



## An Empirical Study of Factors Influencing Implementation of Rural Development Projects in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

The study was prompted by the abiding concern for the continuous existence of failed and abandoned projects in Gwagwalada Area Council of Abuja. The study investigates the extent to which funding, change of government, existing project monitoring mechanisms and workforce affect the implementation of rural development projects of the Council. Content and thematic analysis aided by Nvivo11 was used for the analysis of the interview. Multiple regression was used for hypothesis testing. The finding indicates that the four (4) factors impacted the Area Council's implementation of rural development programs. However, the relative contributions of each factor differed in order of ranking. Change of government and funding, with standardized coefficients of (.414) and (.266), were found significantly responsible for the incidence of failed and discontinued projects in the Council. The study recommends project continuity for succeeding governments and that efforts to boost its Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) be scaled up.

**Keywords:** *Analysis; Implementation; Rural development; Project; Area council*

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### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's rural-urban divide remains significant despite numerous national and rural development efforts (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005, Udeh, 1989 and Onokerhoraye, 1978). In terms of quality of life, social benefits, physical amenities, human development, and standard of living, rural areas continue to score poorly when compared to urban areas. This ignores the fact that the country's rural areas are home to the vast majority of the country's population (Chima, 2010). Nigeria's rural areas house 70% of the country's population, according to the 1963 Census. Nigeria's rural population is estimated to be 70.13 percent of the country's total population, according to a more recent report (Yakubu and Aderonmu, 2010). Rural populations constitute 45.3 per cent of the global population but 70 per cent of the world's poorest region (IFPRI, 2019). As a result of the preceding, it appears that rural areas should be given priority in terms of living conditions. Many approaches to bridging the rural-urban development divide have been tried in Nigeria, with mixed results (Okhankhuele and Opafunso, 2013). As a result, rural areas are still lagging behind urban areas in terms of development. It is in the quest to boost the living conditions of the rural dwellers that local governments across the Federal Republic of Nigeria have been making frantic efforts to fulfil their constitutional obligations.

Gwagwalada Area Council in particular initiated several rural development projects to enhance rural development. However, some of these projects failed, others were abandoned halfway, while many more were completed after the scheduled completion dates (Planning, Research and Statistics of the Council, 2000). The foregoing indicates that rural development projects have not been effectively implemented in Gwagwalada Area Council. The pathetic situations as depicted above triggered the curiosity for this paper to investigate factors inhibiting the effective implementation of the rural development projects in Gwagwalada Area Council of Abuja, Nigeria.

### Objectives of the Paper

The overall goal of this paper is to identify the implementation challenges faced by rural development projects in the Gwagwalada Area Council. The specific objectives are as follows:

- i. Determine the extent funding influences rural development projects' implementation of the Council.
- ii. Examine how a change in government impacts rural development projects' implementation of the Council.
- iii. Examine how existing project monitoring mechanisms influence rural development projects' implementation of the Council.
- iv. Investigate how the current workforce affects the implementation of rural development projects' implementation of the Council.

### **Previous Studies and Hypotheses Development**

Different studies have been conducted to examine project implementation challenges. The results have been similar and the contexts in terms of where the research was carried out differ. Echeme (2009), studied the influence of project funding with regards to the implementation of Local Empowerment and Environment Management Projects (LEEMP) development projects in Imo State, Nigeria. The study found that funding significantly impacted project implementation. This study takes a cue from the foregoing and proposes that:

H1: Funding impact significantly on the implementation of rural development projects in Gwagwalada Area Council.

Focusing on Ghana, Sakyi, et al; (2011) studied the roots of government project failure in developing countries and found that change of government has a huge impact on project implementation failure. Thus, this study proposes that:

H2: Change of government influences the implementation of rural development projects in Gwagwalada Area Council.

Nkansah (2012), conducted an investigative study to determine the cause of project failure in the electricity company of Ghana Accra, West Region and found that project management practices like monitoring and control significantly impact the implementation of projects. Therefore, this study proposes that:

H3: Implementation of rural development projects is significantly influenced by control mechanisms in Gwagwalada Area Council.

MacLean et al; (2011) examined the relationship between project implementation and staffing and found that it has a significant influence on the implementation of projects. Thus, this study hypothesizes that:

H4: Workforce in Gwagwalada Area Council do significantly influence the implementation of rural development projects.

