

THE BETTER-LIFE-PROGRAMME AND THE RURAL ECONOMY OF NIGERIA*

ABSTRACT

This study has attempted to assess the impact of the Better-Life-Programme (BLP) on the rural economy. The findings showed that despite the short period of its existence, the Programme has attracted notable attention and patronage by all and sundry. In particular attention is beginning to be given to the overall plight of women, children and the rural dwellers in general through several incentives and public campaigns. Although mixed trends were observed in the degree of implementation of the project in different states, the efforts so far, represent a remarkable achievement, given the fact that it focussed on economic and social programmes targeted at people who were often neglected by the general macro-economic policies and public expenditure programmes.

However, the scope and spread of these efforts appeared limited and confined to mostly the rural elite and few urban poor, while undue emphasis was placed, in some cases, on fanfare and propaganda campaigns. Among the notable achievements were the supply of farm inputs and credit to women farming cooperative groups; diversification and stimulation of interest in non-traditional farming activities such as handicraft and cottage industries, provision of primary health care, vocational training and social welfare services to rural women.

An overall view of the performance of the rural economy since the inception of the Programme suggested some improvements, all of which may not be attributable to the BLP alone. There were improvements in the incomes and standard of living, in addition to the gains in adult literacy, health, demography and recreational opportunities.

Among the problems which faced the Programme were inadequate funding, weak base for the provision of extension, input supply, credit and marketing services; socio-cultural factors which limited women's participation and access to land and an overwhelming poor state of infrastructures. The challenges identified were the weak base for technological improvements and financing of the projects, limited market opportunities for the products of the Programme's beneficiaries, and administrative lapses.

BLP has the potential to improve the standard of living of women, children and the rural people within the medium- and long-term, provided enough commitment is given to its funding, planning, implementation and overall management. This calls for a progressive shift from the current ad-hoc policy approach to the Programme, to a redirection of public economic and social expenditure programmes towards the goals and objectives of the BLP.

Introduction

The alleviation of poverty has generally been the cornerstone of economic policy in Nigeria. As such, past policies especially under the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) have been pursued with the aim of improving the living standards of the people through enhanced income and generation of employment opportunities. And indeed, with

the advent of the "oil boom" era in the early 1970s, substantial investments were made in stimulating employment and expanding investment in basic life sustaining amenities such as water, light, shelter, health, education, and communication. But, with the rapid expansion in population, coupled with the defective policy strategies adopted, such efforts proved inadequate, while there was no doubt that the majority of the people live in very poor conditions. In particular while fiscal, monetary, trade, pricing and exchange rates policies pursued ensured the rapid enhancement of the earning opportunities of a few urban dwellers, the rural economy was neglected. In addition, water, light, communication, shelter, education and health facilities were mostly cited in urban centres while only a handful of these trickled down to the rural areas. Although few specific rural development programmes were embarked upon, outside the scope of economy-wide programmes for national development, not much had been achieved to date. Basic rural production support services such as Agricultural extension services, input supply, marketing and credit facilities were often not well implemented.

Even then, these programmes for alleviating poverty among the rural people have often discriminated against the rural women. Economic opportunities for women were often limited by societal norms and values which restrict their access to land and the extent of active participation in economic activities. To overcome these impediments and uplift the living standards of the rural women, the First Lady Mrs. Maryam Babangida initiated the Better Life Programme (BLP), which has as its main focus, improving the earning opportunities and alleviation of poverty and ignorance of the rural women. In spite of the laudable goal of the Programme, experience has shown that effective monitoring of its implementation is essential to avoid its becoming another grandiose but weak government project.

The aim of this study therefore is to review and appraise the programme focusing mainly on:—

- (i) its objectives, organisation and financing;
- (ii) its achievement relative to the set goals, and overall impact on rural economy, and
- (iii) a discussion of the problems, issues and challenges posed by its implementation strategy.

The rest of the paper is divided into four parts: Part I

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reviews the objectives and organisation of the Better Life Programme. Part II assesses the Programme's achievements with regard to the supply of rural development support services. Part III gives impressionistic view of its impact on the rural life; Part IV discusses the problems and challenges which confront the Programme, while the final part presents the summary, conclusion and policy recommendations.

PART I

OBJECTIVES AND ORGANISATION, OF THE BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME

Background

The origin of the Better Life Programme (BLP) can be traced to the First Lady Her Excellency Mrs. Maryam Babangida's determination to uplift the status of the Nigerian women in general and the rural women in particular. This identifies with some of the economic policy measures of the Structural Adjustment Programme aimed at boosting economic activities in the rural areas. The policy measures were designed to enhance rural incomes and arrest the rural-urban drift and thus strengthen the rural landscape. The BLP was evolved in September 1987 as one of the vehicles for the promotion of rural development and in particular, the elevation of the status of women in the society. The Programme's orientation has been to harness the creative energies of women for concrete and achievable goals both as individuals and as a group. An important element of the BLP is the recognition of the potentials of the rural women to contribute to the attainment of national goals and aspirations. The potentials of the millions of illiterate and semi-illiterate women in the rural areas are enormous. According to the 1975 Report of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)¹, the rural women perform all the work in the food processing, 60 per cent in marketing, 50 per cent in livestock and animal production and more than 70 per cent in food crop farming. Thus, the Programme was designed to exploit and maximize the potentials in the rural women to aid national socio-economic development.

