

# **AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME ON WOMEN DEVELOPMENT**

**(A Case Study Of Anambra State Chapter -1987 To 1993)**

**BY**

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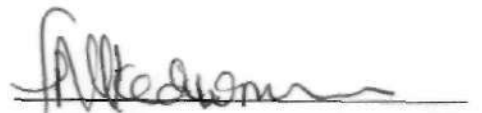
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been prepared by me and that it is a record of my own research work. It has not been presented in any previous application for a higher degree.

All quotations are indicated and the sources of information are specifically acknowledged by means of references.

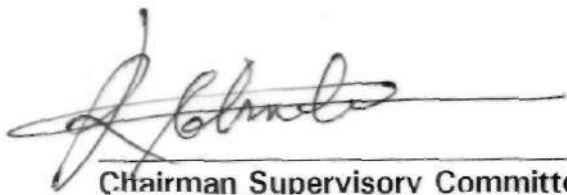
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## CERTIFICATION

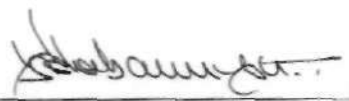
This thesis entitled "An Evaluation of the Impact of the Better Life Programme to Women Development: A case study of the Anambra State Chapter" by Ikedionwu Flora Nwogo meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Masters of Arts in Public Administration (MPA) of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

  
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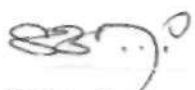
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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to two special people:

1. My mother – Mrs. Nwando Ikedionwu, a complete woman, who is a good inspiration to her children.
2. The Real Nigerian ‘Rural Women’ who inspite of all odds are crying for survival in the midst of their ‘Urban Women’.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

### **“TO GOD, GIVE ALL THE GLORY”**

As with every project, there are several people deserving thanks. Therefore, I acknowledge with grateful thanks the help of all those who made this work possible.

- *First and foremost, Prof. P.C.A. Daudu my supervisor, Dr. Kola Obaitan and Dr. Omolem for their kindness in reading and offering most valuable suggestions which have certainly improved the style and quality of the work.*
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- *My course mates for their wonderful concern all through the period of this programme.*
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- *My sisters and brothers, especially Chudi who deserves huge thanks for his love and understanding. He read every chapter carefully suggesting additions here and subtractions there.*
- *My gratitude also go to my sister-in-law Val, Ozo and Mr. Tite for their wonderful concern and contributions.*
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- *To Mr. & Mrs. Nick Chukwu of Kangoz Nigeria Limited, Sokoto. I am forever grateful for their unending contribution towards my success.*
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## ABSTRACT

Although the Better Life Programme was geared towards rural women development, however, casual observers and media reports have accused the urban women of hijacking the programme to the detriment of the rural women.

This study therefore, sought to identify the reasons that subsequently made the rural women underdeveloped, establish the problems affecting the Better Life Programme in achieving their objectives and assess the government's involvement in funding the programme.

The methods used in carrying out these research were through field investigations, questionnaire, interviews (written & oral) and perusal of related documents or records from files. Six hundred (600) questionnaires were administered to the five (5) selected local government areas out of the sixteen (16) local government areas in Anambra State. Out of these six hundred (600) questionnaires, five hundred (500) questionnaires were completed and returned. Other secondary data used were magazines, journals and newspaper publications.

The study covered the period between 1987 - 1993. From the study it showed that the rural women were actively involved and the programme has made tremendous positive effect on their development. However, it was found that the following factors - ignorance, poverty and traditional position of women were problems limiting the actualisation of the full potential of the Better Life Programme. Simple percentage in a tabular form was used for the analyses.

For this study, three hypotheses were formulated to find out the activities, productivity and funding as regards to women development.

It was recommended that rural women should be the centre of focus in implementing the programme. Education and enlightenment constitute crucial components of mass mobilisation. Therefore, a major effort of the Better Life Programme should be made to ensure the access of all women to basic education.

The recommendations of this study if adopted by Nigerian women and the implementation committee of the Better Life Programme for the rural women in every state, will help in overcoming the age long problem of both the Nigerian and the African women as a whole.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

1. BLP - Better Life Programme
2. DFFRI - Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure
3. ECA - Economic Commission for Africa
4. IWY - International Women's Year
5. JAC - Joint Action Committee
6. LGA - Local Government Area
7. MAMSER - Mass Mobilisation for Economic Recovery, Self-Reliance and Social Justice.
8. NEC - National Electoral Commission
9. NCNC - National Council of Nigeria Citizens/and Cameroun
10. NCWS - National Council of Women Societies
11. MCS - Multi-Cooperative Society
12. OFN - Operation Feed the Nation
13. S/N - Serial Number
14. UN - *United Nations*
15. UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Education Fund
16. WIN - Women in Nigeria
17. WAI - War Against Indiscipline
18. WID - Women in Development

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

There is an increase of interest in gender issue everywhere in the world about the place and role of women in relation to men at all levels of human development.

Going through the pages of newspapers, one finds that in the family, in clubs, in political and social circles, in offices, in academia and in people – women and even men, are demanding more equitable treatment of women. Any organised attempt to promote the rights and interest of women has grown in number, commitment and influence.

Simon holds the view that;

*“women’s interest in the development process have been kindled to a large extent by the actions of women in developed countries”.*

Staging a diligent campaign for political and economic recognition of their own position. Western women have also provoked greater concern for women in developing countries. Many educated women in West Africa feel that women’s co-ordinated action is uncongenial to their social and political environments or that is simply unnecessary. ‘The National Council of Women Societies’ (NCWS) or ‘Women in Nigeria’ (WIN) spend most of their time debating about male domination, discrimination and neglect. This makes them pay little attention to the role of women in rural development.

The majority of women in West Africa are rural, uneducated and living in relatively media-free environments. These rural women remain politically under-represented and only peripherally mentioned in economic and development statistics.

Ekejuba maintained that:

*"the dichotomy between rural and urban development is of recent origin, prior to the incorporation of Africa, especially Nigeria, into the international economy on the periphery of known centres of capitalism, hitherto of most Africans lived in rural areas"*<sup>2</sup>.

The primary concern of most African families is to produce enough food to facilitate reproduction, maintenance, survival, and therefore, the continuity of the family unit and ultimately, society and humanity.

To achieve this goal, each unit made maximum use of the resources, labour and tools available to it to produce enough food for immediate consumption and sale; provide a roof over its head and together with other members of the rural society, provide such basic infrastructure as roads, bridges, clean water supply and the like. The family was self-sufficient in economic production and consumption unit. Its members worked in a cooperation and complementary fashion.

In most parts of Africa, the labour force consists of mainly the rural women who look after the family comprising of able-bodied males and those too young, too old or too sick to produce. Almost everywhere females

irrespective of their position constitute over half the total population in any given society.

Dr. Ekejuba and others agreed that women have been principal actors in pre and post harvest, food processes as producers, processors, preservers, conservers, preparers and traders of food crops. Once societies become civilized, stabilised and law abiding, the functions of the National Government extend beyond the provisions of more modern items, when all the embracing state is well organised and efficient, the provision of the basic human needs – material and social, education, health and general happiness occupy top position in the priorities of the federal or central governments.

Nigeria, like other African countries, is seriously confronted with the problems of rural development since the overwhelming majority of her population find their livelihood in the rural areas. How to promote and accelerate development at grassroots level becomes a major pre-occupation of the various regimes in Nigeria. For instance, in the third National Development Plan 1975 – 1980, the country's rural development policy stipulated that the main objectives of rural development are to increase rural economy and generally enhance the quality of life in rural areas. In addition to raising agricultural productivity, effort will be made to enhance the quality of life in rural areas through the provision of basic social amenities such as health centres, pipe borne water, feeder roads and electricity. The combined effect of these measures should help to narrow the gap in living standards between the urban and rural population. To achieve the above objectives

effectively, it has become imperative that the people concerned, who require those services or for whom they are to be provided, must themselves be made to participate more fully and actively in their provisions. They must be able to decide what they need or influence those who made the decision. In the words of Gohen and his association:

*The involvement of the rural poor in making decision on development efforts which affect them and the contribution of their resources to development activities as well as the resources that the poor in fact benefit from interventions intended to help them are essential to rural development<sup>3</sup>*

Furthermore, in Nigeria today, there is every need to put all hands on deck to salvage the present economic crisis. This will involve the mobilisation of women groups for various communities, states and National development strategies. Thus, it will be to the detriment of any country involved in the societies' nation building and development. Women<sup>4</sup> are now up-in-arms to advance their own interest and right in society up-in-arms against their second class position and status in society, up-in-arms to fight all forms of exclusion, discrimination, inequality and all forms of psychological disadvantages. Women want to be recognised as producers and contributors to the National economy and development.

The emphasis on rural and women development is due to the gap between the quality of life in the urban areas and that of the rural areas. It is against this seeming differences that women in Nigeria have risen to help themselves through the formation of 'The Better Life Programme for the

rural Women'. But government policy occupies a crucial position among the various factors which influence the rural development process. This is because, government policies determine the amount of public funds to be allocated to the rural sector, the way the groups in society which are likely to benefit from the development process.

The awareness for the current issue on women all over the universe may be dated to 1975 which was proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) as the International Women's Year (IWY). Subsequently, the period 1975 - 1985 was declared the United Nations Decade for Women. World conferences on women were held in 1975 in Mexico city, in 1980 in Copenhagen, and in 1985 in Nairobi and more recently the Beijing world conference of 1995 to mark the end of all United Nations Decade for Women.

Various activities during and after the decade for women have subsequently increased public awareness of the iniquities and injustices faced by women in virtually all societies.

There is no gain saying that women are crucial to meaningful contributions to national development. Just like a mother's love for her child, they want to see the growth and advancement of their country and be part of the entire development.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

There are a number of problems facing the Nigerian women today. These problems include poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and lack of political power. These problems affect the Nigerian women regardless of whether they are residing in urban or rural areas of the country.

However, Nigerian rural women suffer the more from additional problems, such as hardship and of trekking long distance in search of water and firewood. They walk long distances on rough roads sometimes bare footed to their farms, with hills and at times streams to cross without bridges. They also walk long distances to local markets, hospitals, clinics/dispensaries where these are available or to a traditional medicine man or woman in distant villages.

After the Nigerian civil war in January 1970, there was extreme poverty in the rural areas and massive male migration to the urban areas of Nigeria in search for wage labour. Even in some areas women for example, serve as security guards and the like. Those left behind in the rural areas were mainly to look after the children. These women were mainly illiterate and poor, yet they have to fend for their children. Furthermore, there was low productivity and food prices suddenly rose. In Nigeria, Okigbo<sup>5</sup> associated the threatening food problem with the younger numbers in school and urban centres. It is the rural to urban migration of male members of the house-hold that has resulted in the increased involvement of rural women in agriculture.

In recent times, many governments especially that of president Babangida's administration have been known to embark on various programmes that characterised the successful execution of a particular leadership style. This regime encouraged the programme of activities that geared towards mobilising the women to some kind of new orientations or directions.

In the case of Nigeria, the nation has experienced various administrations that introduced different programmes of activities aimed at maintaining desirable social awareness of Nigeria especially of the women folk. Some of the mobilisation programmes range from Operation Feed the Nation (OFN). Ethical Revolution of former president Shehu Shagari, War Against Indiscipline (WAI) of Buhari administration, Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI). Mass Mobilisation for Economic Recovery, Self-reliance and Social Justice (MAMSER), Rural Development Authority and Life for the Rural Women.

The 1976 Local government Reforms transferred responsibility for community development to local governments. The objective of that reform was said to bring government nearer to the people and set in motion the development process at the grassroots level. Perhaps, the government concern over the backwardness of the rural areas and the plight of the poor, illiterate rural women who form the majority of rural population must have weighed heavily on the heart of the wife of the ex-head of state, Mrs. Maryam Babangida, hence, her initiation of the Better Life Programme for the

rural women in 1987. The primary objective of the Better Life Programme is to mobilise rural women to participate in development activities to improve their lot and that of their families. The questions to be raised are:

- i. To what extent has the Better Life Programme achieved its primary objectives such as generating a new awareness in the field of women development, creative pursuit, and raising the general standard of living of rural women?
- ii. To what extent do rural women benefit from the programme designed to improve their lot?
- iii. Have the rural women changed – politically, socially and economically?
- iv. Do rural women participate in the programme designed to improve them?
- v. What is the extent of government support and involvement in the Better Life Programme?

