



POVERTY REDUCTION AND LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA: EVIDENCE FROM SOUTH-EAST GEO-POLITICAL ZONE

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at determining the impact of insensitivity of leaders on poverty reduction in the south-east zone of Nigeria. Despite the huge funds earmarked by Government for the various poverty alleviation programmes in the zone, poverty still abounds. This study employed the political economy approach as a method of economic analysis. Data collection instrument was developed and validated by experts in measurement and evaluation department, Alvan Ikoku University of Education, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Data generated in the field survey was analyzed using the chi-square technique. The study revealed that poverty in the south east zone is caused by the self-centeredness and insensitivity of leaders from the zone to the poverty needs of the people. The study recommended among others that the people of the South-east must begin to elect into public offices leaders with integrity and track records and must be ready to vote out any non-performing leader(s) as has been demonstrated in Imo State in recent time.

Keywords: Poverty, poverty alleviation, elites, chi-square and corruption.

INTRODUCTION

The south East zone of Nigeria encompasses; Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States, constituting more than 90% Igbo speaking nationality in Nigeria. It is of importance to give a brief insight into the socio-economic and political influences of the people of this zone in order to give this expository study its due validity and utility. Ejiofor (1981: 113-117) highlighted some basic features of the people thus:

- The political orientation of the people of this zone is deemed complete when it prepares citizens to participate in the politics of the community, taking their place among the group with personal and public confidence. Politics then becomes 'noisy' because there is mass and individual participation. The people of this zone abhor servitude for themselves and domination by others.
- The South East people also cannot be classified as an extremely patient people. However, their patience may last for years only if and when, they see that the Iroko seed is going to be the Iroko tree' that is, in the long eventuality, something impressive will come out of the present signs. They hate total obscurity.
- Another attribute of the people of the south East is their ambivalence to leadership. They love change and could easily grow tired of a leader, especially a non-performing one.

These basic characteristics of the dynamics of the people of the South East explain the dynamics of poverty incidence and its reduction processes in this zone. Thus, leaning to Aristotle's view that 'The way the bulk of the people earn their living, whether they are farmers, herdsman, mechanics, shopkeepers or day-labourers, will have much to do with determining the nature of the state and its government'.

The south east has experienced worse and deepening scourge of poverty and hardship during and after the Nigerian civil war, which has compelled the people of this zone through the spirit of self-determination and the desperate disposition to survive has resulted over the years to the huge community development efforts as evident in community-based infrastructural spread all over this zone. However it does appear that the desperation its people have sought for personal and collective

survival; tackling poverty and reconstruction of this zone does not seem to give any particular concern to its elites over time. Hence, the region appears to have been short changed by the very elites of the zone who prefer their personal gains to the collective aspiration of the zone, hence the zone remained seriously disadvantaged, particularly in terms of infrastructural development, improved social services and increase in real wages. It is against this back drop that Sarah Jibril a northern presidential candidate in the 2003 elections commenting on the mercantilist attitude of Igbo elites and their leaders lamented thus, "Politically I find it painful that a lot of Igbo leaders have become vote contractors. They collect money and sell their votes. So when the voted get into power, they feel they owe them nothing. Many Igbo leaders connive with those who want to marginalize them to vote against the interest of their people. They seem to have no resilience or sustaining principle, people do not respect you, so they do not take you seriously in the scheme of things. Igbo leaders should stop using their people to bargain for their personal needs. There is a lot of sell out, a lot of selfish politicking... Now their boys don't go to school, they are only after money". This runs contrary to Dudley Seer's view of development as he rightly suggested that; the questions to ask about a country's development are therefore; what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? (Zwingina, 1992:p2).