### **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

#### **Project Implementation**

It is necessary to first conceptualize the term project to fully comprehend the concept of project implementation. As far back as some decades, Goel (2009) defined a project as the specifications and accomplishments within a given collection of activities that might lead to a measurable change in any government's or system's potential to explicitly or implicitly improve the well-being of the community. Viewing a project in the same manner, Gray and Larson (2008) define it as a sophisticated, non-routine, one-time undertaking limited by time, budget, resources, and performance standards to meet the needs of the client. Relying on the foregoing definition, a project is a coordinated program of a predetermined group of non-routine essential activities to be accomplished using resources available within a limited time (Nagaranjan, 2012). Similarly, Imaga, et al., (2005) define a project as a scientifically developed work plan designed to attain a certain goal within a set time frame. Corroborating the foregoing definitions, a project can be considered an application of knowledge, skill sets, techniques, and methods to project operations to meet or exceed the demands and expectations of stakeholders (Project Management Institute [PMI], 2006). It can be deduced from the foregoing that a project is a planned undertaking that consists of a collection of operations, procedures, or services with the goal of meeting defined objectives within a set budget and time frame. In the nutshell, the conceptualization of the project as could be seen from above are tilting towards a common end. The common understanding that can be arrived at and which applies in this study is that a project is an activity that has a beginning and an end to be achieved using available resources.

Having explicated the concept of the project, it is worthwhile to define project implementation. But before that, what is implementation? Executing activities as contained in the work plan is implementation. Therefore, the implementation of a project is a stage in the life circle of the project where dreams and plans are translated into reality. According to Chandra mentioned in Njiru (2018), project implementation is the process of putting particular actions and mechanisms on the ground to set dreamed investment rolling and get desired project advantages. After evaluating, choosing, visualizing, planning, soliciting financial resources, a logical conclusion must be arrived at. The logical conclusion is the project implementation. The implementation phase is important in the project management circle, because, it allows an organization to ensure its plans come to fruition, guarantees end-users access to better services and a better living environment once projects are completed, success stories and lessons learned can be shared with experts from other cities and towns, encouraging them to adopt similar practices and, as a result, improving project management abilities.

Despite its usefulness, project implementation according to Igwe & Ude (2018), is a phenomenon characterized with intricacies that frequently necessitates simultaneous attention to a range of issues like human, financial, and technical aspects to make it a success which if not consciously handled would lead to the failure of the project. Elonen and Artto (2003) in a somewhat similar way with the foregoing scholar, identified inappropriate pre-project phase

implementation, irregular project progress tracking, and excessively long projects that are difficult to plan pragmatically in detail as the key obstacles in project activities.

Therefore, for a successful implementation of projects, certain factors must be put into consideration. For instance, the resources required for completing a project among others, are men, material, money and time. In the same vein, Jiang, et al; (1996) listed thirteen factors that could contribute to the success of project implementation. These include clearly defined goals (including the project's overall philosophy or mission, as well as team members' dedication to those goals), a skillful project leader, encouragement from the managerial level, proficient project team groups, sufficient allocation of resources, suitable communication channels, regulatory systems, feedback proficiencies, responsiveness to the client, client consultation, technical tasks, client acceptance, and fault detection. In line with the above-stated factors, the study, relying on previous studies, selected funding, change of government, monitoring mechanism and workforce as possible factors that could thwart the realization of effective implementation of projects in Gwagwalada Areas Council.

### **Rural Development**

The concept of rural development has evolved through time as perceptions of development techniques and goals have shifted. Focusing on the human capital development dimension in the rural region, Singh (2009), refers to rural development as the total development of rural areas to raise the quality of life of rural residents. The definition appears narrow in scope because rural development extends beyond a sequence of qualitative changes among rural dwellers to quantitative changes in the population. Changes in the quality of the population without a corresponding change in quantity and vice versa does not guarantee a balanced rural development. It is a process in which a set of social, cultural, technical and institutional initiatives are deployed for residents of rural areas to improve the rural populace's socio-economic conditions. Consequent upon the foregoing, rural development can be defined as a development effort aimed at improving rural inhabitants' consciousness and living standards. It follows that rural development entails a marked improvement in the social ties that control technology, access to land, labour, physical infrastructure, land tenure, access to service and socio-political organizations of society. The productivity, welfare, and quality of life of rural people are the core goals of rural development (Todaro and Smith, 2009). Rural development, according to Ogidefa (2010), entails providing and expanding chances for rural people to reach their full potential through education and participation in decisions and actions that affect their lives. He further elucidates that rural development is a measure to boost rural productivity, generate jobs, and eradicate poverty, diseases and ignorance in its most basic forms. In a similar vein, rural development could be defined as the long-term enhancement of the population's living conditions or wellbeing (Gustav and Kostas, 2007). It is a strategy for achieving long-term structural changes in the rural sector, such as higher productivity and output, significant modifications in industrial equipment and procedures, and a higher standard of living. Suggesting how to achieve the objective of rural development, Tenuche and Ogwo (2005) observed that it should entail the mobilization and distribution of human and material resources existing in rural regions for the wellbeing of rural residents and the overall improvement of their living conditions.