Objectives

Within the policy framework of harnessing the resources in the rural areas of the country and making living in those areas more attractive, the Better Life Programme aims at:

- (a) encouraging and stimulating the rural women in particular and the rural populace in general, towards improving their standards of living, and their environment;
- (b) inculcating the spirit of self-development in rural women through the promotion of rural education business and recreation; and
- (c) creating greater awareness among the populace about the plight of women.

More specifically, the Programme objectives are designed to:

- (i) raise the social consciousness of women about their rights, as well as their social, political and economic responsibilities;
- (ii) bring women together and closer for better understanding and resolution of their problems through collective action;
- (iii) mobilise women for concrete activities towards achieving specific objectives, including seeking leadership roles in all spheres of national life;
- (iv) stimulate and motivate women in rural areas towards achieving a better and higher standard of living as well as to sensitize the general populace of the plight of rural women;
- (v) educate women on simple hygiene, family planning and on the importance of child care;
- (vi) enlighten women in rural areas on opportunities and facilities available to them at their local government areas;
- (vii) improve and enrich family life; and
- (viii) encourage and institutionalise recreation.

Programmes and Projects

The core of the programmes under the BLP are in the areas of women organisation and mobilisation, welfare, education, agriculture, rural industrialisation, civic responsibilities and the establishment of a National Commission for Women. Consequently, the BLP embarked on a package of projects, based upon the specific needs of each community to another. The programmes and projects of the BLP include:

- (i) formation of co-operatives to provide better access to and utilisation of production resources and credit facilities;
- (ii) establishment of cottage and small-scale industries to improve the productivity of rural women and their income generating capabilities;
- (iii) enlightenment of rural dwellers on improved health care and importance of family planning;
- (iv) intensification of the free education policy made compulsory particularly for girls, via the establishment of multi-purpose women centres where functional and vocational education classes can take place;
- (v) encouragement of rural women to produce more varieties of local arts and crafts; and
- (vi) statutory representation of women in the legisla-

¹See FAO working paper No. 3, *Agricultural Credit problems in Nigeria: A case study*, FAO 1975.

ture, etc.

Organisation of Supply of BLP Services

These projects and programmes are designed to provide and integrate improved basic production, temporarily required development phase and ancillary support services into the rural institutional, social and administrative structures. The basic rural production support services comprise mainly extension, input supply, credit and marketing services.

The temporarily required development phase support services comprise mainly construction services to build plants and install machineries, for instance, for food processing, handicraft and cottage industries. The ancillary support are mainly the research and training of programme's beneficiary and personnel, and all other social services like health, education, social welfare, enlightenment and mobilization programmes. The supply of basic production support services under the BLP is organised by the community based rural self-help organisation.² The formation of these associations is usually motivated and sponsored by the local government chapter of the BLP. The association usually identifies the cooperative rural agricultural and cottage industrial enterprises they want to embark upon. After a preliminary feasibility study of the project, the proposal is packaged for implementation through self-help effort. Consequently, extension services are catered for by mainly the state chapter of the BLP which normally liaises with the relevant research and input supply institutions to ensure that the group obtains the relevant improved seeds and technologies, and other inputs at subsidized rates. The state BLP also ensures that the group procures credit from the NDE and the People's Bank to run the enterprise. And finally, the BLP assists the group to gain access to the markets both locally and internationally for their products.

The development phase and ancillary support services are usually supplied by the relevant government development agencies based on the needs of the self-help group and at the instance and request of the BLP. Usually DFRRRI assists with the provision of rural infrastructures, while the ministries of health, and the newly established ministry of rural development and women affairs state-wide assists with the provision of ancillary support services.

Administration

The administration of BLP is based on a nation-wide net-work consisting of a National Headquarters and State and Local Government Chapters. The National Headquarters is headed and co-ordinated by the First Lady assisted by a National Planning Committee. This function may soon be transferred to the newly created National Commission for Women. The State Chapters are headed by the wives of the States Military Governors and their activities are co-ordinated by the Directorate of Women Affairs in each state, while the Local Government Chapters are headed by the wives of Chairmen of Local Government Councils and maintain functional offices in the local government areas. Since its inception, the BLP Headquarters have been in dialogue with Federal Government Ministries and Agencies such as Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRRI), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in order to obtain the

required assistance and support for the Programme. Another outstanding feature of the implementation strategy is the staging of Better Life Fairs. The objectives of the fairs are to highlight the problems of rural women and to publicise their activities in the areas of farming, handicrafts, home management etc. and thus provide opportunities for the recognition of their economic potentials. It is also expected that the fairs would provide a forum of interaction and co-operation and therefore expand economic links and market outlets at both local and international levels.

Financing

The financing of the basic production support services under the BLP is by the rural-based self-help organisations. They depend on financial resources mobilized from members under their cooperative thrift (savings) and credit schemes, and on loans procured from the NDE, People's Bank and other financial institutions. Available data show that estimated sums of ₦4.6 million and ₦1.7 million have been received from DFRRRI and NDE, respectively, by the BLP beneficiaries in the states surveyed to support on-lending credit programmes (see Table 4). With these funds they pay for the procurement of extension, inputs and market services supplied. In most cases, they enjoy a lot of price subsidies, which normally reduce their inputs and services procurement costs considerably. Available data show that the price paid per bag of fertiliser by the beneficiaries of the BLP varies from nothing to about ₦5, as against the official selling price of between ₦25 and ₦45 per bag. Most other social services are also rendered free-of-charge, while interest rates paid on credit procurement are considerably low. Interest rates paid by beneficiaries on credit supplied was insignificant and in most cases less than 5 per cent.