Therefore a country can only then be passed as developing if all these three problems were becoming less severe. In the context of the prevailing circumstance in Nigeria and Africa in general where poverty has been remotely identified to include; lack of voice; lack of participation in governance ; low per capita income; bribery and corruption; lack of entrepreneurial spirit; injustice, marginalization; and highly skewed income distribution in favour of minority elites, a fact captured by Nwosu (2002) citing Reginald Green (1976) when he states thus; "The denial (nationally and internationally) of access to opportunity, equity and equality comes not of God or of scientific laws, but of men, of classes and of ideologies, created and used in the services of entrenched elites". The non-economic aspects of the remote causes of poverty in the south east are the most severe, devastating and defy the best economic policy and also the best orthodox poverty alleviation strategies and should be given the greatest attention.

The non - economic factors are the bane of poverty in the South East. Amongst these non- economic factors, bribery and corruption is the most dreaded as it depletes the needed resources for the argumentation of productive forces and run contrary to the eminent need for transformations in attitude and in the social, economic, educational, political, legal/administrative and cultural values and institutions for social engineering, as well as in ideology, philosophy and policy thrusts (Nwosu, 2002). The lack of integrity in Nigeria has been responsible for the failures of the massive poverty alleviation programme of the SAP era, which left a deepening mass - poverty in Nigeria in its trail.

Another indispensable strategy to poverty alleviation is the proper pioneering entrepreneurial spirit which often advances industrialization, Research and Development (R&D) and unfortunately, it is of common knowledge that Nigeria entrepreneurs do not take advantage of opportunities to expand, innovate, and modernize. They do not response rationally to changes in prices and policies. Nigeria entrepreneurs are also not known for their frugality, rather they are known for wasteful spending on costly marriages and burial ceremonies, celebrating the acquisition of chieftaincy titles and on conspicuous consumption.

These no doubt are the driving force behind the denial of access to equal opportunities, equity and justice, bring about bribery and corruption, highly skewed income distribution, and failures of various poverty reducing policies and strategies in the past. Whereas the non- economic aspects of development which include the following; well - educated, well - trained, hardworking, creative and cultured human capital, institutions which give incentive and support to efforts, attitudes and political environment which value economic efficiency, distributive justice and intellectual creativity, growing technology and technical and scientific knowledge are the sine qua non for industrial take - off and subsequently a sure means of alleviating poverty through high productivity and income, and subsequently employment creation.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the effect of leaders' insensitivity on poverty reduction in the south-east geo-political zone in Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis

HO: There is no significant relationship between poverty in the south East zone and the insensitivity of their leaders.

Hi: There is a significant relationship between the leader's insensitivity and self-centeredness, and poverty needs of the people.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A concise and universally accepted definition of poverty is elusive. Largely because it affects many aspects of the human conditions; including physical, moral and psychological. Different criteria have therefore been used to conceptualize poverty. Most analysis follows the conventional view of poverty as a result of insufficient income for securing basic goods and services. Others view poverty in part as a function of education, health, Life expectancy, child mortality etc.

An extensive study into the concept of poverty was first emphasized on relative deprivation by Runciman and Townsend. Townsend in particular helped redefined poverty not just as a failure to meet minimum nutrition or subsistence levels, but rather as a failure to keep up with the standard prevalent in a given society. The second shift was to broaden the concept of income-poverty, to a wider set of 'basic need'. Thus, poverty was further defined not just as lack of income, but also as lack of access to health services, education and other social services.

Poverty conceptualization gathered fresh momentum in 1980s. These include; the incorporation of non - monetary aspects, particularly as a result of Robert chambers work on powerlessness and isolation, this helped to inspire greater attention to participation. The other was the new interest in vulnerability and security; association with better understanding of seasonality and of the impact of shock, pointing to the importance of assets and to social relations. Third was the broadening of the concept of poverty to a wider construct; livelihood. Fourth and perhaps more innovative is the theoretical work by Amantya Sen, which introduced the notion of food entitlement or access. He emphasized that income was only valuable in so far as it increases the capabilities of individuals and thereby permitted "functioning in society. Finally, was rapid in the study of gender. The debate moved from a focus on women alone i.e. women in development (WID) to gender relations i.e. gender and development (GAD). Policies to empower women and re-address gender poverty gap were given greater attention.

