

**POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL BACKWARDNESS IN  
IYANFOWOROGI COMMUNITY, ILE-IFE, OSUN STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

The efficacy of policy implementation as a tool for sustainable development in rural areas cannot be over emphasised considering the fact that policies are designed or initiated to tackle certain problems affecting the society. No matter how beautiful a policy name is, it can only enhance sustainable development if it is fully implemented to meet target beneficiaries, anything short of this, will certainly amount to backwardness (political, economic and social). Developed countries that have achieved some level of sustainable development pay more attention to prompt implementation of public policies. Prompt implementation of public policies has the potential of reviving backward economic, social and political system. But public policies in developing countries like Nigeria have not lived up to expectation in terms of facilitating sustainable development specifically in the rural areas because of implementation gap. The paper, therefore, seeks to examine causes of poor implementation of public policy, its implications for sustainable development and rural backwardness. The paper adopts mixed method approach consisting of quantitative and qualitative research designs. The instruments used were 90 questionnaire and 5 key informants' interview. The results showed that delay and non-implementation of government policies in Iyanfoworogi are responsible for retarded sustainable development and rural backwardness in the area. Again, the results showed that corruption and misplaced priority have largely contributed to gap in policies implementation in Iyanfoworogi. And paper concludes that policy implementation has not significantly led to sustainable development as there are still signs of rural backwardness in Iyanfoworogi.

**Keywords:** Implementation, Public Policy, Poverty Alleviation, Rural Backwardness, Sustainable Development.

## INTRODUCTION

Academic research and intellectual resources in respect of reversing rural backwardness through prompt and efficient implementation of public policies, is provoked mainly by cases of incessant policy failures caused by lack of political will and corruption among policy stakeholders and political elites. Policy implementation gaps (failures) has thus provoked studies (Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2013; Tollens, 2002; Paki & Ebienfa, 2011) aimed at reversing such gaps given the immense role that can be played in rural transformation and sustainable development by public policy. In Nigeria, policies have been framed and applied in a bid to correct glaring cases of rural backwardness and enhance sustainable development at the grassroots. Of all government policies formulated and enforced to address problems of rural backwardness, transform it and achieved sustainable development the policy of National programme for eradication of poverty (NAPEP) and Poverty alleviation programme (PAP) requires re-assessment to identify if any, gap between its expected end and achievements so far in Iyanfoworogi community, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

Irrespective of the nature and extent of defects that may have characterize the two policies in theory and practice in Nigeria, they have come to represent an important cog in wheel of the country's politics, especially policies formulation and implementation. Not unpredictably these policies have been subjected to series of critical assessment and analyses but nonetheless, not much academic works have been deployed in examining policy implementation as a vehicle to reversing rural backwardness in the country. The objective of this article is to analyse in an empirical manner how prompt policy implementation will reverse rural backwardness in Nigeria. The paper is interested in knowing whether rural backwardness can be reversed, eradicated or transform in Iyanfoworogi, via prompt, effective and efficient implementation of policies. The core issues of this paper are discussed under several headings. The literature review and theoretical framework, policy failure, poverty and rural backwardness are discussed in the next section. In the subsequent sections, the methodology adopted in the paper, findings of the paper and policy measures of reversing rural backwardness through 'efficient policy implementation' were discussed and lastly conclusion.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to understand the main focus of this paper, it is of great value to clarify some concepts.

### 1. The Concept of Public policy

Different definitions of public policy abound, and it may simply be futile trying to discover which is correct or proper. Public policy spells out the ways and means by which government intends to address a particular issue. One of the widely quoted, but simple definitions of public policy is that given by Dye where he defines public policy as "what government chooses to do or not to do." He went further to explain that:

*Governments do many things. They regulate conflicts within society, they organize society to carry on conflicts with other societies, and they distribute a great variety of symbolic rewards and material services to members of the society and extracts money from the society, most at times in the form of taxes. Thus policies may regulate behaviour, organize bureaucracies, distribute benefits, and extract taxes or all of these things at once Dye (cited in Paki and Ebienfa,2011)*

One crucial point to note from the above conceptualization is the concepts of “non- decisions”. The reason is that a decision by government not to implement a policy, or make changes is in itself a policy decision because it tends to favour the perpetuation of the status quo. Secondly, there may be a divergence between what governments decide to do and what they actually do. Public policy is a future oriented inquiry into the optimum means of achieving a given governmental objective. Thus, it is a governmental programme found in a nation’s laws or in public statements by a functionary of government.