The above questions define the problem which have prompted the conduct of this research.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to carry out an empirical study of the Better Life for Rural Women Programme on women development in Anambra State. To achieve this aim, the following objectives will be pursued:

- I. To identify the reasons that subsequently made the rural women underdeveloped.
- II. Establish the problems affecting the Better Life Programme in achieving their objectives.
- III. To access the government's approach in funding the programme.
- IV. Evaluate the various ways the rural women have changed socially, politically and economically.

#### 1.4 HYPOTHESIS

For the purpose of this research, three hypothesis are proposed.

- i. The Better Life Programme has stimulated the rural women to participate actively in creating awareness of their environment.
- ii. The Better Life Programme has increased productivity in various agricultural activities such as in farming, weaving, animal husbandry and pottery making.
- iii. Women development has induced government support for the Better Life Programme.

#### 1.5 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

1.5.1 Field investigations and analyses were carried out to evaluate the impact of the Better Life Programme for the rural women in Anambra State. These were to confirm or refute information or other data obtained from various sources. This was done through visits to

project sites. The results obtained from the field and other sources of data formed the basis for the evaluation of the impact of the Better Life Programme on rural women development in Anambra State.

#### **1.5.2 Tools of Data Analysis**

Two sets of questionnaires were used, one was administered to all members of the Better Life Programme and the other for the executive officers of the Better Life Programme in the studied areas.

We choose six hundred (600) respondents out of about twenty-five thousand (25,000) population in the study areas.

Simple random sample was adopted in selecting local government areas of study. This is to ensure that only persons who are knowledgeable in the affairs of the Better Life Programme and who were also in a position to supply needed information completed the questionnaires.

Also chosen were a total of fifty (50) executive officers out of the two hundred and fifty (250) executive officers in the are studied.

The simple percentage (%) formula was used in the analysis and presented in a tabular form.

### **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

As this programme – (the Better Life Programme) is relatively new in Nigeria and with the debate over the credibility and viability of the Better Life projects as a strategy for rural and women development, an empirical

research of the Better Life projects will provide a sound basis for proper evaluation.

This research will provide information that will inform policy makers and implementators to improve the lives of rural women in Anambra State in particular and indeed in other states of Nigeria and in any part of the world at large.

This study will serve as a useful source of reference to scholars who wish to research further on rural women development, the Better Life Programme as well as evaluating the performances of the local government in relation to women development.

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#### 1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study concentrates mainly on the development of the rural women being undertaken by the Better Life Programme; since a large number of them constitute the population of the study. Although the ultimate of this research is to be able to reach the total population of rural women in Anambra State, but due to limits imposed by time and finance, sampling technique was involved.

The following major problems were experienced in carrying out this research:

- i. Most officers of the Better Life Programme were still reluctant to give information freely without re-assurance from their heads or co-ordinators.

- ii. There was inability to reach certain vital documents, records especially on finance from the Anambra State Better Life Programme.
- iii. Five representatives of Local Government Areas in the state were used – Awka North, Awka South, Njikoka, Idemili and Onitsha. And fifty officials were selected from these areas for the administering of the questionnaires.

### 1.8 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

- BETTER LIFE** - Better Life involves improved standard of living, achieving that through restoration of dignity of women and realisation of their potentials in an effort to attain self-actualisation for them.
- FIELD** - Survey by students who visit and talk to people.
- ORGANISATION** - This is an act of organising. However, for the purpose of this research, it means an organised body of persons.
- POPULATION** - Number of people living in a place, country or a special section of them.

- PROGRAMME** - A list of items, events for the purpose of this research our conceptual definition is a plan of what to be done.
- RURAL DEVELOPMENT** - A definition adopted from Regional Conference in Tanzania on Rural Development *"The outcome of a series of quantitative and qualitative changes occurring among a given rural population and whose converging effects indicate in time, arise in the standard of living and favourable changes in the way of life of the people concerned"*<sup>4</sup>
- RURAL WOMAN** - The Nigerian rural woman has many faces. She may be a farmer, a petty trader, an artisan or a crafts woman or both. She may be a young adolescent with basic female education or a full grown illiterate adult. Mrs. Ekwegbalu (188) defined rural woman thus: "she is the woman who carries the nation's man-power either at the back or front while carrying the economy on her head".

## END NOTES

1. SIMON, E.B - Economic Research on women in rural development in Nigeria. OLC paper No. 10 Sept. 1976 (OLC – meaning, Oversea Liaison Committee, American Council on Education).
2. EKEJUBA, F. - “Women in the context of Nigerian Rural Development” Women In Nigeria Economy (ed) Martin O. Ijere 1989.
3. GOHEN, M. J. et all - Rural Development Participation “Rural Development Monograph No. 2 published by the Rural Development Committee Centre for International Studies, Cornell University, 1977) p.9
4. TANZANIA - Ref.: Regional Conference on the Integrated Approach to Rural Development.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

##### 2.1.1 Concept of Rural Development

Rural development as a concept has been subjected to various theoretical interpretations and empirical operationalisation. Consequently, it eludes any precise definition.

Todaro defines it as encompassing improvement in the levels of living... and capacity of the rural sector to accelerate and sustain the pace of these improvements. Dwelling on the concept, Lele, defines it as improving living standard of the mass of low income population residing in rural areas and making the process self sustaining.

Lele opines that improving the living standards of the subsistence population involves mobilisation and allocating resources so as to reach a desirable balance over time between the welfare and productive services available to the subsistence rural sector. On the other hand, Williams, in his article, "The World Bank and the Peasant Problem" says that the rural sector as a whole has lagged behind the rest of the economy. According to him, the low prices paid by urban buyers for farm produce has a market effect on agricultural development which is the mainstay of our rural areas. He adds that at

the heart of development in our country is the question of how the economy of the towns and the rural sector can grow in harmony.

William, states that rural development effort should stress generation of employment, more equitable access to available land, equitable distribution of income, widespread improvement in health, nutrition and housing, maintenance of law and order, creation of incentive and opportunities for scoring and investment.

Also writing on rural development in Nigeria Ijere in his book "Leading Issues in Nigeria rural development", has accused the successive Nigeria governments of being pre-occupied with drumming into the ears and heads of the rural dwellers the failing of previous regimes rather than developing the rural areas. He contends that this is the general pattern all over the third world countries. Ijere, holds the view that many strategies such as authoritarian handouts from the administration which prescribed the facilities suitable for the rural areas, and secondly, the so called, "development from below" exemplified in the concept of community development, have been tried in the past in the attempt to solve rural poverty in Nigeria.

Those strategies however, have not proved successful. Ijere, looked at rural development problems such as lack of co-ordinated rural development programmes, manpower problem, problems of infrastructure and problem of irrelevant rural education. He also has suggested solution or remedies to those problems which include:

*Clear understanding of the concept of rural development an integrated development programme, provision of infrastructure, relevance of rural education to the peculiar needs and aspirations of rural areas<sup>1</sup>.*

Summarising his impression about rural development in Nigeria, Ajegbu, maintains that;

*They are still largely incoherent unco-ordinated efforts and programme within individual settlement, and they have raised various development planning problems at regional and national level<sup>2</sup>*

He further says that there is now a dire need for better co-ordination of the government, community and individual efforts based on achieving rural development.

In a similar view, Okereke in his article, "The role of agriculture in rural development in Nigeria" and indeed all developing countries, contends that agriculture plays a dominant role in the rural development process. Okereke maintains, that the requirements for agricultural development and the services available to agriculture provide for most for the essential rural development efforts. He notes that structural and social infrastructures – market centres, health centres, town-halls, churches, local industries, schools, communication system can only lead to rural development if they provide the supporting services to agricultural development. He concludes that all the three components of rural development process – Agricultural development, Human resources development, economic

and social infrastructural development must interact within a framework of integrated approach to produce the desired benefits. Okereke concludes by saying that rural development cannot make adequate impact without agricultural development because agricultural development is the only realistic base for rural development.

Yahaya, in his article, "Local Government as an Agent of Rural Development", notes that one of the objectives of the 1976 local government reforms is rural development. He says further that rural development as a conscious and well articulated development programme is a relatively new strategy in Africa. He describes the Nigerian rural sector as neglected, unattractive for inhabitation, and underdeveloped. Yahaya, therefore, suggests a modification of the relationship between the rural sector and urban centres so as to ameliorate the continued exploitation of the rural areas by the urban sector.

He attributes the neglect of the rural areas of the widely held belief that the attitude of rural inhabitants is antagonistic to "modern ideas". Yahaya explains that this belief is based on lack of understanding of the fact that certain social values held by the rural inhabitants are capable of supporting a development policy. Commenting on the functions allocated to local government by the 1976 local government reforms that its distributive function, he, therefore, concludes that local government is presently organised is

basically an attractive and regulatory structure and therefore, not geared towards rural development. To claim that the rural areas in Nigeria have been neglected cannot be disputed. This is manifested in the wide disparity between the urban and rural areas in the provision of amenities. However, Yahaya's article can be criticised on the ground that it was not an empirical assessment of the performance of local governments in Nigeria in the areas of rural development.

Kulp, sees rural development as a system and employs systems analysis to discuss it. He highlights the basic concepts and problems of rural development and uses a number of case studies from African countries to illustrate his theme. His discussions cover agricultural development planning system, complementary sectors and echelons of which education, rural health, family planning, transportation and inter-sectorial allocations are considered as sub-systems playing their parts collectively to maintain a balance within the whole system of rural development. He concludes his discussion by stating special techniques to be used and problem to be encountered in rural development process.

### **2.1.2 Community Development**

Onwuamalam, in his book "Community Development in Africa: An Eastern Nigerian Experiment", gives a historical and at the same time analytical account of rural transformation spanning over 70 years of

Eastern Nigeria History. The book opens with the background information geographical, demographic political, cultural and occupational characteristics of the Eastern States. He narrows in masterly detail the earliest attempts of colonial administrators at community development as an effective method of which the problems of economic and social progress of newly developing countries can be tackled democratically. He evaluates the partnership of government and the people in the supply of government felt needs with particular reference to "matching" grants and subsidies. Though this partnership, Onwuamalam observes, that achievements were recorded in the fields of education, health, road construction, and agriculture – a task which the government could not have accomplished in all the villages of the state with the limited financial resources.

He devotes his last chapter to discussing the role of community leaders as well as the roles of local government in community development which according to him is;

*to provide the continuing frame through which completed projects are administered.*<sup>3</sup>

Battens book, "communities and their development", was one of the earliest books on community development written for the topics. Although first published in the mid fifties, the book has remained a useful and popular reference for community development practitioners

academic and administrators alike. In this book, Dr. Battens discusses how governments and other agencies in developing countries are trying to stimulate, educate and help people develop their own countries themselves. He approaches the task by studying and comparing the aims and methods of governments and voluntary organisations in many countries. In doing so, he enumerates and considers various approaches, assessing each approach in the context of one or more of the actual situations with which it was designed to deal.

Throughout the book, Batten stresses that people's attitude, their relationship with one another and their likes and dislikes as important factors are affecting the success or failure in rural development. It is against this background that he discusses existing method of selecting and training community development workers.

Says Batten, a community development worker needs:

*very high qualities of fact, judgement, restraint and patience in dealing with communities and he needs them too when complaints are made that progress is too slow or results too few<sup>4</sup>*

Olatunbosun, in his book "Nigerians Neglected Rural Majority", examines the Nigeria rural sector. He notes that the sector is not only economically backward but that the gap between it and the urban sector has been widening in recent years. He contends that the perpetuation of colonial development policies by Nigerians who took

the mantle of leadership from the colonial administrators makes it virtually impossible for the rural people to be affected by development efforts. Consequently, the lot of the rural people has not been improved significantly by both colonial and national governments. He supports as a key to rural welfare in Nigeria, rural diversification so as to reduce Nigeria's external dependencies the development of appropriate technology that is conducive to the most efficient use of the existing resources endowment in the rural sector, improvement in human resources which consists of improvement in rural people's Health, education and nutrition and the provision of other social amenities, and an integrated approach to rural development. In as much as it is evident, the view of Dupe Olatunbosun that the rural areas have been neglected, the scope of this book is limited by the fact that it discussed only the broad area of rural development and did not mention anything about women and their role in rural development.

Professor G. A. Odenigwe, in his paper, "Mobilising the Citizens for Community Development under the new system of local government", sees the new local government system in Nigeria as the ultimate agency for mobilising human and material resources for community development. He notes that the availability of the right calibre of staff and enough financial resources would enhance local governments effectiveness. He opines that the new system provides the greatest opportunity for a partnership between governments and

communities in the implementation of such programmes as education, agriculture and social services. On mobilising citizens for development which is the theme of his research, he itemises steps to be taken for effective mobilisation and the different approaches to be adopted. There is no doubt that with adequate finances and the right calibre of trained personnel, local governments would be better placed to mobilise the citizens for community development. The absence of the above factors (finance and adequate trained staff) are some of the major reasons for the present poor performance of local government in the country.