CAUSES OF POVERTY

The causes of poverty are combination of several complex factors which include; low or negative economic growth, inappropriate macroeconomic policies, deficiencies in the labour market resulting in limited job growth, low productivity and low wages in the informal sector, and deficiency in human resource development. Other factor which have contributed to a decline in living standards, and are structural causes of poverty include; increase in crime and violence, environmental degradation, retrenchment of workers, a fall in the real value of safety nets, and changes in family structure. These are the typical factors that characterize the Nigerian economy for which the south east is no exception. Let us examine some of these factors below:

Low economic growth performance

Growth of the economy is an essential poverty reduction phenomenon. In developing countries such as Nigeria, growth that is employment generating and with export base is poverty reducing with equity. Poor economic performance of these countries is due largely to external shocks such as adverse changes in several countries in terms of trade, changes in global demand for exports, and changes in global interest rate on developing countries external debts. However, it must be mentioned that this does not explain the Nigeria case during this period in focus as its citizens' gloom continues to deepen as she keeps recording tremendous oil windfalls. Extensive evidence links the importance of economic growth with distributive equity to poverty reduction. Indonesia and Thailand are typical example where poverty has been reduced by 30 percent to 40 percent during twenty year period in which annual growth rate were approximately 3 percent. Growth therefore can reduce poverty through increasing employment, creased labour productivity which subsequently generates higher real wages.

Macro-economic shocks/policy failure

As many countries face macro-economic disequilibrium, mostly in the balance of payments due to expensive aggregate demand policies, terms of trader shocks, and natural disasters, it became

necessary undertaking major policy reforms. In the process such economies became vulnerable to poverty largely because they constrain the poor from using their greatest asset "labour". Also, monetary policy that adversely affect cost and access to credit by the poor; fiscal policy which result in retrenchment and lay -offs; exchange rates which raises the domestic cost of production in an import dependent production system will affect the poor adversely. However, an exchange rate policy which boosts export particularly those in which the poor are predominantly engaged (for example agriculture) will help reduce poverty. On the other hand, the urban poor, as a result of policy failure are vulnerable to job losses resulting from job-cuts in the public sector or from decline of industries adversely affected by shift in relative prices. High cost of imports, especially in import dependent economy like Nigeria usually result in declining capacity utilization rate in manufacturing and lay -off and retrenchment all worsen poverty.

Labour market deficiencies

The poor's most abundant resources are their labour, a vibrant and virile labour market is important to reducing poverty and income inequity. The majority of poor households participate in the labour market in one way or the other, and thus poverty is a problem of low wages (especially in the informal sector), under employment, and in some cases protracted unemployment. These problems are brought about in different ways by deficiencies in labour market operations. The majority of labour work as paid employees in the private informal sector, followed by employees in the public sector (as is the case in Nigeria). When there are deficiencies in labour market, the poor are affected by limited job growth and absorption capacity in the formal sector. Also relative high cost of labour in the formal sector that lead to over expansion of a low productivity informal sector, thus putting downward pressure on wages in the informal sector (where many of the poor work), and led opportunities for unskilled youth to acquire job training : skill can perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

Unemployment and Under-Employment

Employment is a paramount determinate for poverty eradication. Gainful employment is important for individual to earn income and escape from 'income' poverty. While the non-poor do suffer from traditional or involuntary unemployment, the poor are faced with problems of structural unemployment due to lack of skill or extremely low educational level, geographic isolation (which effect some of rural poor and the urban poor due to marginalization of persons living in high-brow, high-crime neighbourhood and nepotism)

Underemployment occurs largely in the informal sector and result in low income for an important segment of the labour force, particularly in rural areas. Underemployment is due largely to low economic growth than to the direct effects of imperfections in the labour market; although regulations affecting the formal sector are likely to induce more underemployments in the informal sector. In rural areas, this mainly takes the form of seasonal unemployment and in urban areas those who have given up searching for job. High unemployment particularly affects youths', woman, urban- dwellers and those 'queuing' for good jobs in the formal sector.

