

World Bank Project and Poverty Alleviation in Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The quest for eradication of poverty in many nations of the world has led to numerous poverty alleviation programs organized by various stakeholders (government, NGO, private organisation and the likes) among which includes the rural access and mobility project (RAMP) in Nigeria. The study aims at assessing the effect of rural access and mobility project (RAMP) on poverty alleviation with a view to assess the level of awareness of RAMP in Osun State, Nigeria. The study employed survey research design with a sample size of 371 among the physically challenged, pregnant and nursing mothers, senior/aged citizens, market women, transporters, farmers and households who were selected randomly from 9 local government. The data collected were analysed using descriptive Statistics such as percentages, mean score and standard deviation. distribution. The result of the study shows that all respondents were not on the same level of awareness of rural access and mobility project. Many of the respondents were moderately aware of poverty alleviation by government as the analysis showed a mean of 2.87 on a 5-point Likert scale. There was similar showing in terms of awareness of World Bank assistance at alleviating poverty. The lowest of the mean (2.56) was on awareness of rural access and mobility project. Feedback from the field showed that many did not know the full meaning of the acronym (RAMP) but were moderately aware that it was a World Bank assisted project (2.73). moderately aware that RAMP met expectation (2.73). Respondents had high level of awareness on projects being carried out by government in their locality (3.48) roads and bridges which were actually RAMP based and they did affirm that the roads and bridges were solution to mobility especially during raining season (3.75). The study recommends that government should devise a plan to monitor the coordination and effective implementation of RAMP in Osun State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Assessment, Rural Access and Mobility Project, Poverty Alleviation, Awareness

1. Introduction

The world today is faced with enormous and serious challenges ranging from political unrest, insecurity, kidnapping, and most prominent is terrorism. As challenging as these conditions are, one major phenomenon that has contributed to the present state of the world is poverty (Goodhand, 2001; McKnight, 2019). Scholars from different fields of study, particularly those who share socialist ideology have argued that due to creation of a class society, inequality has prevailed thereby suggesting poverty as a political creation for class control by the elites who create private properties from the common wealth of the people which further promote conflict in the society rather than co-operation (Harrison & Boyd, 2021). Consequently, this class of scholars share the perspective that poverty can be best addressed when private accumulation of wealth is abolished by the elites and the promotion of public ownership is encouraged to thrive.

According to Foundation for International Community Assistance Inc. (FINCA International 2021), over 1 billion people in the world live on or less than \$2.50 (₦1,025) per day. More so, about 280 million in developing or underdeveloped countries live in abject

or extreme poverty with a spending of less than \$1.25 (₦512.50) per day. It further stressed that in developing nations such as Nigeria, India, Indonesia and so on. 60- 60-70 per cent of the downtrodden incomes are spent on food whereas developed nations such as the United States of America, United Kingdom spend less than 10 per cent on food (Ritchie & Roser, 2023). Over 800 million people in the world today live without enough food thereby resulting in over 3 million child mortality across the globe yearly (FAO, 2023).

Furthermore, about 1 billion of the world population live without electricity (IEA, 2018), 40 million children live without a house to live in, and more than 75% of world's poor people live in rural communities and are sustaining on agriculture for their livelihood. Globally, extreme poverty is overwhelmingly rural; about 79% of poor people live in rural areas (World Bank, 2018). Global poverty in rural areas (17.2%) is more than thrice that of urban center (5.3%) (World Bank, 2018). Most rural dwellers are into farming, they are represented within the numbers of those living and working in estimated 500 million family farms in the world which tend to be relatively small (FAO, 2014). Rural farming is mainly rain-fed, predominantly small scale and more of shifting cultivation which often result in farms being farther from village or community primary location (Mellor, 2000). To minimise risk with respect to climate uncertainty, farmers adopt crop and land location diversification, the resulting effect is increased hardship and daily long distances trekking/monitoring to get to the farm (Udeuhele & Eze, 2022).

Many rural areas in Africa suffer from poor access to market, school, health centers and high cost of mobility (Heyen-Perschon, 2001). Inadequate rural roads make it difficult for farmers to easily access farm inputs, produce more, transport excess during and after harvest. Traffic on most rural roads consist primarily of pedestrian often carrying head loads (Lindley, 2015; DFID, 2018). The poor state of rural access infrastructure is a crucial impediment to the growth of both rural and the nation at large. For example, only 27% of Nigerian rural population had access to all-weather roads in 2011 (Beyene *et al.*, 2020) compared to 60% in India and 61% in Pakistan (Giz, 2013). Research further confirmed that most rural areas are still without access and poor connectivity to major road network (JRF, 2016; Beyene *et al.*, 2020).