Okoli writing on "Local Government and Community Development, has traced the origin and development of community development in Nigeria through the colonial government down to the post independent Nigeria and hypothesises that local government and community development were tools of colonial penetration and exploitation of the rural areas. Okoli believes that local government continues to be exploitative even now that Nigerians are at the helm of affairs. He also contends that this situation is likely to continue until local government and community development are named in the broader perspective of overall national objective of political unity and national economic development.

If Okoli's view is accepted or agreed upon, it can then be appreciated the gap the Better Life Programme may fill in women and

rural development. It is the people who need the development that should start the development programme the way it can be attained or achieved.

Also writing on local government in Nigeria, Professor Eme Awa, in his paper, "The Theory of Local Government", has dismissed the assertion by Okoli that Local Government is an instrument of exploitation. He traced the various experiments to restructure the local government system in Nigeria, and laments that despite these restructuring, there has been general dissatisfaction with the performance of local governments and consequently the search for new structure has continued. As to the assertion that local government is an instrument of exploitation, Awa examines the functions of local government in Russia and China where local governments serves as an economic planning unit and asserted that to dub local government as an instrument of exploitation of rural people or the masses generally is to beg the question. He however, says that:

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*if the general polity is created towards exploitation of the people, the local government cannot be otherwise<sup>5</sup>*

The limitation inherent in Professor Awa's paper is that it is not an assessment of the performance of the New Local Government System in the area of rural development.

Lawal's paper on the "Theory and Practice of Community Development", written with particular reference to Sokoto State has observed the interdisciplinary nature of community development and noted that although community development had become a world-wide phenomenon; its philosophy, strategies and programme varied from place to place. He classifies the many definitions of community development broadly into what he calls "academic definition" and definitions originating from organisations". According to Lawal, the former emphasises the social and educational values of community development while the later highlights the roles of government and international agencies in community development.

Lawal observes a close relationship between community development and local government and notes that each can serve as the framework which participatory democracy operated at the grassroots.

Lawal analyses its organisational structure as well as the various community development programmes of the state. He notes that government has been playing the paternalistic role in community development since, according to him,

*there were communities completely lacking in initiative who needed to secure their active and enthusiastic response to the movement<sup>6</sup>*

## 2.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The people of Anambra State are ethnically Ibos and are widely known to be very resourceful and hardworking. Skilled manpower resources are therefore readily available in almost every field; in business, professions, management, commerce and industry. The vernacular spoken is Igbo but English is widely used.

Culturally, the state has a very rich heritage. Culture and customs are referred to as people's way of life. The Advance Learner's Dictionary defined culture as:

*development of the body, mind and spirit by training and experience and custom as:  
Generally accepted behaviour among members of a social group<sup>7</sup>.*

Also, Basden, in his study about the Ibos observed that:

*women have a few right in any circumstances and only hold such property as their Lords permit...<sup>8</sup>*

The women folk in the rural areas suffer from tradition which was set up and determined by the men folk. The women had no right to own landed property and so widows have no say over their deceased husband's property. The widows are rendered helpless and at the mercy of their brothers-in-law this practice is still in existence in most parts of the state.

On the other hand, although in theory women do have land right and cannot directly enter into transaction over land through their male children, they can

acquire land and economic tree such as palm trees, kola-nuts etc. From the yields of such cash crops they are able to engage in trading. With these the widow can help feed the family, buy land and build houses.

A widow is forbidden from social activities during her mourning period; if she does, she is said to be spreading pollution on the land, she would be stripped naked by the Umu-ada and abused and she would be accused of the husband's death, but in Anambra State today this custom is not taken seriously as before.

Traditionally, in Ibo society, women are also forbidden from climbing trees like palm trees, kola-nut, coco-nut, orange tree etc. They are not allowed by culture to cook food for their husbands during menstrual period. If any woman commits any of these offences, she is required to take an oath, pay a fine, sacrifice to the ancestor and cook for her husband and be reprimanded for bad behaviours.

In marriage custom, the parents especially, the fathers choose husbands and wives for the daughters and sons respectively. But nowadays this idea has become things of the past due to the advent of education.

According to Nnamani;

*the influence of western culture on this aspect of Ibo marriage custom is very minimal and has not been able to introduce radical reforms that could dislocate traditional marital system<sup>9</sup>*

Finally, the woman, as a wife, and like any woman anywhere in the world, functions best in the home; if there is cordial relationship between herself

and her husband. In fact, due to the emphasis that is placed on child-bearing in Ibo society, the woman in her role does not feel truly self-fulfilled until she has a child. They take care of their children, prepare them for their own future roles as members of the society. They are also their children's first teachers.

Across the globe, women are being encouraged to think globally and act locally, Nigerian women, like their counterparts elsewhere, have been involved in the country's political development. Not just in the family, but also holding leadership positions. Women in this part of the world are not left out in this drive to make our world a better place for all.

Women have exhibited good leadership qualities and have done creditably well in various areas of development. Women like Queen Amina of Zaria from the North, Madam Tinubu of Lagos from the West and Madam Okwei in Onitsha area from the East are all notable women who have fought for the course of development of women in Nigeria. Also worthy of note was the Aba women riot of 1929, in which the women fought against the imposition of obnoxious taxes imposed on them by the colonial authorities.

During the heated battles for our independence, the women were very active. History has not forgotten the likes of late Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome Kuti for her outstanding contributions, Mrs. Margaret Ekpo, a talented politician who worked in the National Council of Nigerian and the Camerouns

(NCNC). Worthy of note, was Mrs. Sarah Jubril who attempted to run for the presidential election under the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

From the available records, women have been pushing ahead and wanting to be recognised. They have been opportuned to have various women leaders at one point in time or the other. However, the fact still remains that the majority of the rural women are ignorant of their needs and lack the basis for development and organisation. It is to this end that the introduction of the Better Life Programme for the rural women becomes inevitable as a forum for women organisation. Therefore, the evaluation of the impact of Better Life Programme on women development becomes necessary.

- Many scholars have emphasised women's contribution in all works of life both within and outside Africa. A woman's position and role are not to be found only in the home as was often said by the other sex. In an attempt to prove the above statement, the role of women in economic development were assessed by analysing women's participation in the labour force – in which the United Nations survey of the role of women in development opined that:

*the domestic work performed mostly by women has great economic significance, consisting mainly of unpaid labour, it lowers the cost of the reproduction of the labour force and subsidizes male paid labour; as a result it is a powerful factor in the accumulation of capital in many countries at all level of development<sup>10</sup>*

Women constitute the bulk of the neglected rural manpower, a fact stressed by Ijere, in which he said that:

*Women form the backbone of rural development, they are found in agriculture and outside it, in the household an unassailable pre-eminence tending children and even the husbands. The degree in disorganisation and chaos that occurs when they are absent in the house confirms the extent of their importance<sup>11</sup>*

In addition, Ogungbile, analyzes the different role of women in rural development and factors responsible for the changes comments that:

*the work of rural women includes household management (Cooking, Cleaning, Washing, Fuel gathering etc) in addition to some aspects of agriculture production processing, marketing and training<sup>12</sup>*

Ogah, in his opinion subscribes to the view when he asserts that:

*In some communities, it is argued that education spoils the women, and as such women are denied their right to acquire education, thus, they live in stark ignorance and are daily haunted by a feeling of inadequacy<sup>13</sup>*

To this effect the Better Life Programme shares the serious concern that the proportion of illiteracy is more prevalent among our women; according to Newswatch publication, Better Life comment on need for education of women generally opines that:

*Through education of women, there would not be only total eradication of illiteracy and the attending ills but it will awaken the political and civil education especially among our women<sup>14</sup>*

In addition, Amucheazi writing about the indispensability of Nigerian women in the positive transformation of rural area, argues that women are indispensable in national development, and therefore, should be trained and equipped to play their rightful role. Women are agents of social change. In the past, there were roles women were not supposed to play. He strongly supports women liberation and say:

*those days are gone, our women today have broken loose of the bonds of patriarchal dominance, asserting themselves as a preponderant social force who can effectively control situations. Everyday the men are losing their former dominated positions to the women in Nigeria who have remained up and coming social activator in the professions, in the banking industry, in the universities, in the armed forces, in distributive and motor transport business, the women in Nigeria are slowly but steadily asserting themselves and edging out the men<sup>15</sup>*

In today's Nigeria, women are no longer backward, as it was years ago, in terms of education, national development and politics. In this effect, Momoh, opines that;

*women should be given the opportunity to enjoy the better things of life which should be done by organising them into co-operative unions in organised private sectors.<sup>16</sup>*

He adds that tenure system should be reviewed to allow the rural women own land and be entitled to lease, and mortgage facilities, not as individuals but as a co-operative society.

Afegbo, in his article, "women in Nigeria History", has the view that in the area of manufacture, the women also occupies commanding positions, especially in the area of manufacture of clothes, pots, and other earthen vessels, various categories of plaited household articles and the like. Many Nigerian communities differ in their definition of "modern times", but they cannot be many of them who will not subscribe to the views that the rise of women as a conscious pursuit of development are among the essential features of modern times. The two issues, women and development, are thus very closely related. They may be described as being among the many consequences arising from the rising levels of social consciousness of man though the impact of the ideas of a motley regiment thinkers amongst whom the best known is Karl Marx.

Indeed it is possible to regard the rise of women as conscious social force as a specific example of the general awakening of the proletariat of the world which Karl Marx fought for. All these groups are among the hewers of woods and drawers of water whom Karl Marx assumed that they would have nothing but their chains to loose if they rose against their oppressors.

With this statement of a new level of social consciousness, women have become a revolutionary group, a force that must be reckoned with by the advocates of programme of social improvement.

Development also is one of the revolution of our age and leaves its impact on every sector of society or rather should. Because the rise of women and the pursuit of development are today a social reality and

promise to be among the forces of the future, they have become topical and becoming topical have generated participation of most rural women in development.

Judith, in her article, "enhancing women's economic potential through appropriate technology" maintains that in Nigeria, as in other African countries "Home Economics' Extension Personnel" continue teaching imported concepts of home economics while the obvious needs of rural women for agricultural knowledge re totally ignored. Agricultural extension agents, on the other hand, direct their services towards men. The agricultural extension agent in charge of the five rural zones of Anambra State in Nigeria recently commented that agricultural extensions of these zones were geared exclusively towards males since men were the heads of their households and women were expected to be more concerned with family affairs. This is despite the fact that women are very actively involved in agriculture in the particular zones.

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Lack of knowledge of modern agricultural practices prevents rural African women from being fully productive and also make their tasks of planting, weeding, and bringing in the harvest needlessly arduous. Farming, however, comprises only a small part of the multifarious and tedious tasks which village women are expected to perform.

In addition to looking after the children, they also do the house work, fetch firewood, carry water, prepare meals and engage in community development projects.

It is now acknowledged by many development agencies that the drudgery of rural women can be relieved through a combination of appropriate technology and a diversion of time into profitable income-generation activities.

Osuala contends that appropriate technology refers to intermediate technologies which are small, simple and inexpensive to produce and which can be made locally from available raw materials and designed to meet local needs of rural women. Appropriate technology can assist rural women in their ways:

- i. Labour-saving devices reduce the time and effort spent in non-productive tasks such as carrying water and fuel.
- ii. Relevant equipment can help with the time consuming duties such as processing grains, preserving fruits, and vegetables and storing harvested produce.
- iii. Appropriate technology can assist women in income-generating activities such as soap-making, keeping of small live-stock and engaging in traditional craft.

Commenting on the unutilised rural manpower, Baran says... the foremost prerequisite of all economic and social development is the release of creative energies and potentialities of the rural masses held down and crippled by centuries of servitude. In realisation of neglected rural manpower, the aims of rural development given by Anambra State Government official document views rural

development as sensitisation and mobilisation of the entire citizenry particularly at the grassroots level... involving them in effective rural development through village integration. Women constitute the bulk of the neglected rural manpower. A case which was stressed by Ijere. He states that women form the backbone of rural development... women are the invisible farmers of the third world. Although they constitute 50% of the rural labour force, they are excluded or even marginalised by agricultural modernisation and development plans. On the same grounds, Dell regrets that all the work done by women in family enterprises and on the land are given no economic value, and women are being exploited in the employment field.

Development agencies in particular, are taking special cognisance of the prudence of including women in every development plan. The Director-General of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) says that most of the problems the agencies have been facing for years would not have become as serious if... it had concerned itself more with women of the developing world. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), concur but has gone further to emphasise the importance of African women from an indispensable part of human resources for development. Without their contribution, the economics of African countries cannot be expected even to be maintained at their present levels, much less advance

to meet the targets and levels which are consistently being set by African countries.