Thus, there is need to formulate appropriate public policy that can address the issue of poverty in rural-Nigeria. To this end, public policy can be defined as the formulation of what is to be done, or government’s course of action to address certain problematic issue affecting the people in the society. Successive Nigerian Governments have at one time or the other formulate and implement policy aimed at tackling the poverty menace in the country, but observations have shown that these policies more often than not, fails, especially in the rural areas. In most African countries, this is an activity that is essentially monopolised by the civil service. The civil service monopolises policy initiation activities because of the available resources at its disposal, the expertise it can mobilise, the necessary information and data which it can draw upon for the articulation of the policy and unawareness of societal needs and demands through various agencies (Ugoh & Ukpere, 2009).

## **2. The Concept of Policy Implementation**

Policy implementation is the act and process of converting a policy into reality or simply enforcing the policy. That is, it is the process of translating policy mandates into actions, and policy goals into reality. Policy implementation has been given different interpretations by different scholars. According to Adamolekun (1983), policy implementation refers to the activities that are carried out in the light of established policies. It refers to the process of converting financial, material, technical and human inputs into outputs – goods and services (Egonmwan, 1991). In the same vein, Edwards (1980) defines it, as a stage of policy making between the establishment of a policy (such as the passage of a legislative act, the issuing of an executive order, or the promulgation of a regulatory rule) and the consequences of the policy for the people whom it affects. It also involves a wide variety of actions such as issuing and enforcing directives, disbursing funds, making loans, assigning and hiring personnel and so on.

Mbieli (2006) explains that, in the execution of public policy, the combination of human, material, machine and money are highly necessary. He argues further that the agencies involved in the implementation exercise are classified into two broad categories namely: the government and the non-governmental agencies. These agencies are responsible for providing the required goods and services and transforming the rural area.

It is also interesting to note that Maduabum (2006) contends that policy implementation is critical to the success of any policy since it constitutes the epicentre of the policy process. It involves the identification of policy plans, programme, projects and activities; a clear definition of the distinct roles of implementation organizations or agencies; details of strategies and necessary linkages and coordinating mechanisms; as well as resources (human, financial, material,

technology, information acquisition and utilization). However, looking at policy implementation from standardization angle, Randel adds that:

*Performance standards must be set along with policy targets, guidelines, plans and time frame in order to avoid implementation gap. He describes implementation gap as the difference between well-stated and articulated policy objectives or expected outcomes and the actual outcome which is a consequence of inefficient or poor policy implementation (Randel, 2010)*

### **3. Rural Transformation**

Though the concept of rural transformation has been variously defined by scholars and policy makers to mean quite a number of things, this paper adopts a more comprehensive one, inter alia: Rural transformation is a multi-dimensional approach by which the productivity, income and quality of life in terms of health, nutrition, education, and other characteristics of satisfactory life of rural people can be improved or transformed (Ojonemi & Ogwu, 2013).

A host of multi-sectoral activities, including the improvement of agriculture, the promotion of rural justice, the creation of requisite infrastructure and social overheads, as well as the establishment of appropriate decentralized structures in order to allow mass participation (Madu and Umebali, 1993). Rural transformation according to Coker (1990) is perceived as a design to improve the economic and social conditions of rural inhabitants, which must involve strategies for extending the benefits of the development of the rural majority.

Looking critically at these definitions, the objectives of rural transformation efforts include the elimination of poverty, creation of rural employment opportunities, elimination of major inequalities, and ensuring adequate participation of the rural populace in the transformation process. A number of strategies have been adopted for this process and these include agricultural development, infrastructural development, industrialization, and integrated rural development and community development in Nigeria Idachaba (quoted in Ndangara, 2005).

In another development, rural transformation has been mono-cultural field to agriculture which is the occupation of the rural settlers thereby relegating other sectors of development needs of the rural people to the background. In the words of Ndangara, (cited in Ojonemi & Ogwu 2013), the process of rural transformation is therefore synonymous with agricultural development; but agriculture cannot develop unless other rural transformation amenities are present. It is on this note that Abah (quoted in Ojonemi & Ogwu, 2013), succinctly put it that: “To many people, rural development simply means agricultural development; to some it is primarily concerned with welfare”. These views are myopic because rural transformation should affect all aspect of the economics, social and political lives of the people who inhabit the rural areas and it should be relevant to the alleviation of all the conditions associated with the rural sector. It is true that economics base of the rural people is agriculture, but beyond food, they also need education, employment, decent housing, medical care, electricity, roads, other means of communication, entertainment, facilities for social interaction, etc. (Ojonemi & Ogwu, 2013).