Human Resource Development

Human capital development and capacity are the essential for escaping from poverty. Investment in human capital with improvements in efficiency is necessary to sustain reduction in poverty and changes in the labour market. Investment in human capital boost the living standards of households by expanding opportunities, raising productivity, increase in real income, and increase earning power.

Poor health

Good health is basic to human welfare and a fundamental objective of social and economic development. Ill-health distorts human capital, productivity, impedes entrepreneurial activities and hold back economic growth and development. Malaria, HIV/AIDS, cancer and other diseases have been identified as causing poverty across the globe particularly in the third world of African and East Asia and the pacific. "In Nigeria for instance, AIDS prevalence is about 5.4 percent with an infected adult population of 2.6 million. This will constrain availability and participation of this segment of the population in the labour market to earn income" (Ajakaiye and Adeyeye - CBN FER Vol. 39.No 4). This also means that this segment of the population has become dependent upon the already psychologically, mentally and physically strain and over stressed working population for which majority are underemployed.

Debt burden

In several developing countries of the world, debt burden is a cause of poverty in these countries. The servicing of debt has eaten up chunk of resources needed for socioeconomic development in such countries. This has also constrained the productive sector such as agriculture, manufacturing etc leading to low productivity; low capacity utilization; underemployment; and low purchasing power thereby subjecting the citizens to abject poverty. Nigeria's external debt at the end of December 2000 stood at US\$28.5m (about 89% of GDP). The implication of this is that total amount required to service this debt annually will impede government expenditure for the provision of social and physical infrastructure for the poor. Government The persistence and pervasiveness of poverty in several developing countries particularly in Nigeria has been linked to the lack of popular participation in governance and decision making as well as weak institutional base. These have led among other things to poor accountability, poor transparency in resource allocation, weak programme implementation and monitoring. Ultimately, development programmes such as poverty reduction initiatives are rendered ineffective and resources wasted.

Dimensions of Poverty in Nigeria

Spatial

The spatial distribution of poverty as noted by Awoseyila (1999) showed that there is a big disparity between the rural and urban sectors poverty levels. According to him, there is a strong correlation between poverty and remoteness from urban centers. He stressed that various government of developing nations have enough resources for balanced development in the urban and rural sectors. But Okowa (1991) theorized that as a result of the political economies of developing societies there is an inclination on the part of policy makers to pursue urban-biased policies.

Rural people lack access to economic opportunities, social services such as health, sanitation, educations, electricity, etc. Obasanjo (2001) underscores lack of power and voice in the affairs of state by those for whom the state ideally exists as one of the concept is continued in Awoseliya (1999) when he emphasized that knowledge of rights and information is notably lacked among the large illiterate groups concentrated in the rural areas. This he said makes it difficult for rural people to exert pressure or proposes changes in the system, which has often actively; discriminate against them in the allocation of resources.

The deteriorating living and environmental conditions for the poor rural households is evidenced in the CBN/World pnnk (1999) study on poverty concerning depth and severity of poverty, the rural areas are worse off than the urban centers. This is due to dearth of infrastructural facilities in the rural areas, also the state of healthcare in the rural areas are poor, as higher rate of infant mortality, malnutrition and disease are prevalent, (Oladunni, 1999).

Though the urban centres are relatively better than the rural areas there exists urban poverty. Awoseliye (1999) identified some of the factors responsible for urban poverty as under provision of facilities which are inadequate to match the growing demands of urban populace, lack of maintenance of infrastructure and physical structures, inadequate accommodation facilities with its attendant overcrowding making the urban dwellers vulnerable to communicable diseases.

Rural-urban drift syndrome especially among school leavers and university graduates desperately seeking for wage employment and other green pastures at urban centres have also been identified as the cause of urban congestion. Summarizing the rural-urban dichotomy, the pattern of development indicates that the urban sectors are more favored with growth and development incentives than the traditional rural sector (Oladunni, 1999).