As much has been said about the prudence of women in rural development, none of the proponents has any concrete modalities on how to mobilise and integrate rural women in development. The only attempt along this focus was the introduction of the "Better Life" for the rural women programme which in itself seems to be making frantic effort to integrate women into the arena of rural development.

However, Ijere contends that the lack of full-scale study on the role of women in the economy makes it impossible to be precise on the structure and contribution of the women in the economy. A study of women activities in the Better Life Programme will help to fill the gap and lack of empirical study of the role of women in development.

The Better Life Programme for rural women, in Nigeria which is the first of its kind is seen as one of the best thing that has happened to the rural women in our thirty-two (32) years of our independence. The Better Life Programme is a form of functional education provided for the mobilisation and upliftment of rural women and also for the improvement of standards of living in the rural areas.

Mrs. May Akonobi, the wife of the ex-military governor of the old Anambra State, in her "Foreword" to the maiden issue, says that since the inception of the Better Life Programme,

*it has succeeded in arousing both the political and social consciousness of our women and in*

*mobilising the women folk for effective contribution to the nation building<sup>17</sup>*

She went further to say that the impact of the Better Life Programme on the life of our women is the opportunity to enhance their income thereby contributing to the socio-economic well being of their families and societies at large. In addition, she opines that it has liberated and turned the minds of women to progressive attitude and they try their hands on various things and has exposed the great potentials that lie within them.

The level of education one receives determines the type of job or work he or she does.

Mgbenka writing about the achievement of the Better Life Programme said that:

*Education influences any programme, lack of it can impede the success of a programme while the acquisition of education enhances the effort towards achievement of any programme<sup>18</sup>*

It is against the foregoing background that we can clearly understand the philosophical support which informed the inauguration of the Better Life for rural women programme by Mrs. Maryam Babangida in September, 1987.

According to Caroly in her study on Capitalist Development and Women's work.... contends that,

*the education of women has however, lagged behind that of men in Nigeria as in most other countries has excluded many new types of employment; she also discovered that majority of Yoruba women try to carry on the activities from which they have historically generated an income; trading in foodstuffs, venturing into commodity trading. If they have the capital and opportunity, carrying on such crafts as weaving or establishing themselves as self employed seamstress<sup>19</sup>*

Her other view of women in the Nigerian economy is that the;

*regulations concerning maternity benefits, leave and shift work are disincentives to the employment of women especially married women or women with children in condition of an over supply of cheap labour in the market<sup>20</sup>*

“The Better Life Programme for the rural women” was established as strategy for reaching the most disadvantaged group of our society – rural women and empowering them for effective, participation in national development activities towards a higher standard of living – a better life. The programme was conceived as the answer to the unique problem of marginalisation, extreme poverty and powerlessness experienced by this group of women.

### **2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This research investigates the activities and development of rural women through the Better Life Programme since its inception from 1987 – 1993. In undertaking this task, Easton David’s system analysis approach is adopted. The system analysis will help to explain the operations and development activities of women in the Better Life Programme. It will also help to ascertain the influences from the environment: both internal and external that affect the performance of the Better Life Programme.

A system has been defined as:

- (i) *“a set of element standing in interaction”.*
- (ii) *“a set of objects together with relationship between the objects and between their attributes”.*
- (iii) *“a whole which is compounded of many parts, an assemble of attributes”.*

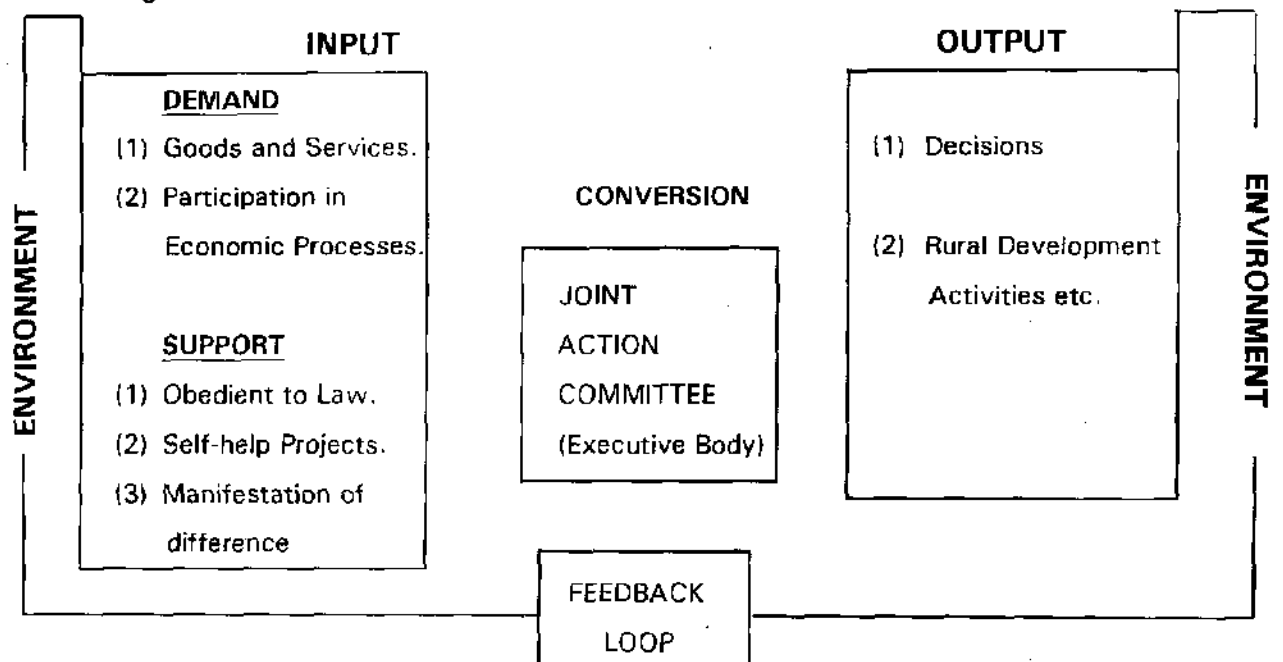
These various definitions of a system.

*involve the idea of group of objects or elements standing in some characteristic structural relationships to one another and interacting on the basis of certain characteristic process<sup>21</sup>*

The main components of Easton David's model are inputs, outputs, and the feedback. This can be represented diagrammatically as in figure 2.1.

### EASTON DAVID'S SYSTEM MODEL

Figure 2.1



SOURCE: Adopted from Easton David (1965)

From the diagram, it shows how the Better Life Programme activities are influenced by the environment both internal and external. The internal environment consists of the joint action committee (the executive body), the wife of the chairman of the local government, constituency representative, grassroots representative, the economic resources within the Better Life

Programme, the quality of the population and the quality of staff of the Better Life Programme. All these constitute forces that interplay and influence the operation and performance of Better Life Programme. The external environment comprises the local, state and federal government. All formulate rules and regulations which guide the operation of the Better Life Programme. The external environmental influence which affects the operation of the Better Life Programme also include the federal and state government budgetary and financial allocation and control. The Better Life Programme as a system received inputs from both the internal and external environments in the form of demands and supports. A demand, according to Easton is:

*an expression of opinion that an authoritative allocation with regard to a particular subject matter should or should not be made by those responsible for doing so<sup>22</sup>*

The various towns within the local government demand the provision of loan, food and agricultural facilities such as tractor, rice thresher, beans and maize grinder, soil tilling machines, palm oil presser and palm fruit thresher, garri processing machine and other facilities from the Better Life Programme. They also demand participation in handling the affairs of the Better Life Programme. The Better Life Programme also receives support in the form of obedience to rules and regulations and self-help projects from the rural women.

These various inputs are converted into outputs by the Joint Action Committee (JAC) and other top officials of the Better Life Programme are the decisions and actions of the authorities. These can be assessed by evaluating their rural development potentials which are the concern of this inquiry, "outputs" as Easton has pointed out;

*not only help to influence events in the broader society of which the system is a part, but also, in doing so, they help to determine each succeeding round of input that finds its way into the political system<sup>23</sup>*

This process is described as a feed-back loop and is an important type of response to support stress in the Better Life Programme.

The Feed back:

*is a dynamic process through which information about the performance of the system is communicated back to it in such a way as to affect the subsequent behaviour of the system<sup>24</sup>*

Thus, through the feed-back, people's feelings and reactions to the operations, actions and performance of the Better Life Programme are communicated back to the authorities of the Better Life Programme.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME IN ANAMBRA STATE

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#### 3.1 HISTORY OF BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME IN ANAMBRA STATE

Anambra State consists of Sixteen Local Government Areas. The main towns are located in Awka, the capital, Onitsha and Nnewi. Onitsha has the largest market of its kind in the ECOWAS Sub-Region. Nnewi is the hub of commerce and industry in the state and it is dotted with factoring and productive activities. (See Appendix 'D' for the Map of Anambra State).

Table 3.1: List of LGS and Their Headquarters:

S/NO.	LOCAL GOVT. AREAS	HEADQUARTERS
1.	AWKA SOUTH	AWKA
2.	AWKA NORTH	ACHALLA
3.	AGUATA	EKWULOBIA
4.	ANAMBRA	OTU-OCHA
5.	ANA OCHA	NENI
6.	IDEMILI	OGIDI
7.	IHIALA	IHIALA
8.	NJIKOKA	ABAGANA
9.	NNEWI NORTH	UKPO

10.	NNEWI SOUTH	NNEWI
11.	OGBARU	ATANI
12.	ONITSHA NORTH	ONITSHA
13.	ONITSHA SOUTH	FEGGE
14.	ORUMBA SOUTH	AJALLI
15.	ORUMBA NORTH	UMUNZE
16	OYI	NTEJE

SOURCE: *Anambra State Diary, 1994*

Development according to Elekwa, refers in general to;

*Changes, which is continuously taking place in man and his Physical, Social, Cultural and Political Environment; this change he said may be beneficial or sometimes detrimental to human survival<sup>1</sup>*

Rural Development as a strategy is designed to improve the economic, social and other conditions of people who live in rural areas. Focussing on the role of local government in community or rural development, we will take our guiding or foundation stone of Federal Government Policy which is in 1976 Local Government Reform. In the 1976 Local Government Reform, Local Government was defined as;

*Government of Local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within defined areas<sup>2</sup>.*

This gives the council to Local Government substantial authority on local matters within the areas of their jurisdiction. What the government

had in mind by creating these local government areas, that it wanted a government that would:

- (i) "Mobilise human and material resources through the involvement of members of the public in their local development".
- (ii) "To make appropriate service and development activities responsive to local wishes and initiative by devolving or delegating them to local representative bodies"; and
- (iii) "Facilitates the exercise of democratic self government close to the local level, of our society and to encourage initiative and leadership potentials".

From the above statement we could easily understand that the local governments have major roles to play in the development of rural areas.

According to Odenigwe, the:

*New local government system in Nigeria is the ultimate agency of mobilising human and material resources for community development<sup>3</sup>.*

He believed that local government is in a better position to encourage, stimulate, direct and co-ordinate the effort of the rural people for community development.

The official launching of the Better Life Programme was through a national workshop which was attended by representatives of all local government areas in the country, relevant government agencies and ministries.

The women commission was set up in September, 1988 as a result of the Decade for women 1975 – 1986, which mandated the setting up of a national commission in all signatory countries present at the 1985 conference in Nairobi. While, other nations had readily implemented this UN resolution, it took Nigeria not until 1988 all of four years after 1985 to comply.

Infact, at the end of the 1985 meeting the only result of Nigeria's feeble attempt to act on the UN resolution, was the setting up of severally circumscribed grouping called "Women In Development" (WID).

However, the 1987 Abuja workshop on "Women in Rural Development" whose theme was "A Better Life Programme for the Rural Women" whose guiding force passionately articulated their need for a commission of their own. One of the recommendations was that government should implement the UN resolution which called for the setting up of a national machinery.

## **THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

For long, women contribution in Socio-economic development rural areas had not been appreciated. This is why every past and successive regimes had not made concerted effort to improve the general welfare and the role of women in development efforts. According to Ihebunike.

*women were always neglected because they were traditionally as mere housewives, full-time mother, perpetual consumers and domestic caterers who should be ascribed no role<sup>4</sup>*

To effect action on rural development extends to various areas of specialisations. They are involved in about 95% agriculture. They organise themselves into work groups or teams for the purpose of self-help through mutual help, and in this way, they perform such tedious tasks as ploughing, sowing, kneading, harvesting and transportation of food and cash crops. The Nigerian women are actively involved in farming although their contributions in most, remain immeasurable and underrated.