The Rural Access and Mobility Project (RAMP) is a World Bank/French Development Agency's assisted project aimed at targeting these identified challenges. It is carried out in collaboration with Nigeria Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The objectives of the project are to improve road access for rural communities and improve management of state road network in a sustainable way. Two major components to the project: first is upgrading, rehabilitation and maintenance of transport infrastructure while the second component is the institutional strengthening, reforms and capacity building component. The first component has two sub-components: Improvement and maintenance of roads through long term output and performance-based contracting and Construction and rehabilitation of some selected river crossings across the state. On the other hand, the second component focuses on supporting project implementation by providing necessary goods, materials and equipment and by ensuring the existence of the appropriate project management capacity and skills at all levels. This study therefore assessed the level of awareness of the local dwellers on the world bank's rural accessibility and mobility project (RAMP) taking Osun State, Nigeria as base.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Rural Access

The phrase rural access refers to means or opportunity to enter a country side;

geographical area outside town or cities (Oxford English Dictionary, 2010). In many developing countries especially in Africa the larger proportion of the populace live in rural areas (Ashagidigbi *et al.*, 2019). Rural areas are major sources of capital formation for the country, and a principal market for domestic manufacturers (Ashagidigbi *et al.*, 2019). They engaged in primary activities that form the foundation for economic development (Olayiwola & Adeleye, 2005). Despite this role, rural areas have been unattractive to live due to the dearth of infrastructures, which are key to agricultural and economic development (Ashagidigbi *et al.*, 2019). Many are not connected to local, regional or global markets. Such connectivity is needed to reduce poverty and promote inclusive economic growth.

Rural Access and Mobility is the ability to move or be moved freely to and from countryside (Oxford English Dictionary, 2010). The free movement of people and goods, ideas, values and culture across communities especially from countryside can be described as rural access and mobility (Montangero *et al.*, 2022). In a nutshell, it has to do with transportation and connectivity of the countryside within itself and urban centres. Transport is a subset of mobility and is germane in the development of rural areas (Ogunsanya, 2016). Transportation constitutes the main avenue through which different parts of the society are joined together (Aderamo & Magaji, 2011).

Ogunsanya (2015) observed three types of routes in the rural area; among which includes bush paths, unsurfaced and surfaced rural roads. Bush path is the most common and least developed route. It links villages, farmsteads, and are usually narrow, winding and often overgrown with weed especially during rainy seasons many of the motorable roads in Nigerian rural areas are narrow width, unpaved surfaces and carry low quality bridge (Akpan, 2022). They are either clad with potholes or characterized by depressions and sagging. They are unpassable during rainy season as vehicles regularly get stuck in mud or when the improvised bridges of tree trunks are swept off by flood (Udeuhele *et al.*, 2022).

Gains from agriculture, forestry and off-farm income-generating activities cannot be achieved or sustained in the absence of basic and appropriate rural infrastructure. This ranges from roads, communication, electricity and energy, education, health and sanitation facilities to access to safe drinking water. Government knows the importance of quality infrastructure for agricultural and rural development but had often allocated the preponderant share of their transport budgets to prestige projects, while skimping on secondary and farm-to-market roads in agricultural areas and their maintenance, both of which generally have much more favourable cost-benefit ratios (Ashagidigbi, 2011, 2019).

2.1.2 Rural Access and Mobility Project (RAMP)

The Rural Access and Mobility Project (RAMP) is a World Bank/French Development Agency's assisted project in support of the national Rural Travel and Transport Policy (RTTP), national agricultural transformation agenda of the federal government as well as the quest for rural development agenda of States (Adenle, 2018). The project kicked off in 2005, with Kaduna and Cross River States as pilot schemes. It was intended to improve transport conditions in rural areas and to bring about sustained access to the rural population. The projects were successfully completed in 2009. The success of the project encouraged the partnership to be extended to four more states of the nation which were – Adamawa, Enugu, Osun and Niger States. The second phase tagged RAMP-2 took off on 22nd November, 2013 and officially closed on 31st October, 2020.

Just like RAMP-1, the Project's Development Objective (PDO) was to improve transport conditions and take sustained access to the rural population, through rehabilitation and maintenance of key rural transport infrastructure in a sustainable manner in selected Nigerian states. The project which had three primary components. The components included:

Rehabilitation of Rural and State Roads - This component had completed a total of 295km out of 307.96km rural roads as well as additional 61km of pilot road. Osun RAMP had also completed a total number of 26 river crossings including four bridges.