The financing of the development-phase and ancillary support services is by grants received mainly from state and local governments, DFRRRI, NDE, ADP and several multi-lateral organisations such as UNICEF, UNDF, McAuthur Foundation and some foreign governments. Available data so far show that the state governments of the respondent states have provided an estimated amount of ₦17.6 million, representing 52.4 per cent, of the total funds while the multilateral agencies have given a grant of ₦4.1 million in addition to donations in kind. Philanthropists in Nigeria have given about ₦2.3 million while, foreign governments have given donations both in cash and in kind to fund the project. The local governments have given about ₦0.5 million to support the programme (see Table 4). The administrative and overhead costs of the Better Life Programme are borne mainly by the state and local governments.

PART II

EFFECTS OF THE BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME ON THE SUPPLY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SERVICES

A. METHODOLOGY

The basic research strategy followed by this study was two-fold. Firstly, a survey was carried out throughout the country to generate primary data on the achievements of

² It is estimated that 150 such co-operatives exist in each state.

the BLP. Questionnaires which solicited for basic information on the activities of the BLP were administered to the Headquarters and all the State Directorate of Women Affairs. Out of the 22 questionnaires administered at the State government level, 19 were retrieved and analysed. (Lagos, Kwara and Abuja failed to respond). This was supplemented by the sample of BLP activities in three local government's in each of the eight states of the federation viz: Oyo, Bendel, Rivers, Anambra, Bauchi, Plateau, Kano and Sokoto. This was done in order to give an insight into the inter-relationship between the state and local governments programme. In these local governments, an impressionistic questionnaire was administered at random to 10 rural dwellers each in order to capture their impression of the programme.

Secondly, secondary data on basic macroeconomic and sector specific indicators of standard of living were compiled from many sources viz, World Bank, CBN and FOS. This covered the period pre-and-post commencement of BLP (1963 to 1989, and where available, up to June 1990), and focussed on GDP, Prices, Population, Employment, Nutrition, Health, Demography, Fertility, and Education etc.

The method of analysis employed for the assessment of BLP achievements is largely descriptive and qualitative, while that for secondary data was mainly a comparative description of the estimates of these indicators "with and without" BLP. This represents a departure from the usual methods of programmes evaluation which normally dwell on the comparison of the socio-economic costs and benefits of the projects.

B. GENERAL APPRAISAL

The results of the survey show that considerable efforts have been made both at the national, state and local government levels at mobilising women and the rural dwellers towards achieving some of the goals of the BLP. Women have been organised into various groups, most the then engaged in income generating activities for their benefits, while some were given vocational training. A number of social welfare programmes were also embarked upon. A preliminary assessment of the overall achievements with regard to project implements exhibits mixed trends in terms of spread and scope, emphasis, and overall focus of the targets.

In terms of scope, their activities cut across a wide range of economic and social programmes such as agriculture, cottage industries, crafts, health, social welfare, education and enlightenment. Emphasis and the level of achievements differ from state to state. While some states have made some efforts to better the lots of rural people through economic activities, many have concentrated on propaganda and enlightenment campaigns. Ironically, states which have emphasised economic activities show some evidence of clear-cut plan of programmes worthy of implementation, while those which have invested more on enlightenment and propaganda have displayed a weak base for programme plans and implementation.

In terms of spread, available information show that about 150 women organisations made up of between 15 to 20 members have been reached by the BLP with basic production support services. This suggests that of the estimated population of 35 to 40 million rural dwellers in Nigeria not

more than 0.5 to 0.2 million (about 1.4 to 1.8 per cent) have benefited directly from the Programme. With regard to the social awareness campaigns, the beneficiaries were estimated to be significantly more than that.

In terms of targets, the findings generally were that for primary production activities, the rural illiterate poor have been the major beneficiaries of BLP while the rural elites have benefited more from the enlightenment campaigns, vocational trainings, and participation in trade fairs.

C. SPECIFIC APPRAISAL

1. AGRICULTURE

(a) Seed Distribution

The programme has assisted women group farmers in the rural areas through the provision of improved seeds and seedlings. Although the system of procurement and distribution of these seeds and seedlings vary from state to state, the most common practice for officers of BLPs is to liaise with state agencies responsible for producing the seeds and making these available to the rural women. Available information shows that about 183 tonnes of seeds and 188.54 million seedlings valued at about ₦7.55 million have been distributed to women farmers through the Programme since the inception of the BLP. Although this amount is far below the set target of 1,278 tonnes of seeds and 492.31 million seedlings for 1990, the shortfalls was due largely to inadequate funds rather than non-availability of seeds (see Table 1).