According to Uwaka and Uwaegbule in studies of Role and Contribution of Rural Women to Agriculture cited by Obayi, they showed that;

*“whereas some fifteen years ago males dominated all activities relating to farm-land preparation and tree crop production, the situation has change a lot. A higher proportion of women are involved in all aspects of farming. As many as 52.94% is staking yams<sup>6</sup>*

Studies by Okoroji shows that; “for jointly performed activities such as sowing, staking and harvesting women’s labour dominate men’s labour”. The commercial activities of women enhance the economy of the nation, Dr. Okigbo cited in Onuoha, says that the role of women in trade has been maintained even to the present day. In villages, the transaction of food stuffs are primarily the responsibility of women. Obayi in concluding her work stated that Igben in his studies posited that eighty percent of trade in food stuff is carried on by women particularly in the western state of Nigeria. The women are involved exclusively in marketing of yams, coco-

yams, cereals and vegetables. These women have to carry the items on their heads to market often several kilometres away.

Women are very actively involved in the processing of farm products, apart from tying yams in the barns, women are the major processors of food products in the rural areas. Food are processed either for immediate use, or for preservation for later use, example cassava making into starch, garri or flour, legumes and grains are dried, extraction of palm oil from fruits are done by women.

Although the southern part of Nigeria is not a large livestock producing area, in keeping goats, poultry, ducks etc. Women provide formidable force for the building of hospitals, community halls, churches and other special amenities.

The need to consider the rural women in the nation's rural development programme therefore arises, not only because of their large numbers but they contribute the dominant labour force in the country's rural areas. Any rural development effort which over-looks the importance of this dominated labour-force therefore, would be doing less good to the objectives of the rural development programme.

Since women form the nucleus of the nations existence, their education and mobilisation for more effective participation in socio-economic and political process in the country should not be taken for granted, for as the saying goes by Aggrey James K.

*To educate a man is to educate a single individual;  
but to educate a woman is to educate an entire  
nation<sup>6</sup>*

Women have been marginalised in many of the most lucrative economic activities in the country. Their lack of access to education and the kind of education they receive also affects employment opportunities and thus their economic independence. In business sheer bias and land ownership patterns often make it difficult for them to obtain loans from financial institutions.

It is therefore fair enough to remove obstacles that prevent women from making full contributions to their country's economic development, and personal advancement. And as Dr. (Mrs.) Abiola Doyin said;

*Networking is the best means of overcoming<sup>7</sup>*

Therefore highly placed women in society can reach out to other women and give them ladder with which to climb up.

### **3.3 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME FOR RURAL WOMEN IN ANAMBRA STATE**

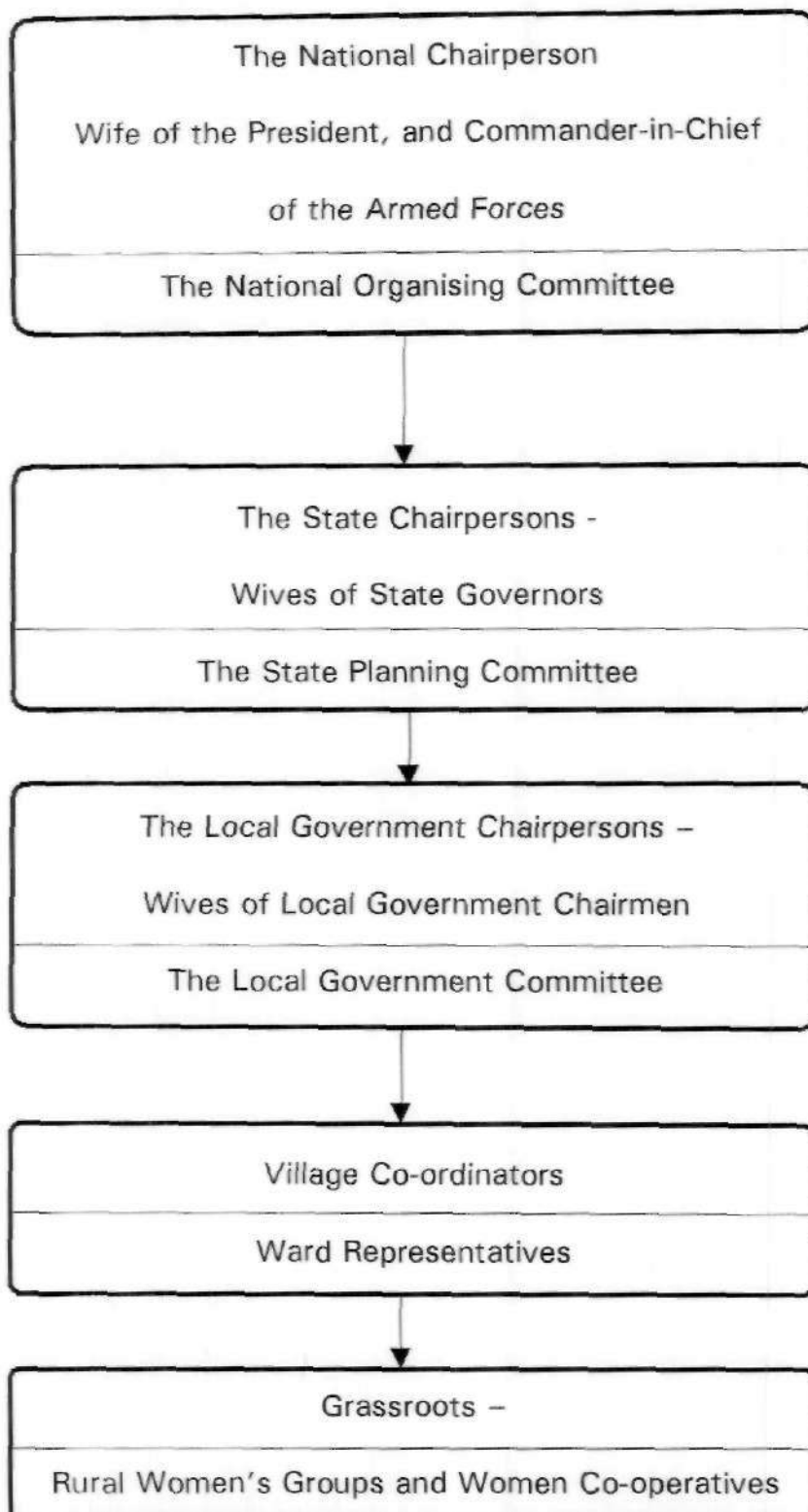
The Better Life Programme was inaugurated on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 1988 with commissioning of two committees for implementation. The first, the Advisory Committee, consisted of sixteen (16) carefully selected women of Anambra State highly placed in their fields but interested in making their own contribution to the upliftment of women. The other team was known as Implementation Committee and consisted of about five hundred (500) members, women leaders from the various local government areas, wives of

the then Chairmen of local governments, members of the Advisory Committee, various heads of parastatals, like DFFRI, PRODA, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ministry of Health. The Chairman of this committee was always the Director of DFFRI. They formed the leadership of the programme at the state level. Members of the Planning and Implementation Committees were assisted by different sub-committees.

The Advisory Committee was charged with the responsibility of carrying out research, giving of advice to the chairperson necessary for the implementation of the programme and this was also divided into groups.

- (a) The Research Team
- (b) Monitoring Team
- (c) Implementation Team
- (d) Questionnaire Administration Team
- (e) Publicity Team
- (f) Health Team
- (g) Trade Fair Team

Figure 3.2: The Organisational Structure of the Better Life Programme



SOURCE: *The National Committee of BLP, Four Years of BLP for Rural Women, p. 162*

**The Research Team:** This consisted of five members. They had the responsibility of preparing and decoding the questionnaire. After decoding, it came out with a report – ‘Report on the Better Life for Rural Women Programme’ which was circulated to the chairman of the sixteen (16) Local Government areas.

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**Monitoring Team:** The responsibility of this committee was to monitor the ‘Better Life Programme’s activities in the rural areas. It also included projects being undertaken by women in the rural areas, their problems and achievements, and ensured that any loans or donations given to the women were effectively utilised. It was the means for ascertaining new areas of needs and possible strategies for greater achievements. In addition, monitoring entailed a continuous and up-to-date contact between the Better Life and the countless rural women had been influenced by the programme.

The monitoring committee made recommendations for more assistance or withdrawal of help as the case may be. It served as on-the-spot vehicle for easy reference to the Better Life Programme for the rural women and vice versa.

**The Implementation Team:** The implementation team headed by Mrs. T. N. Ilobi was given the responsibility of mobilising women in the rural areas of the State to sensitise and create their awareness of the ‘Better Life Programme’. They helped the rural women in organising themselves into groups and selecting their leaders. They met once a month in the government house to consider all plans of the programmes agreed upon.

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**The Questionnaire Administration Team:** The committee administered the questionnaire, thus creating the awareness of the programme at the same time.

**The Publicity Team:** The responsibility of this committee included creating awareness of this programme through the electronic and print media and also produced publications. The committee also functioned as the public relations officers of the programme.

**The Health Team:** The health team was headed by Anambra State Commissioner for Health. It opened a request channel for the Better Life Programme in the State with UNICEF. A committee was set up to produce projects request write-ups for UNICEF to set up livestock farms, vegetable preservation cold rooms and pottery ceramic industries. This committee travelled to Lagos to discuss these requests at the UNICEF headquarters.

**Trade Fair Team:** A task force was created for the Trade Fair for 1988. This committee was set up to plan the strategies and work out the logistic for the States' participation at trade fairs.

### 3.4 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME IN ANAMBRA STATE

#### 3.4.1 Formation of Co-operatives

In the areas of capital projects – like roads, water, electricity and agriculture the findings were brought to the notice of the government and various bodies concerned. However, the main thrust was to mobilise all women for forming in co-operative societies. This strategy helped to achieve several results such as:

- i. Helping women to work in unity;
- ii. Making it easy for them to obtain loans; and
- iii. Facilitating the undertaking of projects that otherwise a single individual could not start.

At the moment, there are about six hundred registered co-operative societies in Anambra State. These co-operative societies embark on various projects like:

- (a) Agriculture for farming in: cassava, maize, rice and yam, vegetable, fruit farming, farm plantation; and
- (b) Livestock farming in: goat rearing, piggery, poultry and fish pond.

The Better Life Programme makes rural women aware of modern farm in-puts such as high yielding variety of seedling fertilizer and machines.

The formation of co-operatives is one of the most effective vehicle for organising rural production. Therefore, co-operatives are

not only the most suitable organisational framework for accelerating rural development but also they are veritable instruments for the mobilisation and sensitisation of women.

#### 3.4.2 Education:

The importance of education to rural folk cannot be over emphasised. Education and enlightenment constitute crucial components of mass mobilisation. This fact was buttressed by the United Nations Organisation when it said:

*Education is an essential factor in the advancement of women as well as in influencing the potential contribution of present and future generations of elderly women to development<sup>8</sup>.*

The planning and implementation committee realised from the onset that illiteracy is one of the biggest constraining factors militating against the active participation of the rural women in the development process.

This is one of the felt needs of the rural women; the need for the self improvement through adult literacy classes and skills acquisition courses. To enable them benefit from such, the Better Life Programme worked with MAMSER, in its adult literacy classes in rural communities. There are now about two hundred and fifty centres with about a total female enrolment of four thousand.

On skill acquisition courses, workshop and seminars have been organised to enable women acquire functional skills. These are in the areas of soap-making, cosmetics, weaving tie and dye and the making of disinfectants. So far, twenty-eight skills acquisition workshops have been organised since the inception of the Better Life Programme.

Therefore, a major effort of the Better Life Programme should be made to ensure the access of all women to basic education. To this end, the Better Life Programme continues to stress the need for women to acquire functional and formal education as a tool for improvement.

#### **3.4.3 Health**

There are high rates of maternal and infant mortality in Anambra State. There are several hospitals (government owned and individuals) and maternities. The improvement on health of the Anambra State people, the Better Life Programme in collaboration with the Ministry of health organise public enlightenment campaigners, seminars and workshops on the dissemination of information on health, family planning and drug abuse.

Women in many areas of the rural areas which were visited are encouraged to embark on building maternity homes and health centres as special projects. The EPI (Expanded Programme on Immunisation)

and ORT (Oral Rehydration Therapy) have been major areas of the Better Life Programme concern.

In 1989 the Better Life Programme was solely responsible for the communication and mobilisation aspect of the very successful Anambra State Immunisation day's programme (ASIDs).

