PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF EMPLOYMENT IN POVERTY REDUCTION IN ENUGU STATE: A PLANNER’S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The incidence of poverty in Nigeria which was initially peculiar and prevalent in the rural areas has also become an overriding urban problem in recent times, making poverty reduction the core challenge for sustainable development in Nigeria in the twenty-first century. In Enugu State, unemployment has been on the increase as a result of the increasing turnout of graduates annually without commensurate employment opportunities. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) which is the only surviving poverty alleviation programme was specifically set to generate employment by training the unskilled, and linking the unemployed to available opportunities and consequently reduce poverty among school leavers and graduates alike in all states of the federation. It is expected that NDE beneficiaries are absorbed in the informal sector which is an essential part of urban development in recent times. The goal of the study therefore is to determine the performance of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in poverty reduction in Enugu State with a view to appreciating the level of poverty alleviation in the state. To achieve this goal, the set objectives were pursued: to review the achievement of NDE in employment generation; to determine the relationship between the number of NDE beneficiaries and the factors that influenced the achievement of NDE, to determine the difference between the NDE staff's and the beneficiaries‘ rating on the achievements of NDE and to make recommendations based on the findings.

Data for the study were collected through secondary and primary sources. Of the 515 copies of the questionnaire administered to the beneficiaries in the three senatorial zones that make up Enugu State, 413 copies were correctly filled and returned, representing 80.2% distribution success rate. Multi-staged random sampling was employed in the selection of the sample size. Three research hypotheses were formulated for the study: that there is no significant relationship between the number of unemployed people and the number of NDE beneficiaries; that there is no significant relationship between the number of NDE beneficiaries and the input factors (number of serviceable vehicles, number of personnel, level of funding, number of collaborative organisations and changes in administration) of NDE and that there is no significant difference between the staff rating and the beneficiaries’ rating of NDE performance all in Enugu State from 1996 to 2005. Simple Linear Regression analysis, Multiple Linear Regression Analysis and the Chi-square ($\chi^2$) were used to test the hypothesis.

The result of the first hypothesis reveals that there is no significant relationship between the number of unemployed people and the number of NDE beneficiaries in Enugu State ($r^2=.100$; adjusted $R^2=.013$, Standard Error = 1225.441, F-cal=.889, F-sig=.373 at $P < 0.05$ significant level). The result also shows that only 2.6% of the unemployed in Enugu were empowered from 1996 to 2005 through employment generation and training by NDE. The result of the second hypothesis shows that there is a significant relationship between the number of NDE beneficiaries and the input factors ($r^2=.832$; Adjusted $R^2=.749$; Standard Error = 610.639; F-cal = 9.932; F-sig=.010; at $P< 0.01$ significant level). The result of the third hypothesis suggested that there is no difference between the rating of NDE beneficiaries and that of NDE staff as calculated $X^2$ value which is 2.363 at the 0.05 significant level was less than the critical $X^2$ value of 161.00. The null hypothesis was accepted. The research also shows that over 80% of the beneficiaries of NDE end up being employed in the informal sector and recommends that urban planners should ensure due consideration of this growing sector to avert land use conversions and other negative effects on the spatial environment.