Successful rural poverty alleviation policies usually work by raising the productivity of the poor, while most urban poverty alleviation efforts are welfare-oriented. Poverty alleviation is one of the greatest challenges facing countries of the developing world where, on the average, majority of the population is considered poor. Evidences in Nigeria shows

that the number of those in poverty has continued to increase. For example according to Ogwumike, (2001), the number of those in poverty increased from 27% in 1980 to 46% in 1985 and to 67% in 1996; by 1999 it increased to more than 70 %. Poverty alleviation programmes on the other hand, are means through which the government aims to reduce, revamp and rebuild the economy. The high incidence of poverty in the country has made poverty alleviation strategies important policy options over the years with varying results. PAP and National Poverty Eradication Programme, NAPEP were all attempts made by various governments in the country to curb the menace.

**TABLE 1: URBAN AND RURAL POVERTY STATUS IN NIGERIA 1980-2010**

Total	1980	1985	1992	1996	2004	2010
	Percentage of people in total population					
	28.1	64.3	42.7	65.4	54.4	69.0
Sector						
Urban	17.2	37.8	37.5	58.2	43.2	61.8
Rural	28.3	51.4	46.0	69.3	63.3	73.2

Adapted from Ajulor (2013)

It is important to note from the above poverty status of Nigeria that the poverty situation in the rural areas is worst, as there are 73% relative rural poverty compared with the urban relative poverty level of 61% and this shows that the incidence of poverty is even worse in the rural areas than the urban centers. The reason for the high poverty rate in the rural areas is caused by nothing than policy failures stemmed from poor policy implementation of rural transformation policies. The paper contends that much of the public policy on rural transformation are targeted at reviving the rural areas, making them ( rural communities) a potential base for National development but reverse has been the case with the rural areas in Nigeria.

#### **4. The concept of Sustainable Development**

This is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- i. the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- ii. the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.

Nwazor (2012) notes that, for sustainable development to be realized, Nigeria should be able to produce more skilled human capital and this would be achieved by the government if investing heavily in entrepreneurship. The quality and relevant capacity building in Nigeria should be such that must help the country put in place machineries for sustainable development. For Nigeria to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, capacity building and entrepreneurship is mandatory because they are sinequa-non to growth and development.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Marxian Political Economic Theory was used in explaining policy implementation and rural backwardness. This theory is of the view that there are two dominant classes in any society namely the class of few political elites who design and implement policy and the class of the masses who are very poor and many. To buttress this view Marx contends that as the masses became poorer and more numerous, the capitalist became fewer and controlled greater concentration of the means of production, whose full productiveness they throttled back for their own gain (Mba, 2006).

It was however noted by Ogwo & Tenuche, (cited in Ojonemi & Ogwu, 2013), that the fundamental exploitative relations between the Nigeria elite classes who designed and implement rural transformation policies and rural poor masses guarantee that rural development policies have the likelihood to consolidate the predominant class and exploitative interests of their imperialist collaborators. The main thrust of this theory is based on the fact that the few political class control the resources with which to design and implement policies of rural transformation, no wonder most of the policies initiated and implemented for reversing rural backwardness have been mis-targeted, mis-placed priority and failed to meet the rural needs because those who formulate them, designed them (policies) to solve their own individual needs and gains at the expense of poor masses. In a clearer analysis Bhagwan and Bhushan pointed out that:

*...after the end of colonial rule, the emerging free states-called the Third World Countries, started the process of socio-economic development which led to phenomenal expansion of bureaucracy and the rise of a new class, a bureaucratic bourgeoisies in many of these countries. This class soon acquired social and political parameters on account of the various political and social factors. This new class was western oriented and framed in western methods of administration with the aid of western countries in the form of training abroad and financial assistance for development projects. This new class of administrators was able to establish bureaucratic authoritarianism and hierarchical formation which substituted for mass mobilization and popular participation, the two essential ingredients of development administration... Bhagwan and Bhushan (quoted in Ojonemi & Ogwu 2013).*