However, it has been realized that the achievement of the objectives of rural development is often clouded with a series of challenges. Omale (2005) attributes the problems of rural development to the following factors namely: a scarcity of professionals in the design and execution of projects and programs, policy and plan inconsistencies which do not create room to pursue long enough rural development for lessons to be learnt. Others are public officials' lack of dedication to duty, greed, and fraud that constitute avenues to rob the country for personal gain. And above all, the non-involvement of the community in development projects is one of the recurring decimals in the problem of Nigerian rural development from the colonial era to the present. Shedding light on the obstacles to the actualization of goals of rural development, Iyoha and Aiya (2003) identify and attribute the problem of rural development to the following: Bad governance, the poor financial base of the local government and reverse resource flow. In the light of the above, it is pertinent to state that the implementation of rural development in Nigeria is shrouded with so many factors, hence, the need to investigate and ascertain factors thwarting the effective implementation of rural development projects in the study location.

## **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

### **Design of the Research**

A Mixed-method approach was utilized in the study. This choice was adopted to avoid method bias and provide a pragmatic understanding of the research problem through a triangulated approach that creates a relationship between the approaches and enriches the findings. The research design utilized was a combination of both a qualitative phenomenological approach with a face-to-face interview and survey research design due to its usefulness in empirical research. The survey is considered paramount because it elicits data from a target population through copies of the questionnaire, interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and subjects' data to statistical analysis to conclude.

**The Population of the Study**

The target population for the study consists of staff of the Gwagwalada Area Council which stands at seven hundred and ninety (790). The choice of Gwagwalada Area Council staff is that they are directly involved in the implementation of rural development projects and also responsible for the funding, providing qualified workforce and monitoring of the implementation of rural development projects (Irechukwu and Chima, 2012). Also, key informants' interview was conducted on ten (10) ward leaders in the Area Council.

**Sample Size**

The sample size of the study is two hundred and sixty-six (266), obtained through Taro Yamane statistical formula. This is shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = sample size,  
 N = population size  
 E = level of significance  
 N = 790  
 E = 0.05 (error margin)

$$n = \frac{790}{1 + 790(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{790}{1 + 790(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{790}{1 + 1.975}$$

$$n = \frac{790}{2.975}$$

$$= 265.546$$

The sample size is approximately = 266

A simple and stratified sampling technique was utilized to ensure that all members of the population have equal chances of being selected. To obtain sample size from each stratum, the formula suggested by the University of California at Davis was utilized. The formula states that: (Sample size of the strata = size of entire sample / population size \* layer size) (<http://www.statisticshowto.com/stratified-random-sample/>).

Since; the entire sample = 266  
 Population size = 790

Layer size= number of people in strata

The sample size for each stratum is given below:

**Method of Data Collection**

Key informant interview was conducted with ten (10) ward leaders in the ten political wards that make up Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja. The face-to-face interviews lasted 30 minutes with each of the interviewees. Several scholars supported those 10 participants in a face-to-face interview are sufficient to reach data saturation (Adler and Adler, 2012; Bryman, 2012; Saunders and Townsend, 2016; Wali and Nwokah, 2017). For ethical consideration, due to the sensitive nature of the study, the researchers ensured that permission was obtained from the respondents.