Roads Maintenance and Local Development – This component financed road maintenance activities on rehabilitated roads and support state mechanisms for maintenance funding. The model used in the maintenance mechanism involves community-based approach. A total number of 213.54km of roads had undergone maintenance in the year 2018/19 under the first tranche of roads and other pilot roads.

Capacity Building, Project Management and strengthening of state and Federal Road Sector Institutional, Policy and Regulatory framework: This component helped in addressing institutional capacity gaps at the sub-national level with regards to rural roads assets management as well as at developing and implementing sound rural transport policies. About 300 residents were recruited to serve as Road Maintenance group for the 275.14km. The project was coordinated by the State Project Implementation Unit (SPIU).

About one billion rural people of which 450 million are Africans risk being left behind because they reside in communities where jobs, education, health care and other essential services required to end poverty cycle are out of reach (GSTC, 2021). Evidence abounds that closing the transport access gap can significantly impact poverty reduction (GSTC, 2021)

2.1.3 Poverty Alleviation

The word poverty comes from the French word “poverté” which means poor, it is a state of lack or deprivation wherein an individual or group of individuals are lacking in some basic necessities of life such as food, water, shelter or decent housing (Kumar & Shukla, 2022). This means the income level from employment is so low that basic human needs cannot be met. A person (or household) is considered poor if the person’s (or household’s) income cannot acquire the basket of goods and services used to define a threshold for poverty (Fuseini et al., 2022).

The monetary value of the basket is the poverty line and the population of people and households whose incomes are below this line, is then derived through a head count. While this approach is the most currently used in household and poverty surveys, it is important to understand that its focus is exclusively on income and expenditure as surrogates for measuring access to goods and services (Fuseini et al., 2022). Based on income/expenditure measures of poverty, the prevalence of poverty is highest in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The poverty line determines the threshold of income or expenditure, separating poor and non-poor people (World Bank, 2022). Concerns about its limitations as a tool for assessing people’s level of deprivation has led to definitions that consider other nonmonetary aspects such as human rights values enshrined in the UN Human Rights Charter, The UN Human Development Programme’s Index has integrated more dimensions to the income/expenditure measures, notably life expectancy, educational attainment and a measure of income (GNI Index). (Klugman *et al.*, 2011).

Most countries use multiple poverty lines to capture monetary versus nonmonetary measures of poverty, and how people’s and household’s incomes are distributed around the poverty line, hence the determination of relative poverty and absolute poverty. World Bank poverty lines are based on official national poverty lines or calculated by World Bank staff based on national income and expenditure surveys. Relative poverty compares the person or household’s income (expenditure) to the income distribution of the country of residence; it is a first indicator of inequality. As a context specific measure, it refers to the minimum amount of income that a person needs to enjoy what is considered an average living standard in the country of reference (Jolliffe *et al.*, 2019).

Relative poverty therefore varies from one country to another and from one region to another. When a person or household is severely deprived of the basic needs considered a strict minimum to enjoy a basic standard of living, they are considered to be in absolute poverty. Absolute poverty is measured with reference to the cost of a basket of minimum basic goods and services, for instance food. Populations or households that live below the food poverty line are considered to be in absolute and extreme poverty (also severe poverty and sometimes chronic poverty (Fuseini et al., 2022). Multidimensional Poverty Measure is an index that represents the percentage of households in a country deprived along three dimensions of well-being - monetary, education and basic infrastructure services (World Bank, 2022). It depicts the additional role of nonmonetary dimensions to poverty and their importance to general well-being (World Bank, 2022). The incorporation of various dimension in Multidimensional Poverty Measure (MPM) presents the extent to which these deprivations arise and intersect.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Progressive Social Theory

Nineteenth century social intellectuals like Marx and Durkhiem are the proponents of this theory (Bradshaw, 2007). The theory does not view individuals as the source of poverty but economic, political and social distortions as well as discrimination, which limit opportunities and resources to create wealth and overcome poverty. The theorists waged a full attack on the individual theory of poverty by exploring how social and economic systems overrode and created individual poverty situations. They analyse how the economic system of capitalism created a reserve army of the unemployed as a deliberate strategy to keep wages low (Bradshaw, 2005). They argued that people may work hard and have acceptable attitudes but still be in the poverty trap because of dysfunctional social and economic systems. The theory ascribes poverty to economic, social and political structures that make the poor fall behind regardless of how committed they may be. Another category of system flaws associated with poverty relates to groups of people being discriminated against based on personal attributes such as race, gender, disability and religion, which limit their opportunities in spite of their personal capabilities.