In the same theoretical analysis, Fezzes Heady in Ojonemi & Ogwu (2013), identified the following major characteristics of bureaucracy in the management of development programmes in the developing countries thus:

- i. The basic pattern of administration is initiative rather than indigenous;
- ii. The bureaucracy are deficient in skilled manpower necessary for development programme;
- iii. They work for realization of goals other than the achievement of programme objectives;
- iv. There is widespread discrepancy between form and reality;
- v. Operational autonomy

Critically, the above assertions reveals that most rural transformation policies are largely unresponsive to rural needs, unrepresentative of the rural populace at large, and elitist in nature and character. Example is the well-equipped nature of government hospital and health care centres in the urban cities. This is due to the fact that urban setting harbours the programmes' planners and managers. Also is the much propagated National Health Insurance Scheme, housing scheme, etc. policies which remains exploitative-driven and class-centred (Ojonemi & Ogwu 2013).

In sum, the theory is applicable to the explanation of how policy meant to transform the rural-Nigeria is hijacked by the few political elite class who are stakeholders in policy formulation and implementation. In other words, policy failure occurs because those who designed it according to Marx are bureaucrats who don't care of the masses predicament but only their own selfish gains. For instance, almost if not all rural transformation policies in Nigeria have been affected by the greedy appetite of the designers and implementers and mis-placed priorities, it is also interesting to note that, in Nigeria, successive government formulate policy to swell their pockets and their cohorts leaving the target group, target communities (like Iyanfoworogi) to wallow and swim in abject poverty and backwardness.

### **Policy Failures, Poverty and Rural Backwardness in Nigeria**

Formulating and rolling out public policies tagged with mere loud-mouthed glorified names aimed at tackling poverty and reversing rural woes or backwardness is not a difficult task in Nigeria, as successive governments at each level of government (federal, state and local government) had rolled out policies aimed at transforming the rural communities and eradicating poverty, much of these policies, have achieved little or no success and the few ones that were implemented, are done to swell the pockets of the political elites and their cohorts, and sometimes the beneficiaries or the target rural communities are excluded from the policy making process (Ugoh & Ukpere 2009). This view was corroborated by Egonmwan when he contends that:

*Implementation in these countries often turns out to be the graveyard of policy where the intentions of the designer of policies are often undermined by a constellation of powerful forces of politics and administration in cooperation with people. Little attention is paid to the subject of policy implementation by policy decision makers while it is often taken for granted that once a policy is adopted by government it must be implemented and the desired goals achieved (Egonmwan, 1991).*

The above weakness of policy initiators and designers has often resulted in poor policy implementation, which, in effect, gives rise to policy failure in Nigeria. There is policy failure when there is a sizeable gap between an expected outcomes and the actuation of the policy. Public policy according to Oni & Adekola, (2000) is usually a tool in the hands of the government to address certain issues affecting the people in the society, problems such as poverty, unemployment and low capacity building have had over-ambitious policies names designed to tackle them, but little success if not total failure has been recorded as the rural communities, Iyanfoworogi inclusive still remain very primitive and backward, in spite of various policies initiatives of the government at the grassroots( B.K. Alao, personal interview, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013). However, Makinde (2005) argued that policy failure is characterized, for example, by the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer in spite of stated policy goal to the contrary. Looking at Makinde's view of policy failure, it can be inferred that poverty and rural backwardness are the consequences of policy failures as she contends that it (policy failure) only makes the poor to get poorer, implying that backward society, would even be more primitive and declined. Efficient policy implementation on rural transformation like it is done in developed nations will reverse rural backwardness and transform it in Nigeria (Makinde, 2005).

In Nigeria, rural backwardness is more prevalent in spite of numerous rural transformation programmes that have been designed to reverse such trend but studies like (Makinde,2005;Egonmwan,1991;Aliu,2001; Faleye, 1999) have all shown that majority of these policies failed to achieve their expected ends. Nigeria as a nation is peculiar because, formulation of policies and programmes does not take any government by surprise. This accounts for her numerous development

plans, poverty alleviation and rural development programmes, agencies and commissions for development, etc. amidst which the anticipated changes is lacking; Okoli averred that:

*The problem in Nigeria is not about conceptualizing policies, plans, programmes and projects. Neither is it about putting down development plans... All the plans are supposed to be prosecuted through programmes and projects. In spite of all the plans and concomitant programmes and projects, there are still lamentation on the state of the socio-economic development and welfare of the people. The indicators being the low level of human development index and widespread poverty Okoli (quoted in Ojonemi & Ogwu, 2013)*