(b) Fertilizer Distribution

Having realised that the rural women are among the disadvantaged groups in terms of fertilizer distribution, the BLP embarked on acquiring fertilizer from the Federal Government for distribution to women farmers at controlled prices. A total of about 9,974 tonnes of fertilizers have been distributed by the BLP to women in the country. This amount is also below the requirements of the women. The reasons adduced for the non-achievement of the target include lack of funds, inadequate supply by the authorities and competition for fertilizer by the men-folk (see Table 1).

(c) Development Support Services

A total of 215 thousand hectares of land have been cleared and prepared for cultivation through the assistance of the BLP. Irrigation facilities like pumps, sprinklers and bore-holes valued at about ₦325,000 were provided through the BLP in some rural areas in the country (see Table 1).

(d) **Market Support Services**

Available information shows that under the Programme women are more involved in food processing than in crop production. For instance, the Kano State Chapter of the BLP has the objective of controlling all food processing in the State and leaving crop production to the men. Various types of processing mills have been provided by the BLP in the various states depending on the staple food in the immediate neighbourhood as well as the major crops produced in such areas. The types and number of mills that have been provided by the BLP can be seen on Table 1.

(e) **Credit Facilities**

The BLP has observed that one of the problems affecting most of the women groups was lack of adequate working capital as well as lack of collaterals for credit from institutional sources. In the light of this, the Programme in most of the States has initiated revolving loan facilities to the women groups. Loans have been given to as many as 233 groups amounting to ₦1.531 million (see Table 4). In view of the repayment rate which is very high and the judicious use of the money given to the women groups, some state chapters of the BLP have negotiated for more loans from financial institutions using the joint liability strategy in some cases and standing as guarantors to the groups in other cases.

2. COTTAGE INDUSTRIES AND CRAFTS

As part of its activities, the BLP has made efforts to develop the skills of the rural women through the establishment and equipment of various cottage industries in rural communities. As many as twenty-one (21) cottage industries were identified during the survey. They range from small hand crafts like the knitting and sewing machines to semi-large processing mills like the rice and maize mills which number about 14 and 23, respectively in the country. Other cottage industries include groundnut oil mills numbering about 4, guinea corn mills (10), yam flour/cassava flour mills (10), hulling machines (31), and fish smoking ovens (12). In all the cases, the number of industries sited were far below the estimated targets required. This situation was said to be due largely to inadequate funds for these projects. The Federal Government through DFRRRI and NDE gave grants of only ₦250,000 and ₦100,000, respectively, per state for the establishment of these cottage industries and crafts as well as forming the base fund for revolving interest-free loans to the rural women to operate these industries. This amount is considered too meagre to create any impact in the development of cottage industries and crafts in the rural areas.

It was observed that the women were also taught some crafts like knitting, crotchetting, tailoring, soap and

pomade-making. Other crafts like weaving and pottery which were already existing with the rural populace were improved upon through the provision of better and more efficient implements like looms for weaving for which about 50 units were provided, and potters' wheels and kilns for pottery for which about 138 units were provided (see Table 2).

3. HEALTH

The primary objective of the BLP in this area is to motivate women into providing social amenities and services — like health centres, maternity homes and vocational centres in their communities. Consequently, the BLP has made series of efforts to inculcate the importance of health care among the rural women through various health programmes and enlightenment campaigns. Efforts have also been made to educate the rural women on personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, nutrition, immunisation, family planning, oral rehydration therapy (ORT) and traditional birth attendant system. These efforts have made considerable impact on the lives of some families in the rural areas in most of the states visited. For instance, in Sokoto State, most families have now realised the importance of clean water and management of water from all available sources such that the incidence of water borne diseases, which hitherto, was common in the state has now dropped considerably. Other efforts made by the BLP to promote its health programme include the provision of some health facilities nation-wide such as four maternity centres, 25 mini-pharmacies, 2 Vesico vagina Fistula (VVF) centres and 2 mobile clinics (see Table 3).

4. SOCIAL WELFARE

In this area, the BLP in its efforts towards improving the welfare of the general public most especially the handicapped and children, has provided such social amenities as 691 day-care centres, 22 Homes for the handicapped and about 34 parks for recreation. In some states where these have not been provided, the BLP has made efforts to equip existing centres with the basic infrastructures required by such centres.

5. EDUCATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

For the purpose of educating women and girls in the rural areas, BLP has embarked on equipping and in some cases taking over existing women centres in the states. Rural women have been encouraged to attend adult literacy classes. Some of the activities taught in the centres include adult literacy; basic hygiene; home economics and nutrition; tailoring; knitting and crotchetting; soap, pomade- and candle-making; and typing as well as local arts and crafts.

Workshops, Seminars and Conferences were also organised to educate rural women on current affairs. The women were mobilised through the assistance of traditional rulers, village heads, district officers and community leaders and formed into groups depending

on their skills and interests. Although there was an initial resentment by the men who thought the BLP was a liberation exercise, the situation changed with the series of enlightenment campaigns, workshop and visits to traditional rulers in an attempt to educate them on the objectives of the programme and using them to get at the women. Through various programmes initiated by the BLP, the standard of education and awareness among the rural women have improved. This is evidenced by statements made by most of the rural dwellers that were interviewed during the survey. Majority of the rural women interviewed commended the various trades they have learnt through the BLP training programmes as well as the opportunity it had provided for meeting and working with other women.