2.3 Empirical Review

Anega and Alemu (2023) conducted a study to investigate the direct influence of rural roads on household consumption in Ethiopia. Econometric and descriptive statistics were used to attain the specified objective. The study specifically investigated the influence of rural road conditions on individuals' well-being via the use of quantile regression, fixed-effect models, and random-effect models. Econometric studies indicated that families' average real consumption per capital might increase by up to 10% if rural roads are improved and/or all-weather roads are provided. The method of transportation was one factor that positively impacted actual consumption per capital. The findings indicated that families that mostly relied on walking as their primary means of transportation may see a substantial increase in per capital consumption, perhaps reaching up to 7%. However, the fixed quantile analysis revealed that only in the 0.8th and 0.9th percentiles, rural road connectivity had a substantial and positive impact on per capital consumption. This suggested that those living in poverty do not get a disproportionately large portion of the benefits resulting from enhanced road accessibility.

Khanani et. al. (2020) conducted a study in the peri-urban areas of Kisumu (Kenya) and Accra (Ghana) examined the impact of road infrastructure enhancements on socio-spatial landscapes, economic progress, and social formations. The major focus of their concern was the repercussions at the community level. The study used a case study methodology to investigate the correlation between socio-spatial factors and economic

progress, using spatial, quantitative, and qualitative techniques. Statistically, Kisumu and Accra have had an increase in residential building due to enhancements in their road infrastructure. This phenomenon may be attributed to the increased inclination of real estate developers towards constructing residential areas in the peri-urban regions next to major roads. Consequently, this has resulted in a significant rise in both house rental prices and land expenses. Furthermore, there was an enhancement in the availability of amenities and provisions. The enhancements made to the transportation networks also bolstered job prospects in both areas. However, the implementation of road infrastructure projects resulted in gentrification, which displaced low-income citizens to the outskirts of both cities. This led to significant alterations in the social structure and the level of integration to some extent. The impoverished individuals saw the full impact of the road construction projects' inequitable advantage towards affluent landowners.

Hammed et. al. (2019) studied Rural Road Infrastructure and Nigerian Agriculture Value Chain Conundrum: Empirical evidence from RAMP intervention in Osun State Nigeria. The duo examined the extent to which rural road intervention through Rural Access and Mobility Project (RAMP) in Osun State has been able to reduce key constraints to efficient agriculture value chain. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect primary data from 160 selected households in the study area. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistical technique and quasi experimental techniques of Double Difference and Propensity Score Matching. The results of the analysis revealed that RAMP increased the favourability rating of the road as being good by 90.37 percentage points, reduces the chance of experiencing road closure due to weather condition by 53 percentage points. It further revealed a decrease in the travel time from the villages to the nearest market by 33.021 minutes on average and reduction in the cost of transporting a truck with two axles of agriculture produce by 370.023 Naira. The project also increased agricultural production as the average land cultivated for maize and cassava increased by 2.32 acres and 1.998 acres respectively. Consequently, the rural road infrastructure provided through RAMP reduced constraints to efficient agriculture value chain. Based on this, concerned stakeholders were advised to prioritize rural road rehabilitation as one of the strategies towards attaining efficient agriculture value chain in Nigeria.

3. Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design and was carried out in Osun State Nigeria with an area of approximately 14, 875 square kilometers. It is bounded by Ogun, Kwara, Oyo, Ondo and Ekiti State in South, North, West and east respectively. The study was limited among physically challenged, pregnant and nursing mothers, senior/aged citizens, market women, transporters, farmers and households in Osun State, South West Nigeria. The method used in this study is the survey type which involves the selection and studying the sample size of 371 selected randomly from 9 local government. The sampling techniques adopted for the study was multi stage sampling techniques. Questionnaire was used as research instrument among the respondents. The data was analysed using the percentage score, frequency table and mean ranking and standard deviation.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Table 1 shows the analysis of the level of awareness of rural access and mobility project (RAMP) in Osun State, Nigeria. The mean values of the respondents vary between 2.56 and 3.75 on the 5 point Likert scale. Thus, all respondent were not on the same level of awareness of rural access and mobility project. Many of the respondents were moderately aware of poverty alleviation by government as it showed mean of 2.87. There was similar

showing in terms of awareness of World Bank assistance at alleviating poverty. As shown by table 1, the lowest of the mean (2.56) was on awareness of rural access and mobility project. Feedback from the field showed that many did not know the full meaning of the acronym (RAMP) but were moderately aware that it was a World Bank assisted project (2.73) moderately aware that RAMP met expectation (2.73). Respondents had high level of awareness on projects being carried out by government in their locality (3.48) roads and bridges which were actually RAMP based and they did affirm that the roads and bridges were solution to mobility especially during raining season (3.75).