#### **3.4.4 Social Welfare**

The plight of the disabled, the motherless babies and the generally handicapped have been a concern to the Better Life Programme Committee. Identification of the first babies of the year has been one of their major recognition. This was done in Abakaliki (in the Old Anambra State) zone in 1990 when four maternity homes in four local government areas were visited and food and clothing were distributed.

The outstanding achievement of the Better Life Programme in Anambra State is the mobilisation of women into co-operative organisations. According to late Dr. (Mrs.) Ikeme, it is the only sure way of reaching the rural women. When the programme was started said one Okonkwo, there were only 38 purely women co-operative societies in the former Anambra State. As at the end of March, 1990, 360 women co-operative societies were registered.

Since co-operative societies are the only avenue through which the Better Life Programme could mobilise the rural women for development, one could as well evaluate the implementation of the

Better Life Programme vis-a-vis the impact of women co-operative societies on rural women. As regards mobilisation, one would conclude that about 28,253 (twenty-eight thousand, two hundred and fifty-three) rural women have been mobilised since the inception (1987 – 1993) six years period when the programme has been in existence.

This is inferring from the existing membership of the 660 women co-operative societies in the State. The figure is significant if one relates it to about to 60 percent of rural dwellers which constitute rural women. The 'Tidal wave' as they call it, of the women co-operative society have reached some towns in the State. However, most of the existing women co-operative societies are yet to benefit from the Better Life loans and grants. Since the Better Life Programme has as its objective of recovering loans that were due for repayment and which has not been forthcoming, this situation has been hampering the sensitising of the newly formed proprietress of three women co-operative movements formed in Nnewi in 1988, one of which is the Ichi palm produce and multipurpose co-operative they have since been negotiating for loan but none has been received. However, they have benefited from the train the trainers workshop of the programme; from where they have learnt crafts, producing cosmetics, weaving etc.

The Better Life trade fair is seen by the movement as a venue for public practical demonstration of the immense benefits realised from the Better Life Programme.

The Better Life fair for the rural women has the following as the objectives:

- i. To highlight existing techniques for processing, preservation and storage of local food stuff.
- ii. To provide a forum, for display and promotion of home made goods, designs, crafts and artifacts by the rural people.
- iii. To discover and enhance the rich cultural products of the rural people.
- iv. To create a market outlet for the various products of the rural dwellers and promote interaction, co-operation and joint ventures at village, community, state and national levels.

Bearing in mind previously highlighted rural problems and to promote income generating channels that would lead to increased income and improved family life of the rural people.

Encouraging and sponsoring the rural women to learn crafts and commercialised already existing creating potentials like ceramics making is an invaluable aspects of the Better Life projects in Anambra State. The rural women have been taught that they would modify their handicraft to enable them to attract national and international market.

There has been positive change attitude towards women involvement in economic development and response of women to formation of co-operative societies. Initially, women were reluctant to either organise their own co-operative societies or to join co-operatives where men are members. Women co-operative

societies provided invaluable opportunities in the area of 'Better Life' grants and interest free loans for the establishment of small scale food processing, agro-allied industries, business, livestock rearing, farmland acquisition, provide access to farm input and promote produce marketing.

The commission has also encouraged the setting up of agro-allied small scale or cottage industries for the economic improvement of our women garri processing in the sixteen local government areas, palm oil produce in Aguata and Orumba local government areas, corn pulling and rich milling in Orumba South, Anambra, Awka North and South, Ogbaru and Oyi Local Government Areas to mention but a few.

The sick, the disabled and motherless babies have not been left out. Through the action of the Better Life Programme, the Ministry of Health and Information have initiated the drafting of an edict stipulating minimum standards for the six motherless babies homes in the state. These homes are visited regularly and food and clothing made available for the up-keep of the babies. The blind school children at Oji-River, the leppers at Oji and those at Emene in (Enugu State) are also visited from time to time and food and clothing donated for their up-keep.

By visiting hospitals, it has been possible to identify and help patients who could not receive treatment as a result of lack of funds. In this manner an acid victim and a fire victim were identified at orthopaedic hospital in Enugu and given ₦5,000 and ₦1,000 respectively for their treatment. The sum of ₦3,000 as also made available for the treatment of a little girl who was born with brain injury.

Other categories of handicapped persons have also received help as the need arose.

The Better Life Programme in Anambra State has subscribed to the efforts of others in helping the less privileged, it contributed ₦1,000 in aid to an orphan in Uyo, donated ₦2,000 as well as plastic seats worth ₦1,000. Through making the Anambra State Government aware of the plight of the VVF victims, the government approved an additional grant of ₦20,000 to hospitals.

In liaising with the Spinal-cord Injuries Association, a census of all afflicted persons in all the local government areas of the state has been carried out.

Widows have, according to their requests, received some aids. In this manner, three widows were assisted with small grants of ₦200.00 to ₦300.00 each to start small business. They were subsequently introduced to the People's Bank for loans.

The rural women have undergone a lot of transformation to improve their lots through the formation of the Better Life Programme for the rural women.

*(Source: Women Affairs Commission Project File, Awka 1989)*

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CHAPTER FOUR  
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

**4.1 PRESENTATION**

Two sets of questionnaire, were used. One set was for the members. The questionnaire were administered to the members from the five Local Government Areas in Anambra State; Awka North and South, Njikoka, Idemili and Onitsha. One hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed to each of the five local government areas. Thereby, making a total six hundred questionnaires. However, only five hundred were completed and returned. This gives a response rate of eighty-three percent.

The second set was administered to the officials in the five local government areas studied. Ten questionnaires were distributed to each of the offices in the local government areas. Thereby, making a total of fifty questionnaires and returned.

The office records and documents used in this study were collected from the women commission office, Awka. Some of the issues in the questionnaires were investigated by oral interview.

The simple percentage table was used to analyse all the data. This study helps to highlight the impact of the Better Life Programme on women development in Anambra State.

#### 4.2 DATA ANALYSIS ON RURAL WOMEN OF THE BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME

The content of this questionnaire is to help in evaluating the impact of the Better Life Programme on women development in Anambra State.

The analysis are presented in a Tabular form.

*Table 4.1: Please, do you have any Better Life Programme Project in your area?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	500	100
No	-	-
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

This shows that all the five hundred respondents agreed that there are Better Life Programme projects in their areas. To know the type of projects they have, this question was put to them.

*Table 4.2: What type of Better Life Programme Projects you have?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER (YES)	PERCENT AGE (%)	NUMBER (NO)	PERCENT AGE (%)
Farming	410	85	90	15
Weaving	340	68	160	32
Pottery	315	63	85	37
Food Processing	250	50	250	50
Rural Housing	-	-	-	-
Water Scheme	-	-	-	-

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Four hundred and ten respondents that is 85% stated that they have farm projects, while 15% said no that they have no farming project. 68% respondents stated weaving, while 32% said no they don't have weaving. 63% respondents stated pottery while 37% said no. 50% respondents stated while 50 said no. All these projects are identified with the Better Life Programme in Anambra State.

Table 4.3: *Do you have women co-operative identified with Better Life Programme?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	500	100
No	-	-
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

The Table 4.3 shows that all the respondents stated that not that they have women co-operative societies but that the co-operative societies are identified with the Better Life Programme.

Table 4.4: *Is it Multi-purpose Co-operative Society?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	500	100
No	-	-
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.4 shows that all the respondents stated that they have multi-purpose co-operative societies.

If multi-purpose co-operative societies, please specify type? The respondents stated that basically they have cassava projects but they combine them with goat rearing and growing of corn, melon, vegetables and the like. Some respondents stated that they make pomade and soap, weaving and pottery. These products are used in the homes and the remaining are sold to recover the money spent and to make profits.

On the issue of participation the question;

Table 4.5: *How would you grade your participation in Better Life Programme Activities in your area?* was asked.

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Very Active	340	68
Active	120	24
Not Very Active	37	7.4
Neutral	-	-
Not Active	3	0.6
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.5 shows that 68% of the respondents are very active in Better life Programme activities whereas 24% of the respondents stated that they are active and 7.4% respondents stated that they are not very active in Better

Life Programme activities. These responses show that zeal and enthusiasm with which the rural women embrace the Better Life Programme activities.

These responses also support our first hypothesis that “the initiation of the Better Life Programme has stimulated the participation among the rural women. On the question,

**Table 4.6: Do you get loan for your project(s)?**

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
Yes	183	36.6
No	317	63.4
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.6 shows that 36.6% of the women co-operatives get loan, while 63.4 did not get loan for farming. It goes to show that the loan system is not for everybody. We gathered from the project file that the loan was given first come, first serve basis and according to the availability of fund from the Better Life Programme office.

On how much was received by those that have collected loans. Some of them did not state the amount. We gathered orally from them that they feared being looked upon as divulging so much information.

However, (see appendix E) for some of the list of the Better Life assisted co-operative societies culled up from the project’s file, Anambra State Better Life Programme report.

The table shows that all of the groups or individuals who have benefited from the loan scheme do not bother to repay the loan given to them. The record is not encouraging at all.

In order to find out the cost of the loan given, the question was asked.

Table 4.7: *Do you pay interest on the loan?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	469	93.8
No	31	6.2
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.7 shows that those who get loan do not pay interest on it. On how the loan is paid back:

How do you pay back money loaned to you? The respondents stated that it was by instalmental payment spread over a period of three years.

To find out the nature of input into their farming activities, this question was asked:

Table 4.8: *Do you use fertilizer for your farm project?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	469	93.8
No	31	6.2
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.8 shows that 93.8% respondents in women co-operatives use fertilizer for farming. And the question, yes, what is the source? Was put to them. Respondents indicated that initially the Better Life Programme gave them free fertilizer and subsequently they bought it at a reduced rate. On he increase on the output of farming. The question asked was:

Table 4.9: *How would you rate the increase in output of your farming since the introduction of more co-operative societies?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Very High	373	74.6
High	112	22.4
Low	13	2.6
Very Low	2	0.4
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.9 shows that 74.6% of the respondents in the Better Life Programme co-operatives agreed that the rate of the increase is very high while 22.4% agreed that it is just high while those that said the increase is low is insignificant. They were further asked to state what they attribute the result to. The respondents stated that Better Life Programme influenced the rural women to use fertilizer, team work and use of improved cassava stem system in their farming. The respondents answers support the second hypothesis that: The initiation of the Better Life Programme has stimulated production among the rural women.

In finding out how the Better Life programme has helped to increase food production, this question was asked.

Table 4.10: *Is increase in production in Rural Areas due to the activities of Better Life Programme?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	396	79.2
No	104	20.8
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.10 shows that out of 500 respondents, 396, that is 79.2% felt that an increase in food production in rural areas is due to impact of Better Life Programme. This support the second hypothesis which is that the Better Life Programme has generated productivity among the rural women.

In summary, the findings show that the Better Life Programme as a rural development strategy has awakened rural women to work hard and increase their general development.

To find out the benefits derived by participating in the Better Life Programme, this question was asked.

Table 4.11: *Do you think that Rural Women and their beneficiaries benefited from Better Life Programme?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	417	83.4
No	83	16.6
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.11 shows that 417 out of 500 respondents i.e. 83.4% agreed that rural women have benefited from the Better Life Programme. And to know how they are benefiting from the Better Life Programme. They said that without the existence of Better Life Programme most women would have been ignorant on how to improve their lot.

The issue of the development of women since the inception of Better Life Programme was raise thus; 475782

Table 4.12: *How would you rate the development of women in your area since the inception of Better Life Programme?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Very High	377	75.4
High	110	22
Neutral	-	-
Low	-	-
Very Low	13	2.6
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.12 shows that 75.4% of the respondents rated the development of women in their rural area very high while 22% of the respondents rated the improvement as high. Only three respondents rated it as low. To get more insight into this issue, this question was asked – please explain what you think is the reason(s)? The 75.4% respondents stated that socially, majority of women have started taking better care of their looks, body and clothing.

They now take interest in what their various communities are doing and boldly ask questions, show resentment where they feel cheated. There is a feeling of freedom and production and recognition in all spheres of their endeavour, be it religion, politics, business or culture. "They feel an umbrella of protection over their heads".

Economically, the rural women have greatly improved. They feel better now and are very hopeful for more economic gains.

The 22% respondents feel that the traditional and cultural nature of women still make them feel reluctant to participated fully as Better Life Programme members. The age long position of women in the society is still affecting them.