Questionnaire was also utilized because of the large sample size. It was modelled on the Likert scale with response mode of Strongly Agree (SA)5, Agree (A)4, and Undecided (U)3, Strongly disagree (SD)2 and Disagree (D)1. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section (A) focuses on project funding in Gwagwalada Area Council, Section (B) deals with the change of government and implementation of rural development projects in the Area Council, Section (C) dwells on the monitoring mechanism and implementation of the rural development project in the Area Council and Section (D) deals with workforce and the implementation of rural development projects in the Area Council.

**Validity and Reliability of Instrument**

The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation. This was done with the support of experts in public administration and project management. Expert opinions formed a significant part in the design of the research instrument. The study adopted the internal consistency method of reliability. It ensured reduction of construct validity by deriving the research variables from existing theoretical frameworks. Further, the instrument of the study was trial-tested on 20 randomly selected staff of the Area Council. The data obtained were analysed using Cronbach

Alpha reliability coefficient to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. According to Hair et al., (2003), reliability index of 0.8-0.95 (High reliability), 0.7-0.8 (Good reliability), 0.6-0.7 (Fair reliability) and < 0.6 (Poor reliability). The table below shows the reliability of the instrument.

**Table 1: Reliability Result**

Variables	Reliability Index	No of Items
Funding	0.750	5
Change of Government	0.732	5
Monitoring Mechanism	0.869	5
Workforce	0.877	5
Implementation	0.804	5

The results from table I above indicate that the instruments are reliable and suitable to measure what it intends to measure, given the reliability index above 0.70 for all the variables in the paper.

**Method of Data Analysis**

The study did content and thematic analysis with the aid of Nvivo11 for the interview result obtained. Further, the study used inferential statistics, specifically, multiple regression for the test of hypotheses. The choice of multiple regression was utilized as an analytical tool due to the nature of the problem statement of the study, which included two or more independent variables and a predictor variable. The Statistic Package for Social Science (SPSSv23) was used to perform the multiple regression analysis.

Decision rule: at 95 per cent level of significance, reject the null hypothesis if the calculated p-value is less than 0.05 (p < 0.05), and admit it if the calculated p-value is higher than 0.05 (p > 0.05).

**Model Specification**

The reviews provided a yardstick from existing literature; thus, the model specifications below were used to test the four hypotheses.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 + \beta_2 + \beta_3 + \beta_4 + \epsilon_t$$

$$Imp = \beta_0 + F + CG + MM + WF + \epsilon_t$$

Where:

- $\beta_0$  = Constant
- Imp = Implementation
- F = Funding
- CG = Change of Government
- MM = Monitoring Mechanism
- WF = Workforce
- $\epsilon_t$  = Error Term

**Justification of the Model**

The choice of using multiple regression estimation methods was due to the number of variables in the study that is influenced by the nature of the research problem of the study that seeks to measure the influence of the independent variable in relation to the dependent variable.

**Data Presentation and Test of Hypotheses**

The hypotheses stated earlier are repeated and tested at a significant level of 5 per cent and the study variables were checked for normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity to meet the fundamental and underpinning assumptions of multiple regression analysis, as suggested by Hair et al., (2003). In this study, the normality assumption was met as the residual appears to be normal as suggested by Sekaran and Bougie (2010). In this paper, the linearity assumption was met as residual scattered around 0. The VIF values are less than 10 while the tolerance values are more than 10 as indicated in table 4, thereby, indicating that the assumption of multicollinearity is met and the scatter plot also shows the assumption of homoscedasticity is also met.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Assessment of the Implementation of Rural Development Projects in Gwagwalada Area Council

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Implementation	4.5833	.49399	252
Funding	4.4524	.49872	252
Change of government	4.5119	.52417	252
Workforce	4.4286	.49586	252
Monitoring mechanisms	4.3571	.48011	252

Table 2 indicates the descriptive statistics on the variable of the study. Sekaran & Bougie, (2010) suggest that a score of less than 2.33 is considered low, a score of 2.33 to 3.67 is considered moderate, and a score of 3.67 or higher is considered high. The mean represents the data set's average value, whereas the standard deviation is a measure of

spread or dispersion that provides an index of variability in the data set. According to the results above, Implementation has the highest mean (M=4.580, SD=.493), followed by Change of government (M=4.512, SD=.524), but Monitoring Mechanisms has the lowest mean (M=4.36, SD=.480). Eventually, all of the variable means were at a high level.