The population census of the Federal Republic of No a (1991) revealed that Nigeria is predominantly rural with 63.72% of the population living in the rural areas as against 36.25% who live in the urban areas. Poverty was largely a rural phenomenon in 1980, with 27.2% of its population living below poverty line. But by 1985, poverty became pervasive in both rural and urban sectors of the Nigeria economy. Urban poverty incidence is more than doubled as it rose from 17.2% in 1980 to 37.8% in 1985, while the incidence of rural poverty equally increased remarkably from 27.2% to 51.4% within the said period.

The high incidence or urban poverty is not surprising given the high rural-urban drift that accompanied the impetus to development generated by oil revenues. The collapse of oil exports income, and the massive importation of food to meet the declining production capacity in the agricultural and industrial sectors, may have severely affected the urban dwellers. Also responsible

for urban poverty is under provision of facilities which are inadequate to match the growing demands of urban populace, lack of maintenance of infrastructure.

In 1992, urban poverty head count remained almost the same at 37.5% while rural poverty declined from 51 percent in 1983 to 46% in 1992, thanks to the numerous poverty alleviation initiatives of the SAP era. By 1996 both urban and rural poverty rates increased astronomically from 37.5 percent to 58.2 percent and 46 percent to 69.3% for urban and rural population respectively. In 2004, there was a general decline from 58.2 percent to 43.2 percent and 69.3 percent to 63.3 percent for urban and rural sectors respectively.

Thus, summarizing the rural-urban dichotomy, the trend in poverty level among the rural and urban sectors in Nigeria, indicates that the urban sector is more favoured with growth and development incentives than the rural sector.

Occupation

Across the sectors of the economy, poverty is disproportionately distributed along professional or trade line. Ten different occupational categories (professional, technical, administration, clerical, sales workers, service industry, agriculture and forestry, production, transport, manufacturing and processing, students and apprentices) were identified with household heads (FOS, 1999).

The type of economic activity engaged in, is a factor that can also affect growth and development and hence the welfare of the populace, Oladunni (1999). The implication of the 1991 census is that remuneration accompanying each activity favours professional and technical, administrative/managerial activities, as compared to low remuneration and poor standard of living of the people in agriculture and other related fields.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Until recently, little attempt was made to extend theory to the forms, extent of and changes in poverty as such. Social scientists, including Marx, had been primarily concerned with the evolution of economic, political and social inequality. Economists had devoted most interest to the factor shares of production and distribution rather than to the unequal distribution of resources, and where they had studied the latter, they had confined themselves to studies of wages. However, some emerging theories of poverty will be discussed as follows:

Minority Group Theory

This theory is associated with Rowntree (1901), he classified the society into categories and then identifies a cycle of poverty. Children, young married couples with children and old people are very susceptible and run the highest risk of descending into poverty. The division of the society into different social categories and the allocation to some of relatively low resources and status is considered the primary concern of poverty studies. Systemic mechanisms are put in place by which some groups are allocated low resources and of course low status as the outcome of action on behalf of other privileged groups. If these minority groups are disqualified from receiving new services established by the state, or new kinds or amounts of resources made possible by a growing economy, they can experience a gradual fall into deprivation and poverty without there being any explicit discrimination against them.

Classical Economic Theory of Poverty

Only in recent years has economic theory begun to be applied to the phenomenon of poverty. In classical theory, attention was concentrated on the aggregate distribution of profits, rent and wages. Ricardo, for example, described the principal problem of political economy as the division of the earth's produce 'among three classes, namely; the proprietor of the land, the owner of the stock or capital necessary for its cultivation, and the labourers by whose industry it is cultivated'. Little or no attention was devoted to the explanation of the distribution of personal incomes and the relationship between personal incomes and aggregate shares of profits, rents and wages. However classical economists that came later began to give increasing attention to inequality in the distribution of earnings and then happens to factors affecting individual earnings rather than family incomes in explaining inequality.