On the question to assess generally the contributions of the Better Life Programme this question was asked:

Table 4.13: *Do you think Better Life Programme in your area has creditably done well?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	492	98.4
No	8	1.6
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.13 shows that 492 respondents stated that the Better Life Programme has creditably done well. And to further investigate why they feel so – They were further asked to state their reasons. They state that

before the inception of the Better Life Programme that is in the old Anambra State that there was only thirty-eight co-operative societies as against six hundred and sixty, they have at present. After the creation of Enugu State the new Anambra inherited about three hundred and seventy co-operative societies. (Anambra State Project File) .

A lot of women now engage in one self-help project of the other to improve their standard of living. Their male counterparts now have started changing their attitudes towards their women. They are allowed to travel to participate in any of the workshop/seminar organised by the Better Life Programme in their area and sometimes outside their communities. This give them ample opportunities of exchanging ideas with their fellow rural women from other areas.

#### 4.3 DATA ANALYSIS ON BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

It is essential to evaluate government involvement in Better Life Programme. To this end, the question:

Table 4.14: *How would you grade government support for Better Life Programme?* was asked.

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Unsatisfactory	-	-
Fair	13	26
High	27	54
Very High	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.14 shows that only 13 out of the executive members rated government support for Better Life Programme as fair, 27 executives rated government support for Better Life Programme as high whereas 10 of the respondents rated government support for Better Life programme as very high.

It is therefore, inferred from the above table that all the Better Life Programme executives rated government support for Better Life Programme as very encouraging. Their presence is being felt by the Better Life Programme.

On the question of how much grant did your office receive from the government from 1987 – 1993. All the respondents could not state any amount. When we further asked to know, some said it was for security reasons. Some said that the aspect of finance was not open to the members of staff. Those that are in the finance department were not ready to talk either by instructions or fear of letting out official secrets.

However, it is acknowledged that government has interest on the Better Life Programme and has contributed immensely towards it. This supports the third hypothesis that women development has induced government support for the Better Life Programme.

On the question of improving the services of members of Better Life Programme, this question was asked "what services would you like to see introduced for members?" 70% of the respondents would like a situation where fund is available to beneficiaries to enable them secure loans for their

projects, 25% of the respondents want government to encourage the beneficiaries by continuing hosting of trade fairs annually, seminars, workshops and symposiums more frequently. However, 5% of the respondents would want all women banking to be opened where the beneficiaries would feel free to deposit their money as well as transact some business.

On general evaluation of other chapters of Better Life Programme in the country, this question was asked.

Table 4.15: *As a Better Life Programme official, how do you rate the Better Life Programme in other chapters?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Very Active	37	74
Active	11	22
Neutral	-	-
Not Very Active	2	4
Not Active	-	-
Total	50	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.15 shows that 37 of the respondents rated other chapters of Better Life Programme as very active while 11 of the respondents rated them as just active. Only 2 of the respondents rated other chapters as not very active. This goes to show that the impact of the Better Life Programme has spread to almost all the areas and its local government areas.

On trying to find out how far the beneficiaries can get in touch with the executive offices, the question: "suppose a community or individual need your help or services, how would they get in touch with you? Was asked.

All the 50 respondents stated that through the women commission that the Better Life Programme offices are located in all the local government areas at strategic places and that they have made sure that adequate coverage has been given to it through radio and television broadcast as well as advertisement.

On whether the living standard of the rural women has improved, the question was asked.

Table 4.16: *Do you think that the living standard of the rural women has improved?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	42	84
No	8	16
Total	50	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.16 shows that 42 of the respondents stated that the living standard of the women has improved tremendously while 8 of the respondents agreed that it has not quite highly improved because the women need total emancipation from their male counterparts.

This finally brought us to the oral question of the attitude of general public to the Better Life Programme? The reactions are in two folds, one from the women who are not beneficiaries of Better Life and then from the menfolk. The women felt that the leaders and urban women are hijacking the programme and it made it not purely for the rural women. The menfolks felt that the women are really contributing enormously to the economic and social situation of the whole country. While some said that for fear of donation they find it difficult to let their wives participate fully as beneficiaries of the Better Life Programme.

However, everybody agreed that the general development of the rural women have improved tremendously. Our women now opt for more education, political post and government recognition for their rights.

#### **4.4 HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

Three hypothesis were postulated for evaluation in this study. The first hypothesis that – c the Better Life Programme has stimulated participation of the rural women in creating awareness of their environment. To test this hypothesis, this question was asked.

Table 4.17: *What made you take part in Better Life Programme?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Because it is a women's organisation	67	13.4
Because women want to rule Nigeria	433	86.6
Because it gears towards stimulating women awareness of their environment	-	-
Because you want to be given money	-	-
Because you want to be rich	-	-
Any other	-	-
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.17 shows that 433 of the respondents stated that it was because it stimulates them in creating awareness of their environment that made them to take part in the Better Life Programme, whereas 67% of the respondents stated that it was because it is a women's organisation. It can be clearly seen that the first hypothesis is upheld. To further test the first hypothesis the following question was asked.

Table 4.18: *How would you grade participation in Better Life Programme activities in your area?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Very Active	340	68
Active	120	24
Not Very Active	37	7.4
Neutral	-	-
Not Active	3	0.6
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

The findings clearly support our first hypothesis. The difference of opinions stated merely showed the degrees of participation of the rural women.

The second hypothesis stipulates that the Better Life Programme has increased productivity among the rural women. This hypothesis is tested by this question.

Table 4.19: *How would you rate the increase in output of your farming since the introduction of more co-operative societies?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Very Fast	412	82.4
Fast	88	17.4
Neutral	-	-
Very Slow	-	-
Slow	-	-
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.19 shows that 82.4% of the respondents in Better Life Programme co-operatives agreed that the increase of their farm products is due to the increase co-operative societies.

The second hypothesis was supported by further asking the following question. To state their reason(s) for ascertaining that the increase in farm product is due to increase in co-operatives. The respondents stated that that Better Life Programme influenced the rural women to use fertilizer, engage in team work and use of improved cassava stems.

To find out how the Better Life Programme has helped to increase food production and to this end the following question was asked.

Table 4.20: *Is the increase in food production in rural areas due to the impact of Better Life Programme.* This will further test the second hypothesis.

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	458	91.6
No	42	8.4
Total	500	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.20 shows that out of 500 respondents 458 believe that an increase in food production in rural area is due to the impact of the Better Life Programme. In summary, the findings show that the Better Life Programme as a rural development strategy has awakened the rural women to work

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harder. This upheld the original hypothesis that “the Better Life Programme stimulated productivity among the rural women”.

The third and final hypothesis stipulates that “that the Better Life Programme has induced government support for the Better Life Programme”.

It is essential to discern government involvement in the Better Life Programme executive thus:

Table 4.21: *How would you grade government support for Better Life Programme?*

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
Unsatisfactory	-	-
Fair	13	26
High	27	54
Very High	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: By the Researcher (1995)

Table 4.21 shows that 13 executives of the respondents rated government support for Better Life Programme as fair, 27 executives rated government support as high while 10 executives of the respondents rated government support for Better Life Programme from as very high. The Better Life Programme in Anambra State started in 1988, is backed up by government support, thereby developing formal organisational framework for the programme. This upheld the third hypothesis that the Better Life Programme has induced

government support. They were asked to specify the level of government's support.

The 13 executive officers stated that the government support is not enough in each of funding. The 27 stated that the government is trying but the project is enormous and need additional funding from the people. Ten of the executives feel that the government is contributing much to the programme.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From its inception (1987) the Better Life Programme received the blessings and the approval of the President of Nigeria. For this reasons, Better Life Programme in a matter of six years 1987 to 1993 has made impressive studies towards the conditions of rural women in Nigeria.

Like most other new ventures, the Better Life Programme started on ad-hoc basis and further developed into "Better Life Fairs" which were organised in Lagos in 1988, 1989 and 1990. In these fairs were representatives of rural women from all states of Nigeria, led by the wives of the State Military Governors who gathered and discussed and exhibited of local made crafts by rural women. Now, they have better life shops in the headquarters where their products could be bought by people.

The findings show that the Anambra State Better Life Programme has pursued the cardinal objectives of improving the life of the rural women through the encouragement of self-help and the award of various incentives through which they could benefit from the Better Life Programme. More women multipurpose co-operative societies have been formed. We discovered that the Better Life Programme engages in agriculture and animal husbandry which was designed deliberately to improve the protein intake of rural families.

The findings show that there were many rural women multipurpose co-operative societies seeking for help from Better Life Programme. These were considered on 'first come, first serve' basis, selection of co-operatives are also based on studies and realistic amount the Better Life Programme could afford. Special attention in the form of loan was given to co-operatives which chose to raise animals like goats, pigs and chickens. Loan was given to co-operatives also which sought to farm extensively as well as those which sought some machines for food processing. We discovered that those women co-operatives that were given loan were not to pay interest on the loan and repayment was on instalment basis spread over a period of time (that is, three years).

However, there are constraints that inhibit rather than enhance achievements in Anambra State Better Life Programme. Inadequate funding to executive the women co-operatives slowed down the pace of progress of the Better Life Programme. The societies got disheartened because their applications for loan are not always successful. And again, needs constantly surpass available resources.

There is need for some raw materials at affordable prices. Some materials that are obtainable have in recent times escalate in prices, with the result that there is an increase of price of the finished goods.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Better Life Programme needs to be applauded. For the first time in Nigeria efforts have been made to mobilise the rural women for their development. According to Ekwegbalu, women have been neglected in national programme, geared towards development; they have been longing for a:

*"Piece of the action" and now they have it. Better Life Programme has so far succeeded in mobilising the rural women. Rural women have made remarkable improvement both socially and politically.<sup>1</sup>*

In retrospect, there is a future for the Better Life Programme for rural women. It has of recent been acknowledged that development of the rural areas of Nigeria is tantamount to the development of the nation as a whole. Therefore, whatever policies that are targeted to the improvement of the rural women will, if well implemented, go a long way to improving the lot of most Nigerian families. Hence, the Better Life Programme is seen as one of the hopes for the overall development of Nigeria.

It is through Better Life Programme that the rural women could hope to enjoy provision of more social amenities – motorable roads, good drinking water, rural health centres, adult education centres, electricity, recreation centres etc. The programme has helped to promote and support fairness, social justice and equity for happiness, peace and prosperity of Nigerian rural women.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Since NEC (National Electoral Commission) has it that “women in the rural areas constitute about half of the rural population of the Nigerian women”.

For the Better Life Programme to be more meaningful to them:

- a. The rural women must be educated, well informed and enlightened about issues concerning them and the nation at large;
- b. It is advisable to embark on the rural women than being involved in so many projects whose impacts are not highly felt;
- c. The Better Life Programme is not being well-funded. The government cannot fund the Better Life Programme alone. Individuals, corporate bodies and establishments should actively be involved in funding the programme.
- d. There is the need to increase or extend the enlightenment campaign for the menfolk especially those in rural areas so that they can change their attitude towards female education and development;
- e. Centres where the Better Life Programme are organised should be located very close to the villages to enable the less privileged rural women have the opportunity of participating, and the women should encouraged to form co-operatives.
- f. Transport facilities should be improved for almost all the Better Life programme chapters.

- g. While promoting the formation of more women co-operative societies, attention should be focussed on the traditional mutual aid societies and organisations as instruments of rural development;

Such organisations include; Isusu Club, Age Grades, Self-Help Associations, Welfare Groups, "Inyom" and "Umuada" meetings (from the Anambra State indigenes), Church professional groups. Their potentials can be more fully realised if they are integrated into the whole spectrum of the Better Life Programme.

- h. The Better Life advisory and implementation committees need to go into dialogue with these groups to discover their needs, their constraints, especially on time, energy and money;

In other words, if the rural woman is to be reached and mobilised:

- i. She must be reached through the channels well known to her. She should therefore, by no means, be approached through the educated rural elites who can relate to her in the language she understands;
- j. People who trained in leadership roles and have interest of promoting the lot of rural women should be involved in the programme.

The thing to do is to carry out a national hunt for the right people to undertake the crucial work particularly at the front line. It is not necessarily meant that the governors and the local government chairmen's wives should be leaders and co-ordinators; if they do not possess the traits of leadership. Those on the lead should be deeply committed and gifted to carry out the programme effectively. Lady Ademola advises women to take their rightful

place in the society. On the present efforts of Nigerian women towards national development as well as her assessment of the role of women since independence she said:

*I have seen such tremendous changes and women have progressed in every sphere of life. In the 50's, it was never imagined that a woman would be a vice chancellor or ambassador<sup>2</sup>*

She goes further to urge the Nigerian women to unite to fashion out a plan of action and in the same spirit of unity, work relentlessly to achieve their set goals. On the part of the rural women, the lot of the rural women should be improved by relieving her of the burden of being water and firewood carrier as well as having access to basic education.