PART III

BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME AND THE PERFORMANCE OF THE RURAL ECONOMY

An attempt to relate the achievements of the BLP to the economic performance and overall well-being of the rural economy may be very difficult due to several reasons. This is because firstly, guaranteeing better life and or upliftment of the living conditions of the rural populace can only take place within a long-term perspective. As such, a three-year existence of a programme may be too short a period to make manifest the fruits of the policy innovations. Secondly, improving the well-being of the rural people goes beyond the scope of a programme alone. It cuts across macroeconomic policies and sector specific programmes, usually the responsibilities of both the Federal and State governments and a host of parastatals. As such, the total and/or partial effects of BLP in the scheme of things may be difficult to isolate. Finally, the general dearth of data and the degree of its reliability makes the situation more complex.

These notwithstanding, preliminary assessment of the Programme's impact can be based on the *a priori* estimates of the extent of secondary benefits generated and on the extent to which the actions taken so far attempted to promote rural growth and improve the well-being of women and the rural people.

(a) Rural Capacities to Manage Development Efforts

Prior to the programme, government ministries and parastatals featured predominantly in management and provision of development facilities. Little scope existed for active participation of rural dwellers in the transformation process. Even when rural-based organisation such as cooperative and farm settlements were encouraged, very little consideration was given to their role as intermediaries designed to promote grassroot activities. Most often, they function more to distribute services according to political patronage rather than on the basis of the felt needs of the people. Although it may be difficult to quantify, the BLP seems to have empowered women and the poor by fostering grass-roots support and non-governmental organisations such as cooperatives and women groups determined to find solutions to their socio-economic problems.

(b) Rural Production and Incomes

Aggregate production and national incomes generally have experienced declines in recent times. Available data show that both the GDP and GNP per capita which grew rapidly by 8.4 and 5.3 per cent, respectively, in 1965-73 had begun to stagnate, and in fact experienced declines of 1.7 and 4.8 per cent, respectively in 1981-87 (see Table 5). The declines in per capita GNP suggests progressive decline in the incomes of the people. Little wonder that Nigeria was reclassified as one of the low-income countries by the United Nations Organisation (for IDA loans) recently. Even with this, the extent of impoverishment was more pronounced in the rural sector. At a time when there was economic boom and urban activities were flourishing the predominant activity of the rural sector — agriculture, experienced stagnation with progressive declines in output of 1.4 per cent annually in 1973-80. Although the situation improved for agriculture marginally in 1981-87 with its growth rate put at 0.6 per cent annually, significant improvement in the economic performance of the nation did not commence until 1988-89. Total GDP, GNP per capita and Agricultural GDP grew by 4.1, 1.3 and 3.9 per cent, respectively, in 1988-89. Perhaps this could be in response to the macro-economic policy reforms which provided the right incentives for domestic investment in rural economic activities such as farming, handicraft and cottage industries.

(c) Prices

Inflationary pressures which declined from about 16.2 per cent annually in 1974-80 to about 10.2 per cent in 1981-87, soared to about 39.6 per cent annually in 1988-89. The rural economy had its fair share of inflationary pressures estimated at about 40.0 per cent annually for 1988-89. However, the price level has fallen persistently since July, 1989, and the trend in rural-urban indices reversed with rural areas recording lower prices. Available information showed that the rural index for the first half of 1990, increased by 6.9 per cent compared with 16.5 per cent in the urban areas. The downturn in the price level was traceable mainly to improved supply situation of staples which is the predominant activity of the rural dwellers. Thus, the programme could have helped in mitigating the cost of living of the rural people in the country.

(d) Population and Employment

The population and unemployment situation prior and up to 1987 was not favourable to the rural sector. Available data showed that although total population grew rapidly by 2.5 to 3.5 per cent annually during the period (up to 1987), the share of urban population rose dramatically from about 17.0 per cent in 1965-73 to 33.0 per cent in 1981-87 (see Table 5). In absolute terms, while the rural population rose from 59 million in 1973 to 72.7 million in 1987 (23.2 per cent), urban population swelled three-fold from about 12.1 million in 1973 to about 35.8 million in 1987. The situation was fostered mainly by migra-

tion of the virile rural labour force to urban centres in search of jobs. This could have been motivated largely by the fact that there existed during the period limited investment and employment opportunities in the rural areas. And indeed, the rural sector was characterised by disguised unemployment. Available figures showed that most of the rural labour force left behind were the aged, the women, and other illiterate persons who could only engage in subsistence farming and simple handicrafts. Although the estimated rural unemployment rate was low at 4.5 per cent annually, the proportion of illiterate (no-schooling at-all) rural population and rural women unemployed was put at 23.8 and 28.4 per cent annually in 1981–87, respectively (see Table 5). The rural unemployment rate reduced to 4.3 per cent in 1988–89 with the return migration of urbanites following the increased employment opportunities in rural areas, reflecting the activities of NDE, DFRRRI and other programmes. It is not unlikely that the BLP could have played a salutary role in lowering the unemployment rates of the completely illiterate rural female population to about 23.3 per cent estimated for 1988–89. This is because, during this period, the BLP played a dominant role in mobilising women to engage in productive activities which they had helped their men to perform over the years such as food processing, marketing, livestock and animal production, farming, handicrafts and cottage industries. It can also be concluded that apart from the provision of gainful employment, the BLP also succeeded in stimulating women to exploit their potentials and productive capacities.