The paper notes that in spite of all government efforts at reversing pro-longed rural backwardness in Nigeria, the horrible situation of poverty, low standard of living and inequalities persists. In the same vein, Bradshaw (2006) noted that, poverty situation of rural setting in Nigeria was that of continuous woes and that, in spite of numerous efforts of successive governments and relatively increased funding as at the early 1990s the situation is not improved. Also, Muoghalu (1991) contends that, despite the numerous strategies adopted in Nigeria, the rural areas are still very backward. He went further to comments that:

*In terms of income, urban-rural wage differential has risen fourfold. Social services and amenities remain largely inaccessible except by traversing long distances of foot. But the greatest negative effect has been on agriculture that has remained largely primitive and has lost its most active labour force to the urban areas making the rural areas the “Deserted Village” of Goldsmith (Muoghalu, 1991)*

Critical review of all these scholarly works shows that successive Nigerian governments have all shown keen interests at reversing rural backwardness and transforming it to improve socio-economic development of the rural people, but one noticeable problem has been traced to policy failure caused by various factors such as mis-placed priority, insincerity, lack of political will and corruption among other things. Also Eneh (2009), contends that most policies in Nigeria are wonderful, but ultimate summersault, abandonment or failure awaits them. Nigeria is replete with brilliant, impeccable and well written policies. The problem is implementation. The logical and expensively produced policies often end there as policies. From the foregoing analysis, successive governments have formulated various policies which meant to assuage the people’s plight but these policies were applied negatively or not directed to the root causes of the crises.

## **STUDY’S METHODOLOGY**

The study adopts both the quantitative and qualitative methods. Data for quantitative method were sourced through administering of questionnaires on key informants who are mainly rural local farmers, artisans, retired primary school teachers and unemployed youths. The rationale for their selection was based on the fact that these groups are most targeted by any rural transformation policies. A total of ninety (90) people were selected using stratified random sampling techniques. The entire community was stratified into four villages, and in each, twenty (20) people consisting of farmers, artisans and unemployed youths were selected while the remaining ten (10) people were selected from retired primary school teachers. For the qualitative method, an in-depth interviews was conducted on other five key informants consisting of three (3) key officials of Ife-East local government who are in charge of administration of the rural transformation

policies. While other two (2) informants were officials of NAPEP in the state. The statistical test of chi-square was applied to test the quantitative data, while content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data.

## **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

In the process of administering the questionnaires, 87 out of 90 questionnaires administered were returned representing 97% of the questionnaires distributed. The analysis was based on the returned questionnaires.

## **HYPOTHESES**

Some hypothetical statements were formulated and tested. The hypothetical statements were:

- i. Rural backwardness in Iyanfoworogi cannot significantly be reversed through effective and prompt implementation of public policy in Nigeria
- ii. Gap in the implementation of rural transformation policy is not the cause of policy failures and backwardness in Iyanfoworogi community.

## **TEST OF HYPOTHESES AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

The statistical tool adopted for testing the hypothesis formulated for this study is the chi-square ( $X^2$ ) method of data analysis.

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where O= Observed frequency

E= Expected frequency

$\sum$ = Summation

$X^2$  = Chi-Square test

$$\text{Expected Frequency} = \frac{RT \times CT}{N}$$

Where RT= Row Total

CT= Column Total

N= Grand Total

## STATEMENT REQUIRED TO TEST HYPOTHESES

The statements used to test the hypotheses from the tables below were generated from the questionnaire.

### STATEMENT 1

Rural backwardness in Iyanfoworogi cannot significantly be reversed through effective and prompt implementation of public policy in Nigeria

**Table 2: Hypothesis One**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	13.8%
Agree	15	17.2%
Disagree	29	33.3%
Strongly Disagree	30	34.5%
Indifferent	1	1.2%

Sources: Field survey, 2013

### STATEMENT 2

Gap in the implementation of rural transformation policy is not the cause of policy failures and backwardness in Iyanfoworogi community.