Dual Labour Market and Radical Theories

A large number of economists have now begun to adopt approaches which depart from orthodox assumptions. Some of them direct attention to the nature of the demand for labour and to forces other than individual characteristics which determine wage levels. Others direct attention to

‘aspects of the labour market such as trade unions, employers’ monopoly power and government intervention, which mean that there is no longer perfect competition’.

Studies of local conditions have favoured adoption of a concept of a segmented labour market. Evidence had accumulated in favour of there being an internal labour market within an established firm or plant, which appeared in many respects to be insulated from the outside labour market. This observation had further led to the conception of a dual labour market. On the one hand, attention was called to a ‘primary’ sector in which employment was stable, where pay was good and where there were strong unions. On the other, attention was called to a ‘secondary’ sector in which employment was unstable, where pay tended to be low, prospects of promotion poor and unions of small importance. In explaining poverty, then, emphasis was placed as much on the disadvantageous characteristics of the secondary labour market as upon the characteristics of the individuals holding such jobs.

Elites Theory of Poverty

The elite theory of poverty was based on the principle of ‘conditional welfare for the few’ and took its root in the early nineteenth century when leading elites was of the view that poverty was necessary for industry and the overall growth in output. They argued that the laboring poor would not be motivated to work if they are not hungry and poor. The elite theory of poverty argues that the structure of political power in a society determines the extent and distribution of poverty in that society. The ruling minority elites, establishes and legitimizes the processes of allocation of opportunities and resources for which the societal structure depends. Therefore, poverty is a socio-economic phenomenon whereby the resources available to society are appropriated by the few elites in power to the detriment of the larger population who are in constant struggle to meet their basic needs. So people are poor because certain political, economic and social structures have been imposed on them.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the political economy approach. The researcher considered this research design most appropriate for reviewing a subject such as poverty, lacking in theoretical depth. According to Ake (1981) "this method based on dialectical materialism assures the material conditions, particularly the economic system, as the decisive formative system, as the decisive influences on social life, and constituted the essential point of departure for discovering the laws of motions of a society and for explaining it." The three main features by which political economy can be identified as a research method are:

- It recognizes the importance of non-economic factors in its study of any economic problem and actually takes such other factor(s) into account.
- It attaches more importance to the history of the problem that is being studied as a background to the work.
- It does not rely exclusively on any particular technique of economic investigation, e.g. quantitative or non-quantitative technique considered appropriate in the particular circumstance (Akpakpan, 1991).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The researcher sampled 267 as true representative of the target population. In selecting samples for this research, the researcher adopted the stratified sampling technique as the most suitable. The samples were drawn from the five states in the south-east with the help of research assistants on the categories of urban settlements; rural settlements; town unions; and Youth Associations. Then, within each group the simple random sampling (SRS) technique using balloting was then applied.

Data Treatment Technique

Data obtained from the research instrument were analyzed using Chi-square (X^2) test. The choice of Chi-square (X^2) statistic was inform by the nature of the data obtained which are basically in nominal scale, also the ease of manipulation of data using the Chi-square (X^2) underscores its use.

The Chi-square (X^2) formula is given as:

$$X^2 = \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e}$$

Where: X^2 = chi- square

F_o = observation frequency

F_e = Expect frequency

Decision Rule

The null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted if the Chi-square calculated is less than the critical value, otherwise, it is rejected and the alternative hypotheses accepted.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Data Analysis

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by State of Residence

State of Residence	Actual Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Returned	Percentage Returned
Abia	60	50	18.7
Anambra	60	46	17.2
Ebonyi	50	42	15.7
Enugu	60	60	22.5
Imo	70	69	25.8
Total	300	267	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 2: Leaders Insensitivity root Cause of Poverty in the South-east

Response	Wage Earners	% Response	Non-wage Earners	% Response
Yes	107	65	53	52
No	58	35	49	48
Total	165	100	102	100

SOURCE: Field survey, 2015

Table 2 revealed that 160 respondents did agree that poverty in the south east is caused by the insensitivity and self-centeredness of their leaders who diverts funds and programs meant for the common good of the people. This finding therefore corroborates Uwalaka (2003:34) “thus while few Igbo ‘Irokos’ are often well settled, the mass of Igbo ‘shrubs’ are left defenseless and empty-handed”, further corroborating Ajakaiye and Adeyeye (2002) as stated thus, “poverty can also be due to certain groups using certain mechanisms in the system to exclude 'problem groups' from participating in economic development, including democratic process.” Thus, the exclusion of the people of the south east from political and economic programs by their leaders for selfish interests is the bane of poverty in the south east.