Table 3: Model Summary Result on Assessment of the Implementation of Rural Development Projects in Gwagwalada Area Council.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
	.790	.625	.619	.30507	1.435

Table 3 shows the multiple regression results on the assessment of the implementation of rural development projects in the Gwagwalada area council. The overall models (funding, change of government, monitoring mechanism and workforce) were evaluated in terms of their ability to predict project implementation in Gwagwalada area council; showing R= .790, R<sup>2</sup>= .625, adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.619, SD = .3051. The R is the multiple correlation coefficient between the variables. The multiple correlation coefficient between the variables was .790. This means that there is a strong positive correlation between the variables, which is 79% strength of association. The R square is the coefficient of determination between the predictors and the criterion variable. The R square = .625, indicating that there is a 62.5% shared coefficient of determination between the independent variables and the dependent variable. This simply means that the predictors (funding, change of government, monitoring mechanism and workforce) accounted for 62.5% of the variance in project implementation in the Gwagwalada area council. The adjusted R square shows a better estimate of the true population to be .619, this means that if the model is used on a new data set 61.9% of variability will be accounted for in the same data set. The Durbin-Watson value of 1.523 (which is less than the threshold of 2) indicates the absence of serial or autocorrelation among the variables.

Table 4: ANOVA Result on Assessment of the Implementation of Rural Development Projects in Gwagwalada Area Council

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	38.262	4	9.565	102.776	.000
Residual	22.988	247	.093		
Total	61.250	251			

The ANOVA results are presented in Table 4. The results indicate the fitness of the model. The F-statistics of 102.76, with its corresponding P-value of 0.000 indicates that the model is fit. The P-values indicate the effect is significant at 5% level for both the independent and dependent variables.

Table 5: Coefficients Result on Assessment of the Implementation of Rural Development Projects in Gwagwalada Area Council

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error				Tolerance	e VIF
(Constant)	.588	.206		2.855	.005		
Funding	.264	.058	.266	4.578	.000	.449	2.230
Change of government	.390	.063	.414	6.230	.000	.344	2.911
Workforce	.044	.066	.044	.661	.509	.347	2.879
Monitoring Mechanisms	.199	.051	.193	3.919	.000	.626	1.597

H1: The implementation of rural development projects is not significantly affected by funding in Gwagwalada Area Council.

Table 5 above shows that the t-statistic for funding is 4.578 (p-value <0.05) and the beta is .266. As a result, there is enough evidence to prove that the implementation of rural development projects is significantly affected by funding in Gwagwalada Area Council. Hence, H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and alternate accepted.

H2: Change of government does not significantly affect the implementation of rural development projects in Gwagwalada Area Council.

The coefficient from Table 5 above provides a basis for concluding that change of government affects the implementation of rural development projects, given that the t-statistics is 6.230 (p-value <0.05) and beta is .414. This implies that the change of government significantly affects the implementation of rural development projects in Gwagwalada Area Council. Hence, H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and alternate accepted.

H3: Implementation of rural development projects is not significantly affected by monitoring mechanisms in Gwagwalada Area Council.

As shown in Table 5, the t-statistics for the monitoring mechanism is 3.919 (p-value < 0.05) and beta is .193. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the implementation of rural development projects is significantly affected by monitoring mechanisms in Gwagwalada Area Council. Hence, H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and alternate accepted.

H4: Workforce in Gwagwalada Area Council does not significantly affect the Implementation of rural development projects.

As shown in Table 5, the t-statistics for workforce is 0.0661 (p-value > 0.05) and beta is .044. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that workforce in Gwagwalada Area Council does not significantly affect the implementation of the rural development project. Hence,  $H_0$  is accepted and alternate rejected.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The Tables above shows the multiple regression results on the assessment of the implementation of rural development projects in Gwagwalada Area Council. The overall models (funding, change of government, monitoring mechanism and workforce) were evaluated in terms of their ability to predict project implementation in Gwagwalada Area council; showing  $R = .790$ ,  $R^2 = .625$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .619$ ,  $SD = .3051$ . The multiple correlation coefficient between the variables is denoted by R. The multiple correlation coefficients were .790. This implies that there is a significant positive correlation between the variables, with a strength of association of 79 per cent. The R square is the coefficient of determination between the predictors and the criterion variable. The R square = .625 indicates that there is a 62.5% shared coefficient of determination between the independent variables and the dependent variable. This simply means that the predictors (funding, change of government, monitoring mechanism and workforce) accounted for 62.5% of the variance in project implementation in Gwagwalada Area Council. The adjusted R square shows a better estimate of the true population to be .619, this means that if the model is used on a new data set 61.9% of variability will be accounted for in the same data set. The Durbin-Watson value of 1.523 (which is less than the threshold of 2) indicates the absence of serial or autocorrelation among the variables.