**Table 3: Hypothesis Two**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	4	4.6%
Agree	15	17.2%
Disagree	15	17.2%
Strongly Disagree	50	57.5%
Indifferent	3	3.5%

Sources: Field survey, 2013

## Observed Values for Hypotheses

**Table 4: Combined Analysis of the Two (2) Hypotheses**

Variables	Response to Statement 1	Response to Statement 2	Total
Strongly Agree	12	4	16
Agree	15	15	30
Disagree	29	15	44
Strongly Disagree	30	50	80
Indifferent	1	3	4
Total	87	87	174

Sources: Field survey, 2013

## Computation of the Expected Values

$$\text{Formula} = \frac{R \times C}{E}$$

$$E: \text{ Strongly agree} = \frac{16 \times 87}{174} = 8$$

$$E: \text{ Agreed} = \frac{30 \times 87}{174} = 15$$

$$E: \text{ Disagree} = \frac{44 \times 87}{174} = 22$$

$$E: \text{ Strongly disagree} = \frac{80 \times 87}{174} = 40$$

$$E: \text{ Indifferent} = \frac{4 \times 87}{174} = 2$$

## Chi-Square Statistic for the Hypotheses Testing

**Table 5: Hypotheses Testing**

O	E	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
12	8	4	16	2
15	15	0	0	0
29	22	7	49	2.3
30	40	-10	100	2.5
1	2	-1	1	0.5
4	8	-4	16	2
15	15	0	0	0
15	22	-7	49	2.3
50	40	10	100	2.5
3	2	1	1	0.5
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>14.6</b>

Sources: Field survey, 2013

## RESULTS

At 5% level of significance = 0.05. If  $X^2$  calculated is greater than the chi-square table, the null ( $H_0$ ) hypothesis of “no relationship between variables” will be rejected and the alternative ( $H_1$ ) hypothesis that there is a relationship between variables will be accepted.  $X^2$  calculated was 14.6. From the table  $X^2$  at 0.05, degree of freedom (df) is (R-1) (C-1) df = (5-1) (2-1) = 4, df = 9.488 which was estimated at 9.5. Since the obtained value of  $X^2$  calculated exceeds this critical value (14.6 > 9.5), the probability that the obtained value of chi-square occurred by chance under the null hypotheses are all less than 0.05.

Therefore we can reject the two null ( $H_0$ ) hypotheses and accept the alternative hypotheses ( $H_1$ ). This can be concluded that rural backwardness in Iyanfoworogi can be significantly reversed through effective and prompt implementation of rural transformation policies in rural communities. Also, it can be concluded that there are obvious gaps between the expected ends of NAPEP, PAP and their achievements. This in the long run has contributed to the state of backwardness in Iyanworogi community.

## CONTENT ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

The data collected from in-depth interviews forms the major basis for achieving the objective of the study. Our objective here is to present, analyse and discuss the data collected from the five key informants. As previously stated in this paper, in the methodology, data for this study were collected from the four existing villages. The reason for this is that Iyanfoworogi community is fairly represented by these villages. This study, for qualitative data utilizes data obtained through interview of 5 key informants/respondents who are either officials of NAPEP and Ife-East Local Government for a descriptive explanation of findings.

Specifically, for the qualitative data, extracts of interviews conducted were presented and analysed using the objective of this study as a guide and it is restated thus:

1. To examine how prompt policy implementation will reverse rural backwardness or transform Iyanfoworogi community in Nigeria.

In analysing these objective, relevant questions in the question guide were used. This was done to elicit rich and comprehensive data for the research. It is important to note that the objective was actually analysed.

## ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIVE

1. ***“To examine how prompt policy implementation will reverse rural backwardness or transform Iyanfoworogi community in Nigeria.”*** To analyse this objective, the following questions were used 1 and 2.

### **Question 1: Would you say that the implementation of NAPEP and PAP have helped to reverse or transformed your community?**

The aim of this question was to find out if the enforcement of the twin policies of NAPEP and PAP have helped to reduced and transformed their community. For most of the respondents, the implementation of NAPEP and PAP had minimal effect in terms of transforming their community. Though, all the respondents agreed that the two policies were implemented, but that there are challenges with their implementation. Almost all of them, if not all, responded in the affirmative that the policies have actually helped to liberate the community from its primitive state to what it is now. On this issue, the response of Mrs. Elujoba Seun, an official who sees to prompt implementation of government policies in, Ife-East Local Government was particularly illuminating. For her<sup>1</sup>