Table 3: South East Leaders Do Not Co-Operate Among Themselves In Order To Achieve United Goals?

Response	Wage Earners	% Response	Non-wage Earners	% Response
Yes	130	79	82	80
No	35	21	20	20
Total	165	100	102	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 3 showed that 130 respondents of the wage earners group, constituting 79% of that group and 82 respondents of the non-wage earners constituting 80% of that group did agree that leaders from south east are not united and do not co-operate among themselves in order to achieve united goals. This conforms with Uwalaka (2003) when he states, "This lack of common vision, common agenda by the Igbo leaders is the scandal of today" Igbo nationalism".

Table 4: South-East Leaders Are Far Removed From Their Electorates

Response	Wage Earners	% Response	Non-wage Earners	% Response
Yes	125	76	80	78
No	40	24	22	22
Total	165	100	102	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4 revealed that South-East leaders do not reach their electorates and so do not know their problems so as to making efforts to solving them. 77 % of total respondents do agree that leaders from the South-East are far removed from their electorates.

Testing of Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between poverty in the south east zone and the self-centeredness and insensitivity of their leaders.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between the leaders' insensitivity *and* self-centeredness, and poverty needs of the people.

Observed Frequency (Fo)

Response	Wage Earners	Non-Wage Earners	Total
YES	107	53	160
NO	58	49	107
TOTAL	165	105	267

Expected Frequency (Fe)

Response	Wage Earners	Non-Wage Earners	Total
YES	99	61	160
NO	66	40	107
TOTAL	165	102	267

$$X^2_c = \frac{(107-99)^2}{99} + \frac{(53-62)^2}{62} + \frac{(58-66)^2}{66} + \frac{(49-60)^2}{40}$$

$$X^2_c = 0.65 + 1.31 + 0.97 + 2.03$$

$$X^2_c = 4.96$$

$$X^2_{0.05} (1) = 3.841$$

KEY

X²c = Chi - Square calculated

X²0.05 (1) = Chi- square table value at 5% level of significance, and 'degree of freedom (df) = 1

Decision Rule

Since our X²c = 5.00 > x²_t = 3.841, we reject the null hypothesis (Ho) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H₁) and conclude that poverty in the south-east zone is caused by the self-centeredness and the insensitivity of leaders from the zone to the poverty needs of the people.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

Findings of this study revealed that South-east leaders insensitivity to the needs of the people are largely responsible for the poverty in the South-east zone. This collaborated Uwalaka (2003) thus, "Many of the self-acclaimed Igbo leaders are nothing but fair-weather leaders, opportunists who in times of crisis hide themselves, become voiceless only to resurface for public exhibition, when the wind has subsided. The leaders the Igbos want are the leaders who truly weep with them when they weep, laugh with them when they laugh, and by their voice and commitment offer them strength and confidence in the time of crisis".

The researcher made the following recommendations:

- ✓ The people of the South-east must begin to elect into public offices leaders with integrity and track records and must be ready to vote out any non-performing leader(s) as has been demonstrated in Imo State in recent time.
- ✓ Leaders at all levels must be made to brief their constituents periodically and through such medium feel the pulse of the people to identifying with the challenges of the people.
- ✓ Leaders at all levels of Governments from the South-east must cooperate among themselves in order to achieve united goals for the zone.

- ✓ Finally, the 'live and lets live, communal' spirit must be rekindled for collective progress of the South-east zone.

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