It is believed that women tried. They have been trying in various fields. The society is just not supportive enough. A lot of discrimination exist. Some Nigerians feel that women should not aspire to leadership positions, that the place of women is in the kitchen. This is not saying that women should not discharge their duties as wives and mothers. But it is wrong for a woman to fail to realise her full potential as a human being. It is on this basis that 'Better Life Programme for the Rural Women' was initiated.

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APPENDIX 'A'

QUESTIONNAIRE TO INVESTIGATE AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF THE  
BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME ON WOMEN DEVELOPMENT – A CASE STUDY OF  
ANAMBRA STATE

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a post-graduate student in the Department of Public Administration, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. I am carrying out a research on 'An Evaluation of the Impact of the Better Life Programme on Women Development in Anambra State'.

The purpose of the investigation is to evaluate the impact of the Better Life Programme on women development in Anambra State. For the collection of the relevant data, a questionnaire designed for the purpose is being handed to you for completion.

I shall be very grateful if you could please offer me the required assistance. All your responses will be treated with strict confidence.

I count on your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

FLORA N. IKEDIONWU

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME BENEFICIARIES AND OFFICIALS**

**SET 'A' BENEFICIARIES OF BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME (BLP)**

Tick [✓] against the answer(s) of your choice in the brackets below or fill in the word(s)

1. **Sex:** (a) male [ ] (b) female [ ]

2. **Marital Status:** a) single [ ] (b) married [ ]

(c) divorce [ ] (d) widow [ ]

3. **Educational Qualification:**

(a) primary school [ ]

(b) secondary school [ ]

(c) post secondary school, but not university or college of education [ ]

(d) university, college of technology or equivalent [ ]

4. **Occupation:** Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. **Age:** Optional \_\_\_\_\_

6. Please, do you have any Better Life Programme Project?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

7. If your answer is 'Yes' please, how many Better Life Programme do you have? Please, tick the right bracket(s)

(a) Farming [ ] (b) Weaving [ ]

(c) Pottery [ ] (d) Food processing [ ]

(e) Rural Housing [ ] (f) Water Scheme [ ]

(h) Any other(s), please specify here \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Please, do you have women co-operative society identified with Better Life Programme?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

9. Is it multi-purpose co-operative?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

10. If multi-purpose co-operative, please specify type \_\_\_\_\_

11. What made you take part in the Better Life Programme? (please tick one bracket only)

(a) Because, it is a woman's organisation? [ ]

(b) Because, the wife of the Head of State  
initiated the programme? [ ]

(c) Because, women want to rule Nigeria? [ ]

(d) Because, you want to be given money? [ ]

(e) Because, you want to be rich? [ ]

(f) Any other reason(s) [ ]

12. If any other reason(s), please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. How would you grade your participation in the Better Life Programme activities in your area?

- (a) Outstandingly active [ ]
- (b) Very active [ ]
- (c) Not very active [ ]
- (d) Not active [ ]
- (e) Neutral [ ]

14. Have you taken part in any workshop or seminar in your:

- (a) Area [ ]
- (b) Outside the community [ ]
- (c) State level [ ]
- (d) Federal level [ ]
- (e) International level [ ]

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15. Do you get loan for your project(s)?

- (a) Yes [ ]
- (b) No [ ]

16. How much have you received, if your answer is yes? ₦ \_\_\_\_\_

17. What is the source of the loan?

- (a) Better Life Programme [ ]
- (b) DFRRRI [ ]
- (c) MAMSER [ ]
- (d) World Bank [ ]
- (e) Any other [ ]

18. Do you pay interest on the loan obtained from the Better Life Programme?

- (a) Yes [ ]
- (b) No [ ]

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19. How do you pay back money loaned to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
20. Do you use fertiliser for farming?  
 (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]
21. If yes, what is the source? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
22. How would you rate the increase in output of your farming?  
 (a) Outstandingly high (85 – 100%) [ ]  
 (b) Very High (70 – 84%) [ ]  
 (c) High (50 – 69%) [ ]  
 (d) Low (40 – 49%) [ ]  
 (e) Very Low (Less 40%) [ ]
23. What do you attribute to the result? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
24. Is increase in food production in rural areas due to the activities of the Better Life Programme?  
 (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]
25. Do you think that rural women and their families have benefited from the Better Life Programme?  
 (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]
- 25B. If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

26. How would you rate the development of women in your area since the inception of the Better Life Programme?

- (a) Outstandingly high (85 - 100%) [  ]
- (b) Very High (70 - 84%) [  ]
- (c) High (50 - 69%) [  ]
- (d) Low (40 - 49%) [  ]
- (e) Very Low (Less 40%) [  ]

27. Please explain what you think is the reason(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

28. Do you think the Better Life Programme in your area has creditably done well?

- (a) Yes [  ] (b) No [  ]

29. If your answer is 'Yes' or 'No', what is the reason? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX 'B'

**SET 'B' FOR THE BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME EXECUTIVE OFFICIALS ONLY**

**INSTRUCTION:** Same as in SET 'A'

1. **Name:** (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Qualification:** \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Profession:** \_\_\_\_\_
4. **No. of years in present job:** \_\_\_\_\_
5. **Why was the Better Life Programme for the Rural Women Founded?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. **How does the Better Life Programme work?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. **Who supports the Better Life Programme?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. **What has the Better Life Programme done so far?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. **How much grant did your office received from the government in the following years?**
  - (a) 1987 – 1988 \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) 1989 – 1990 \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) 1991 – 1992 \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) 1993 \_\_\_\_\_
10. **State other sources of your resources** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. How would your grade government's interest in the Better Life Programme?
- (a) Lukewarm [ ]
- (b) High [ ]
- (c) Very High [ ]
- (d) Outstanding [ ]
12. How would you rate the overall services of the Better Life Programme to Beneficiaries?
- (a) Very good [ ]
- (b) Good [ ]
- (c) Average [ ]
- (d) Very poor [ ]
- (f) Other comment(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
13. What services would you like to see introduced for the beneficiaries? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
14. As a Better Life Programme official, how do you rate the Better Life Programme in other chapters all over the country?
- (a) Outstandingly [ ]
- (b) Very Active [ ]
- (c) Active [ ]
- (d) Not Very Active [ ]
- (e) Not Active [ ]

15. How do you rate the coverage of the Better Life Programme in Conferences/workshops and internationally?

(a) Outstanding (85 – 100%) [ ]

(b) Very good (75 – 84%) [ ]

(c) Fairly good (50 – 69%) [ ]

(d) Poor (40 – 49%) [ ]

(e) Very poor (Below 40%) [ ]

(g) Other comment(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Suppose a community or individual needs your help or services, how will they get in touch with you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Who will be responsible for the fund needed by the community or individual?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. Do you think that the living standard of the Rural Women has improved economically, socially and politically?

(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

19. Whatever is your response, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. What do you think is the attitude of the general public to the activities of Better Life Programme in Anambra State? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

21. How would you rate the general development of women since the inception of the Better Life Programme? \_\_\_\_\_

---

- |     |             |             |     |
|-----|-------------|-------------|-----|
| (a) | Outstanding | (85 - 100%) | [ ] |
| (b) | Very High   | (75 - 84%)  | [ ] |
| (c) | High        | (50 - 69%)  | [ ] |
| (d) | Low         | (40 - 49%)  | [ ] |
| (e) | Very Low    | (Less 40%)  | [ ] |

## APPENDIX 'C'

### ORAL INTERVIEW – GUIDE QUESTIONS

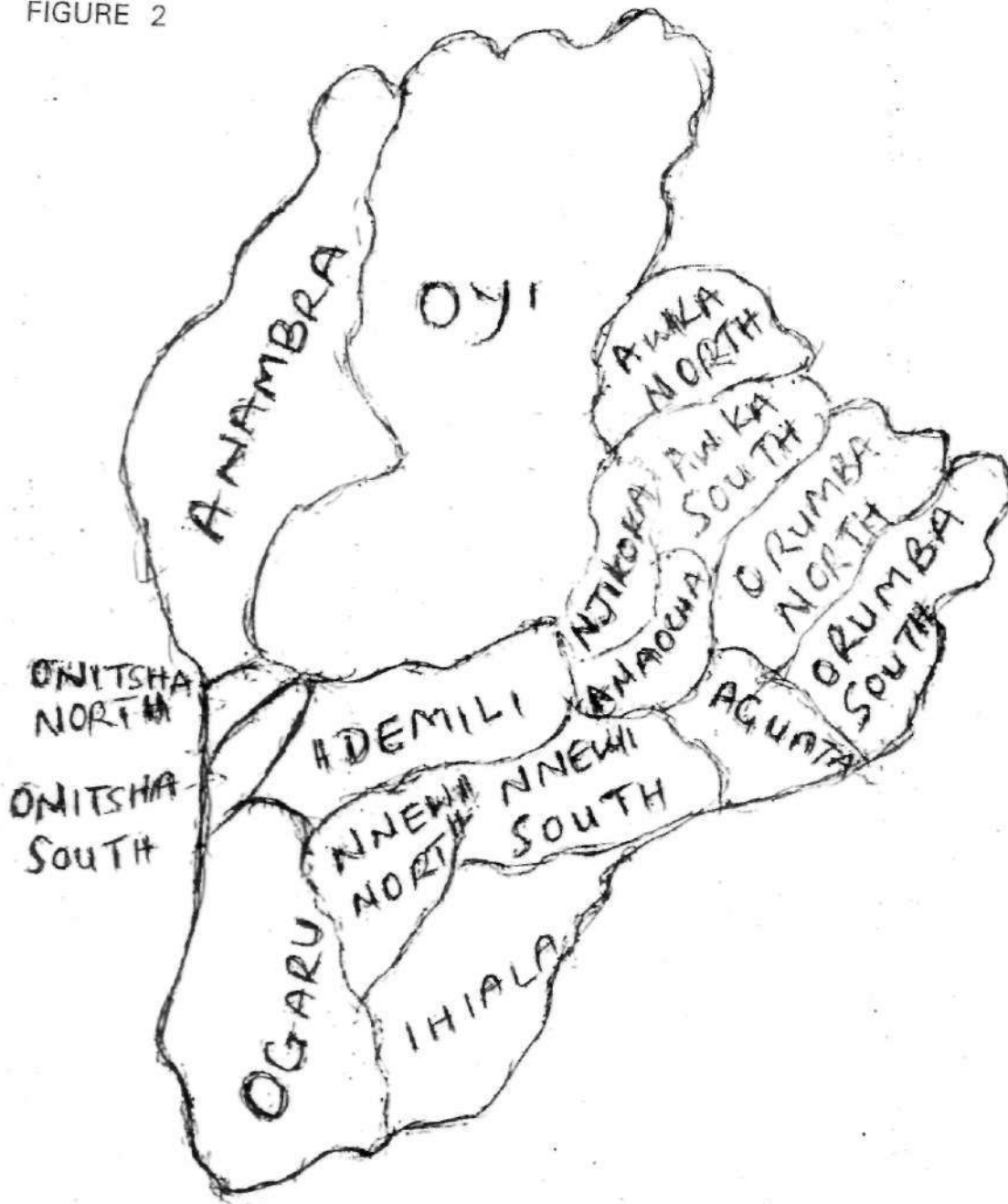
1. Why did you feel reluctant to state the amount of loan collected from BLP?
2. How have you benefited from the Better Life Programme?
3. Why could you not state how much grant your office have received from the government from 1987 to 1993?
4. What is the general attitude of the public towards the activities of the Better Life Programme in Anambra State.

These oral questions were also used for non-beneficiaries, both men and women.

APPENDIX 'D'

THE MAP OF ANAMBRA STATE SHOWING THE SIXTEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AREAS

FIGURE 2



APPENDIX 'E'

SOME LIST OF BETTER LIFE ASSISTED CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES

S/N	NAME OF CO-OPERATIVE	LOAN (N)	GRANT (N)	AMOUNT REFUNDED (N)	AMOUNT OUT-STANDING (N)
1	Nkpologwu Women Co-operative Society - Palm Kernel Cracker	10,000	7,800.00	-	10,000
2	Igboukwu Women FMCS Ltd.	-	30,741.46	-	-
3	Obioma Neni Women Co-operative Society	55,000	1,000.00	-	55,000
4	Ukpo Ananuife Umuoji Women MCS Ltd.	41,575	-	-	41,575
5	Oba Women MCS Ltd.	20,000	-	-	20,000
6.	Obosi, Oganiru Women Co-operative Society Ltd.	2,000	-	-	2,000
7	Mrs. Beatrice Okoli	4,000	-	1,000	3,000

Source: Project File, Anambra State Better Life Programme Report (1989)