This is in line with the study of Hammed *et al* (2019) that researched on Rural Road Infrastructure and Nigerian Agriculture Value Chain Conundrum empirical evidence from RAMP intervention in Osun State, Nigeria. From their research, they saw that RAMP increased the favorability of the road as being good by 90.37 percent and reduced chances of road closure due to weather condition by 53 percent. Nnaukwu and Emenike (2022) in their study of influence of access to transport on socio-economic discovered that access to road transport is a vital tool in achieving socio-economic and rural transformation goals.

Table 1: Level of Awareness of Rural Access and Mobility Project (RAMP)

| Statement | NA 1 | SA 2 | SOA 3 | MA 4 | EA 5 | Mean | Std. | Remarks |
|---|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|------|-------|--------------------|
| Aware that government alleviates poverty? | 72 | 87 | 80 | 80 | 52 | 2.87 | 1.333 | Moderate awareness |
| | 0.19 | 0.47 | 0.65 | 0.86 | 0.70 | | | |
| Aware that World Bank Assists at alleviating poverty? | 55 | 113 | 99 | 57 | 43 | 2.75 | 1.238 | Moderate awareness |
| | 0.15 | 0.61 | 0.80 | 0.61 | 0.58 | | | |
| Aware of Rural Access and Mobility Project (RAMP)? | 106 | 104 | 65 | 41 | 55 | 2.56 | 1.466 | Low awareness |
| | 0.29 | 0.56 | 0.53 | 0.44 | 0.74 | | | |
| Aware of any government projects? | 30 | 58 | 80 | 105 | 98 | 3.48 | 1.603 | High awareness |
| | 0.08 | 0.31 | 0.64 | 1.13 | 1.32 | | | |
| I have been aware of RAMP for more than 5years | 60 | 100 | 68 | 83 | 60 | 2.95 | 1.374 | Moderate awareness |
| | 0.16 | 0.54 | 0.55 | 0.89 | 0.81 | | | |
| Aware that RAMP has to do with good roads | 70 | 90 | 67 | 73 | 71 | 2.97 | 1.392 | Moderate awareness |
| | 0.19 | 0.49 | 0.54 | 0.79 | 0.96 | | | |
| Aware that roads & bridges done by RAMP are solution to mobility during raining season? | 25 | 35 | 72 | 116 | 123 | 3.75 | 1.415 | High awareness |
| | 0.07 | 0.19 | 0.58 | 1.25 | 1.66 | | | |
| Aware that RAMP is a World Bank assisted project? | 90 | 85 | 78 | 70 | 48 | 2.73 | 1.281 | Moderate awareness |
| | 0.24 | 0.46 | 0.63 | 0.75 | 0.65 | | | |
| Aware that service delivery of RAMP is up to the citizens' expectation | 85 | 83 | 75 | 74 | 54 | 2.82 | 1.418 | Moderate awareness |
| | 0.23 | 0.45 | 0.61 | 0.80 | 0.73 | | | |
| Aware that RAMP is a reliable World Bank assisted project? | 85 | 83 | 84 | 76 | 43 | 2.76 | 1.282 | Moderate awareness |
| | 0.23 | 0.45 | 0.68 | 0.82 | 0.58 | | | |
| Grand Mean | | | | | | 2.96 | 1.38 | Moderate awareness |

NA represents Not at all aware, SA indicates slightly aware, SOA represents somewhat aware, MA represents moderately aware and EA represents extremely aware.

Source: Researchers' Computation (2023).

5. Conclusion And Recommendations

The study has assessed world bank project and poverty alleviation program in Osun State Nigeria. After successful data collection for this study, in which survey research design was adopted and the data was analysed, the study established that that most of the respondents were aware and could ascertain the current situations of Rural Access and Mobility Project (RAMP) in Osun State, Nigeria because it aids their mobility through good roads, bridges, among others in order to promote agriculture as their major sustainability. The study recommends that government should devise a plan to monitor the coordination and effective implementation of RAMP in Osun State, Nigeria. This will promote the objectives of the RAMP and enhance timely intervention to transform the economies and the livelihoods of the benefitting economies in Osun State, Nigeria.

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