(e) **Nutrition and Health**

The nutritional status of the average Nigerian has fallen. Estimates showed that calorie intake per capita per day declined from 2,254 in 1980 to 2,146 in 1987. This was about 15.1 per cent below the recommended world-minimum standard of 2,471 calories. The extent to which food shortage and poor nutritional status affected the urban and rural dwellers differed considerably. Evidence showed that a significant proportion of the rural, illiterate and unemployed population especially women and children are more vulnerable to hunger and deprivations than their urban counterparts. In fact, the relatively high calorie intake by urbanites' sometimes surpassed the minimum requirements. Related to this is the nutritional status of children. About 21 per cent of children of age group 12–23 months were affected by malnutrition in 1987, while 25 per cent of babies were born with low birth weights in 1987 (see Table 6). The degree to which urbanites were able to combat hunger and overcome mal-nutrition in children was comparatively higher than that of the rural dwellers. This is because improvement in food supplies with access to imports is often feasible for the urbanites within a short period. Moreover, the purchasing power of non-farm families and urban poor is also higher. Given the level of unemployment among illiterate women in rural areas, and the traditional norm in the rural setting that child-rearing is the responsibility of women, it seems that,

even when supplies are available, the number of rural households unable to afford an adequate diet is considerably high.

However, in 1988–89, the nutritional status of Nigerians and the overall welfare of children were estimated to have improved marginally. Daily calorie intake per capita was put at 2,200 while the percentage of children malnourished and those born with low birth weights declined to 20 and 24 per cent, respectively, in 1988–89. Although these could have resulted from the overall efforts to combat hunger nationwide, it does appear that BLP activities could have contributed to the improvements, especially for the rural women and children.

Significant strides have been taken towards better health care in Nigeria over the period. Available data showed that the population per physician and per nursing person has risen from 29,530 and 6,160 in 1965 to 6,727 and 1,065, respectively, in 1987 (see Table 6). However, the percentage of children population under one-year old fully immunized against, DPT, Polio-myelitis and measles declined from 24, 24, and 55 per cent in 1980 to 20, 21 and 31 per cent, respectively in 1987, while those immunized against tuberculosis rose from 23 per cent in 1980 to 41 in 1987. Also, rather than declining, population per hospital beds in Nigeria which stood at 1,155 in 1980 rose to 1,161 in 1987. However, the quality of life healthwise has shown some improvements. Life expectancy of an average Nigerian at birth has risen, from about 40 and 43 years for the males and females in 1965 to about 49 and 53 years, respectively, in 1987, (see Table 6). Maternal mortality rates fell from 177 and 118 per 1,000 live births in 1965 and 1980 to 107 in 1987. These rates are still, however, on the high side and inadequate when compared to the standards in other developing and developed countries, despite the fact that the rates exhibited declines in 1988–89.

Despite the inadequacies of health services, a closer look at the structure of budgetary expenditure on health in Nigeria showed that emphasis is unduly placed on high cost curative medicine in modern hospitals (majority of which are located in cities) than on preventive and rural community based systems. Mass immunization campaigns which are cheap and effective against several major childhood killer diseases and which can easily be propagated in rural areas, is not given adequate emphasis (as borne out by the available data). Also adequate efforts have not been made to educate rural people on personal hygiene, sanitation, family planning and other oral therapies that are less expensive to disseminate. Although a number of philanthropic organisations have sponsored these campaigns in the past, it does appear that the BLP focus on preventive medicine, could have contributed to the improvements. Available estimates showed a significant rise in the number of one-year old fully immunized against communicable diseases in 1988–89.

(f) **Demography and Fertility**

Alleviating poverty and improving the incomes per

capita of the rural people can only be achieved if population growth rate is slowed down. Available data showed that there had been rapid explosion in population, put at 3.4 per cent annually for 1981–87. This has not only tended to overburden health care delivery system but made the task of feeding the nation enormous. Although the improvements witnessed in health care delivery system slowed down, crude birth and death rates declined marginally from 51 and 23 per 1,000 persons, respectively, in 1965 to 47 and 15 in 1987, the wide divergence in both rates showed the degree of explosion the nation may have to contend with. Moreover, average fertility rate is high, estimated at 5.7 children per woman, a far cry from probably 1–2 children per woman in advanced countries (see Table 7). Even with this, available estimates showed that erstwhile effort directed at family planning has not been very fruitful. Available data showed that of the 43–45 per cent of women population which belong to the child-bearing age, only 5.0 per cent of them use contraceptive devices. In most cases these proportion are found only among the urban elite women while the vast majority of rural women was completely ignorant of family planning. Although no hard fact are available, the BLP has rightly targetted their family planning services at the rural woman and the results may begin to manifest in reduced birth and fertility rates in the long run. Indeed, it was estimated that the percentage of women of childbearing age using contraceptives rose to about 7.5 per cent in 1988–89 (see Table 7).