***NAPEP and PAP have both helped to equip our farmers with fertilizers, farming tools and seedlings. Artisans have been provided with interests free loans form the old community banks while retired teachers are provided with stipends for their upkeep in their old age. In fact, our community has been fairly transformed though there are hitches and bottlenecks in implementing these policies, yet, there have been remarkable progress in Iyanfoworogi community.***

From the data gathered, only very few participating beneficiaries actually gets full advantage of some of the benefits of the twin policies but all of them are empowered in one way or the other. Corroborating this view was Mrs. Adewole Oluwole an officer in NAPEP office, for her<sup>2</sup>

***Youths in the community have been empowered with one skill or the other, for instance, tailoring skill, brick making skill, poultry/rearing skills, are all acquired through the PAP and NAPEP. On our village roads, we now see youths who picks and sweep the roads and collect stipends from the local government; these jobs and skills are created and acquired by the youths engaged in the policies. In sum, from my own view, NAPEP and PAP have had positive effect on job creation and youth’s empowerment in the community.***

In terms of recruitment of the youth and their empowerment, all the respondents agreed and responded that the two policies (NAPEP and PAP) have greatly helped in recruitment of some youths in community banks, agro-allied small scale firms, poultry farming industries within the community and this in the long run empowers them. The beneficiaries of these policies who are in most cases unemployed graduates are gradually absorbed into Ife-East Local Government employ depending on available vacancies in different departments of the council<sup>3</sup>.

**Question 2: Do you really think that the two policies (NAPEP and PAP) have actually achieved their expected ends in your community?** This question was intended to ascertain and identify if the implementation of NAPEP and PAP achieved their expected ends in Iyanfoworogi community. From the data gathered, there are gaps between expected ends and the actuation of these policies. The reason for the gap was as a result of challenges identified in the implementation of NAPEP and PAP. While almost all respondents believe that the policies have challenges with its implementation in the community, many claimed that the problem range from poor funding by government, misplaced priorities, mis-management of funds meant for the policies to shortage of readily available jobs space to accommodate the participating youths, poor monitoring of beneficiaries progress and the use of propaganda to exaggerate performance of the policies. This position was supported by a senior Officer in Ife-East Local Government office, in charge of coordinating youth empowerment programme at the ward level opined that<sup>4</sup>:

*NAPEP policy no doubt has been very helpful in the training of our youths and their recruitment in small scale businesses, but there capacity building is still at a low pace, not because they have not acquired some skills from the policy, but because only few of them are engaged in skills acquisition training programme, while a whole lot of them are deployed to do menial jobs that requires energy, when you compared those who do menial jobs with those who acquired skills, you will see that on the aggregate, there is no significant improvement in the capacity building of the beneficiaries youths of the policy, hence a gap between its expected ends and its actual achievement.*

To Mr. Elusogbon Alao, officer of NAPEP, who averred that ‘that the policies (NAPEP and PAP) is so popular and reaches every nooks and crannies of the community is because of the strategies deployed by the combined efforts of office of NAPEP and Ife-East Local Government, yet, the two policies have performed below expectation as there are still obvious cases of backwardness and underdevelopment in Iyanfoworogi community’<sup>5</sup>.

From all the relevant questions asked pertaining to the objective and the responses received, it is obvious that rural transformation policies like NAPEP and PAP have slightly transformed the community but there is a gap between expected ends and the actual achievements of the policies, this is due to some challenges experienced in the implementation of the policies.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The study reveals vividly that an effective and well efficient implementation of public policies of rural transformation will go a long way in reversing the backwardness and transforming the rural communities Iyanfoworogi inclusive (see Study’s Result).The study also reveals that gap in the implementation of rural transformation policy is the cause of policy failures, slow sustainable development and backwardness in Iyanfoworogi community. Other findings include:

One, the two policies of (NAPEP and PAP) were actually implemented in Iyanfoworogi community but there were gaps between expected outcomes and achievements as majority of respondents confirmed that in spite of the implementation of the two public policies in the community, there is still signs of poverty and backwardness in villages. The study also discovered that some of the challenges of rural transformation policy lies in its implementation and some of them are stated thus: misplaced priority and non-consultation with the host community, these programme were merely imposed on rural communities without any contributions from the target communities in decision making process, corruption, non-continuing with past or inherited policies, political patronage, politicisation of public policies, conspiracy between policy stakeholders' and community leaders and youth representatives and ambiguous policy goal setting. The aforementioned reasons for policy implementation gaps were corroborated by some scholarly studies (see Arogundade et al, 2011; Ajulor, 2013; Lazarus, 2010;Ogboru & Abimiku, 2012).