The ANOVA results were presented in table 3. The results indicate the fitness of the model. The F-statistics of 102.76.923 with its corresponding P-value of 0.000 indicates that the model is fit. The P-value indicates that the effect is significant at a 5% level for both the independent and dependent variables.

Table 4 is the Coefficient table from which the regression line is extracted. The regression line  $IMP = 0.588 + 0.264F + 0.390CG + 0.044WF + 0.199 MM$  indicates that implementation of rural development projects in Gwagwalada Area Council improves by 58.8% for every 1% increase or decrease in independent variables (Funding, change of government, workforce and monitoring mechanisms). Furthermore, each independent variable's relative contribution was shown above beneath the standardized coefficient. The largest beta coefficient is the change of government ( $\beta = .414$ ), which means that change of government offers the most significant and unique contribution to elucidating obstacles to the implementation of rural development projects in Gwagwalada Area Council; when the variance is explained by all other variables in the model are controlled. This was neatly followed by funding with ( $\beta = .266$ ). Workforce makes ( $\beta = .044$ ) and has the least contribution to explaining the implementation of rural development projects in Gwagwalada Area Council. This means that change of government affects project implementation the most followed by funding in Gwagwalada Area Council.

The revelations from the quantitative analysis are almost similar to the outcomes of the qualitative analysis results. The change of government was found influential in project implementation in the Area Council. The extent of the influence is expressed in the views that change of government is fundamental to improved project implementation as the perceived interest associated to project implementation is often an influencer to project implementation in the Area council. Respondent 6 who is a chief in the Dobi community in Gwagwalada Area Council, asserted that.....

*"Hmmm change of government from Party A to Party B, has affected Area Council projects badly. As soon as the project is not credited to the succeeding party, that marks the end of the project. The construction of a double cell culvert in Old kutunkun awarded 2014 was abandoned, the construction of a prototype health clinic at Dobi was also abandoned. Also, most of these projects are awarded to their Party members even though there are better hands outside to do the job. Most of our community projects are used as a rewarding ground for Party loyalists. Project leadership changed immediately, as soon as, there is a change of government".*

The responses to the interviews with regards to funding were almost similar to the quantitative analysis. The majority of the respondents expressed confidence that funding is perceived as the major problem to the implementation of projects in Gwagwalada Area Council. However, two of the respondents stated that funding is majorly a business of the contractor and there is no way they will have full knowledge of whether it influences the implementation of rural development projects. Respondents 6 and 4 both expressed jointly that:

*"Funding has been the major reason why most of our community projects have been abandoned. Most of the contractors complained that money was not released to them on time by the Area Council which leaves the project to be completed halfway and last beyond the completion period".*

A major theme that remained repetitive in the content result from the interview was the opinion that funding is a major factor and moderated by politics, this is evident with the expressed opinions that:

*"Some criticize the government of wasting money, to initiate a project, they cannot complete, the example is the portable water scheme in Paiko Kore awarded 2008 and now is in the desolate form, construction*

*of Gwako I road abandoned etc. the manner they award contracts is terrible, the Area Council only award contracts to benefit the interest of the few (politicians) not the interest of the masses. Even before, they award a contract; the percentage they stand to gain from the contract must be negotiated and agreed upon before awarding it, not the interest of the masses. That is why; there is no too much noise when the project is completed halfway by the contractors because the "oga at the top done wash mouth from the beginning".*

It was also indicated that there is a lack of monitoring mechanisms to check project implementation in the Area Council. The respondents in their entirety expressed confidence that the existence of a monitoring mechanism will be vital to project implementation in the area council. Respondent 8 stated that....

*"Which monitoring mechanism? Nothing like that oo. Even the host communities are not carried along in development projects oo. We are more like a spectator".*

However, a major theme that was discovered in the analysis was a monitoring framework that should be holistic taking into cognizance beneficiaries of the project with requisite expertise as members of the monitoring mechanisms. Beneficiary monitoring team membership was defined as the participation of host beneficiary communities in the evaluation and monitoring of projects within their vicinity.