(g) **Education**

Alleviating poverty among the rural people suggests a reduction in the level of illiteracy, so that such people can absorb and benefit optimally from modern production enhancements, innovations (better production methods), preventive medicine and stimulate over all level of consciousness and awareness about their general plight. Available data showed that although literacy level had improved with percentage of age group enrolment in primary schools rising from 32.0 per cent in 1965 to 97 per cent in 1980, a significant proportion of rural unemployment labour force who are completely illiterate are women. Also, the proportion of females per 100 males of the population in primary and secondary schools were 63 and 51 in 1965, a situation which improved marginally to 79 and 80 per cent, respectively, in 1987 (see Table 7). These figures suggest that a significant proportion of adults especially women in rural areas are illiterates. While government expenditures have been channelled significantly towards developing pupils of school age, little scope existed for adult literacy programmes. With the introduction of adult literacy programmes, and vocational training by the BLP, it does appear that there is some scope for enriching the human resourcefulness of the rural populace. Preliminary estimates showed that these ratios have improved to 81 and 83 per cent, respectively, in 1988–89. However, more efforts would have to be put in to achieve meaningful results.

(h) **Social Welfare and Recreation**

Traditionally, the concern of government over primary health care, nutrition, water, sewerage, hotel and tourism, often leads to the neglect of social welfare services to the aged, the handicapped, the bereaved and in general neglect of recreation facilities for the healthy populace. Few of the handicapped homes which exist in the country were established and run by philanthropic/women organisations. Targetting these groups for assistance by BLP is laudable.

PART IV

PROBLEMS, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Problems

Generally, the BLP has made tremendous impact on the rural economy during its three years of existence. However, the level of attainment of the programme could have been higher barring a number of constraints which are associated with the programme package as well as the effects of the socio-cultural environment. These constraints are glaringly noticeable in the areas of finance, basic economic activities such as agriculture, industry, social services, infrastructure and attitudinal behaviour. These are analysed below:—

(a) **Finance**

The problem of inadequate funding cuts across the various programmes and projects of the BLP. The Federal Government agencies such as the NDE and recently the People's Bank are yet to have the desired impact on the lives of the rural dwellers. Recourse to loans from the commercial banks has been difficult as most rural dwellers cannot offer adequate collateral required for such loans. Besides, there is lack of direct subvention from the Federal Government in aid of the programmes and projects. Thus, there is clamour for Federal Government financial backing of the programme in order to execute the projects and widen the scope of activities.

(b) **Agriculture**

The factors which hinder agricultural production activities under the BLP include:

- (i) inadequate field extension workers and services;
- (ii) insufficient tractors and machinery to aid large scale farming especially land clearing;
- (iii) late procurement of farm inputs such as seeds, seedlings, fish fingerlings and fertilizers;
- (iv) poor information on the part of rural farmers on where, when and how to obtain vital information and services;
- (v) lack of permanent cultivable farmland and inability of women in some parts of the country to own land due to the land tenure systems;

- (vi) lack of infrastructural facilities such as good roads, bridges, potable water and electricity and simple irrigation facilities;
- (vii) lack and inappropriate storage facilities such as silos for grains;
- (viii) non-availability of freezer or cold stores and cold storage for sea foods.
- (ix) high cost of transportation and inadequate transport facilities resulting in hikes in the prices of staples;
- (x) high cost of establishing live-stock centres such as goatry, piggery, snail/periwinkle farms; and
- (xi) the prevailing high interest rates on bank loans.

(c) Cottage Industries

Constraints in this sector include the following:

- (i) constant breakdown of PRODA prototype machines and other locally manufactured machines and also lack of spare parts especially in ceramic and pottery industries;
- (ii) lack of accessibility to external market particularly of locally made textiles, arts and crafts. The major hindrance being the low level of participation in international trade fairs and inadequate institutional facilities for export promotion; and
- (iii) shortage of foreign exchange to procure spare parts and raw materials especially in textiles and soap-making industries.

(d) Health and Education

The development of health and educational services under the BLP is hampered mainly by lack of funds. The execution of major projects such as maternity centres, mini-pharmacies for the sale of safe drugs, immunization etc. has slowed down in the health sector so also the establishment of vocational centres, e.g. adult literacy classes, multi-purpose women centres and enlightenment campaigns. Other problems in the education sector relate to inadequate trained personnel for the vocational centres and literacy classes and lack of working and teaching aids e.g. laboratory equipment, classrooms, furnitures etc.

(e) Socio-cultural Factors (Attitudinal Behaviour)

Constraints identified are:

- (i) cultural and religious norms which prevent women from participating in certain activities such as exists in the purdah system thus denying them opportunities for self-improvement;
- (ii) negative attitude of the menfolk resulting in lack of

co-operation of some husbands in releasing their wives to participate in group economic activities. This was manifested in non-participation of many women in co-operative associations which is the core of BLP.

- (iii) other socio-cultural forces and traditions, taboos and beliefs that militate against economic emancipation of the Nigerian women include, dehumanising widowhood practices, and land tenure practices especially in Igboland where women are not entitled to own land. For example, it was discovered during the National survey that a group of BLP co-operatives in Aba (Imo State) tilled and ploughed a parcel of land that was later forcefully taken over by some men under the guise that "women are not entitled to land".

(f) Infrastructure

Basic infrastructural facilities is sine qua non to any meaningful economic and social development. The inadequacy or lack of infrastructural facilities has been identified as the major set-back of rural development programmes including the BLP. Specific complaints include the following: lack of good access roads including bridges, potable water, electricity and good communication system; as well as administrative secretariats (women resource centres) in the local government headquarters.