The study discovered that Iyanfoworogi community is still very backward in spite of the beautiful promises of the policies of NAPEP and PAP and reveals that these policies failed simply because the targeted beneficiaries were not covered by these policies. This view was corroborated by Ajulor (2013), where he avowed that public policies are made and decided upon by experts in Abuja who sent them (policies) to state and local governments to implement without looking at the peculiarity of the state and local government. However, lack of continuity with old (past) policies from successors who gradually abandoned or absolutely rendered past policies impotent, further worsen the success of rural transformation policies in Iyanfoworogi community, a rural suburb in Osun State, Nigeria. In the same vein, Eneh (2009) contends that lack of involvement of the target beneficiaries in identifying the right projects coupled with administrative and operational failures were among the problems identified as hindering the achievement of the objectives of the two programmes of NAPEP and PAP in Nigeria. Ajulor (2013) opined that public policy processes in Nigeria continued to be top-down in conception, design, formulation, implementation and evaluation. This undermined citizen participation as an essential part of the public policy development process.

### **POLICY MEASURES TO RE-ADDRESS RURAL BACKWARDNESS IN IYANFOWOROGI COMMUNITY**

It is on record that successive Nigerian governments prefer to initiate policies and programmes that the masses will ascribed to their regime or administration with little or no time devoted to inherited past policies from their predecessors, and it is known that the assessment of the performance of any government is normally based on the positive impact or the development brought by the public policy embarked upon by such government. Based on this premise, successive governments in Nigeria should continue with policies of past administration instead of discarding them and they should rather adopt the mixed scanning model of policy making which combines the rational and incremental models.

Policy summersault, abandoning of projects and policy implementation gaps are common snags that militate against sustainable development and transformation of rural communities in Nigeria. They are fallouts of corruption and political elites' maladroitness that characterize the country. These factors contributed to the reasons why rural backwardness still persists in rural communities including Iyanfoworogi in Nigeria, in spite of numerous policies on rural transformation in the country. Failure of rural transformation policy in Nigeria rubbishes good development dreams, visions, policies and plans, and keeps rural transformation scuttling. Therefore, for any meaningful transformation of the rural communities or sustainable development to take place in Nigeria, serious attention should be paid to effective and efficient implementation of public policy.

Government also, should ensure that when policies are formulated, appropriate strategies of implementing them must be put into consideration the financial and manpower requirements, communication links between the target beneficiaries and the implementers for actuation of the policies. Finally, proper supervision and monitoring of the policies and projects should be steadfastly done, in addition to this, policies should be evaluated and assessed to identify their loopholes and shortcomings and necessary adjustment and corrections should be made as soon as possible to put the policy in the right direction.

## **CONCLUSION**

The poor implementation of rural transformation policy has had considerable negative impact on transformation and sustainable development of Iyanfoworogi tilting the pendulum in outrageous disfavour to dwellers in the community. Against the background of this, the paper examined the utility of efficient policy implementation in reversing rural backwardness and sustaining grassroots development in Iyanfoworogi, Nigeria. It is the paper's contention that the prompt implementation of public policy on rural transformation and grassroots sustainable development can be helpful in this direction.

Nonetheless, the paper observed some limitations and proffered solutions to them. Finally, the paper also contended that for an effective and quick move towards effective and efficient implementation of rural transformation policies in Nigeria, a multi-pronged approach requiring a combination of factors need to be adopted. To this end, emphasis should be laid on, inter alia, involving the target beneficiaries in policy decisions, ensuring proper supervision of projects, adopting a viable strategy in policies implementation and discouraging practices that could lead to policy failure and implementation lapses particularly those that are adversative to rural transformation. The paper concludes by advancing the frontier body of knowledge of public policy by establishing and remarking that efforts at reducing policy implementation gaps require concerted and sustained effort. Substantial feat in a twinkle of an eye requires strong political will and discipline.

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#### Notes:

1. Mrs. Elujoba Seun, an official who sees to prompt implementation of government policies in, Ife-East Local Government
2. Mrs. Adewole Oluwole an officer in NAPEP office.
3. Mr. Mbah Ikechukwu, an officer in PAP office
4. Mr. Akamo Jimoh senior Officer in Ife-East Local Government office
5. Mr. Elusogbon Alao, officer in Ife-East Local Government office

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