The responses indicated that the workforce is not essential to the implementation of projects. This is in line with the outcome of quantitative analysis. The workforces are often dependent on the project for survival. Most of the workers are hired workers and the projects are mainly handled by contractors. The respondents expressed their opinion via the interview that the workforce has no significant influence on rural development of projects, as they are mainly a tool for job completion and not often taken seriously as a critical factor to project implementation.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study investigates factors inhibiting the implementation of rural development projects in the Area Council with the sole aim to determine the most influential factors on the implementation of the projects. The result indicated that funding, change of government, monitoring mechanism and workforce influence implementation of Area Council's rural development projects. However, the overall ranking of these factors that affect the implementation of rural development projects in the council shows that change of government and funding are ranked as the topmost factors that affect the implementation of rural development projects. This is followed by monitoring mechanism and workforce respectively. The study, therefore, concludes that project implementation is a vital issue to rural development; hence, the Area Council should as a matter of urgency implement the strategies suggested in this study, to curb the issue of discontinuity of projects when there is a change of government and overdependence on external sources for funding rural development projects. Sequel to the findings and conclusion arrived at; the following recommendations were proffered.

### **Funding and Implementation of Rural Development Projects**

The Area Council should make a frantic effort to boost its internally generated revenue through property rate, fees, fines etc., to avoid heavy dependence on external sources of revenue accruing to it for the funding of rural development projects.

There should be a prompt release of funds to the contractor after the valuation of the projects by the Council regardless of the emerging political leadership of the Council. The party should be seen as the vehicle to win the election, not a yardstick to delay the release of funds to the contractor who is not in the same party with the emerging leadership.

iii. Financial autonomy should be granted to local governments to avoid the state government from interfering with their financial autonomy through the State Joint Local Government Account (SJLGA). Local government councils' development efforts have been impeded as a result of this. Sections 162(6) and (8) of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution should be repealed as a remedy for this highly unsatisfactory condition.

The sub-sections on SJLGA should be replaced with (a) direct transfers to local government councils and (b) the establishment of an independent audit agency comprised of federal, state, local government, and private members via a constitutional change. They should be shouldered with the responsibility to supervise, inspect, and audit the usage of funds. Members must have a documented track record of financial management. Accountability and transparency will improve in the use of local government finances by providing checks and balances on local government officials' financial administration.

### **Change of Government and Implementation of Rural Development Projects**

i. To avoid monumental waste of resources, there should be projects continuity by the succeeding government, and the idea of whether the project will be credited to that party or not should be disregarded. The succeeding government should continue from where the predecessor stopped to avoid incessant projects abandonment in the Area Council. In the spirit of indigene-ship and natives of Area Council, the succeeding government should set aside party affiliation and focus on the completion of the existing project without abandoning it.



- ii. Merit as against party patronage, unlike spoilt system whereas party patronage, overtook merit system and winner takes all should be avoided. The implementation of rural development projects in the area council should not be a rewarding ground for party loyalists but rather based on merit. In the process of bidding for contracts, the contractor who merited it should claim the contracts not the other way round. This will enhance quality work and avoid mediocrity associated with the implementation of rural development projects in the Council.
- iii. An independent institutional framework should be set up upon which funds should be released to contractors to avoid delays in the release of funds when there is a change of government.

#### **Monitoring Mechanism and Implementation of Rural Development Projects**

- i. There should be an effective and efficient monitoring team that report exactly what they saw on the field without frivolities. The quality of work must be tested and project progress must be reported as well.
- ii. The monitoring team should be motivated to show commitment to their work.
- iii. Council leadership should not entertain any delay in replacing a non-committed member of the monitoring team with the best hand that could do the job.
- iv. The acronyms for team "together everyone achieve more" should be a watchword among the monitoring team members.

#### **Existing Workforce and Implementation of Rural Development Projects**

- i. Though the existing workforce is sufficient, trained, motivated, however, they lack the sophisticated equipment to implement the rural development projects in the Area Council. Sophisticated equipment, like caterpillars, bulldozers, excavators, backhoe loader, skid-steer loader, tracked loader, trencher, motor grader, crawler loader, scrapers should be made available by the council.
- ii. The Area Council should utilize its existing workforce in the implementation of rural development projects than resort to hiring workers to cut the cost of governance.

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