Challenges and Prospects

In order to keep the pace of on-going activities and consolidate its achievements the BLP faces the following challenges:

There is the need for change in attitudinal behaviour on the part of women and menfolk alike for the BLP to have its full impact on rural dwellers. Some socio-cultural beliefs, religion and superstition which tend to inhibit self-actualisation on the part of women and thus reduce them to perpetual subordinate position must be discarded. Fortunately, the Nigerian Constitution guarantees equality for all Nigerians irrespective of sex. The BLP must mobilise the women to cultivate the right attitude to reduce the economic imbalance between them and the menfolk.

There must be the will to keep the programme going irrespective of change of government, be it military or civilian. Lack of continuity of programmes resulting from policy conflicts between the outgoing and incoming governments has been the bane of some of our development efforts. One is reminded of previous programmes such as Operation Feed the Nation and Green Revolution, which were designed to raise agricultural productivity and improve the standard of living of rural dwellers, but which were wantonly discarded or stalled for one reason or the other. In fact, some of the apprehension of most rural dwellers interviewed centred on how BLP would survive the exit of the present military government.

Research and Development is germane to the success of any development effort. The research institutes have a great role to play in the development and spread of innovations and technologies adaptive to the needs and factor endow-

ment of the nation and within the financial reach of the rural dwellers. In addition, the capacity to develop foundaries where machinery proto-types and spare-parts as well as basic agricultural implements such as cutlass, hoes, axe, shovel etc. could be fabricated is sine qua non for effective propagation of innovations. The situation so far, suggests that there is little scope for improving the technological base, which may ultimately affect the BLP.

Finance is very vital to the progress that can be made on any rural development effort. Public and private expenditures on programmes designed to improve the standard of living of the rural people has to be adequate and directed at the targeted population if it is to be meaningful. In terms of adequacy of funds, there is little scope for the rural people to expand funding for both economic and social sector programmes due to dwindling incomes. And from available data so far, it does appear that while state governments were able to vie funds from other budgeted voteheads to support BLP activities, the Federal Government did not make any direct allocation to the programme, while the resources mobilized by the rural self-help organisations proved grossly inadequate. It is apparent that such un-budgeted financing is unreliable for a purposeful planning and execution of the projects of the BLP. Related to this is the continued unfavourable direction of public expenditure programmes designed to improve the well-being of rural people. Undue emphasis is increasingly being placed on curative medicine, food supply, and expensive university education, while little consideration is given to preventive medicine, vocational training and child nutrition. Unless constructive efforts are made to integrate the latter into our expenditure pattern for the social sector, little progress would be made in alleviating poverty and improving the standard of living of the rural people through the BLP alone.

With regard to improvements in financing by the rural self-help organisation, the progressive move towards elimination of subsidies under the SAP, may pose serious challenges to the degree of patronage/adoption of the BLP projects by the rural dwellers. Except constructive effort is made to give rural dwellers concessionary access to cheap credit, it may be difficult to sustain the programme. Also, existing financing institutions may be unable to meet the financing needs of the rural people given the macroeconomic policy and institutional framework under which they operate.

Providing production incentives to rural dwellers is obviously desirable. The general aspiration is to ensure sustainable diversification of the productive base and expand the market for products of the beneficiaries of the programme. The product lines so far, represented a diversification from modern manufactures to handicrafts and cottage industry products. Except special efforts are made to promote these products, they may face stiff competition from both domestic and imported manufactures. If this happens, it could depress the prices and incomes of the rural self-help production enterprise.

Finally, the programme designs so far appear to be an integrated one, cutting across several lines of established public administrations. For instance, Ministries of Agriculture, Industries, Science and Technology, Health, Education, and a host of parastatals have major roles to play in the implementation of the programme. Given the enormous challenges posed both by coordinating and synchronising

the programmes of these different institutions (packaged into one), this may really have more negative than positive effects in institutional building and administration of the programme. It may also be very difficult for the recently created National Commission for Women to compel the other Ministries to integrate and accommodate her projects into their individual ministries projects.

PART V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and Conclusion

This study has attempted to assess the impact of the Better Life Programme on the rural economy. The findings so far showed that despite the short period of its existence, the programme has attracted notable attention and patronage by all and sundry. In particular attention is beginning to be given to the overall plight of women, children and the rural dwellers in general through several incentives and public campaigns. Although mixed trends were observed in the degree of implementation of the project in different states, the efforts so far, represent a remarkable achievement, given the fact that it focussed on economic and social programmes targeted at people who were often neglected by the general macroeconomic policies and public expenditure programmes.

However, the scope and spread of these efforts appeared limited and confined to mostly the rural elite and a few urban poor, while undue emphasis was placed, in some cases, on fanfare and propaganda campaigns. Among the notable achievements were the supply of farm inputs such as improved seeds, and seedlings, fertiliser and credit to women farming cooperative groups; diversification and stimulation of interest in non-traditional farming activities such as snail and periwinkle farming; establishment of processing, handicraft and cottage industries such as food processing, weaving, pottery, tailoring, catering and leather works; others include the establishment of maternity centres, rural mini-pharmacies; mobile clinics, family planning and immunization campaigns in a limited number of rural areas, and donations to existing welfare centres. Vocational and other enlightenment campaigns such as adult literacy programmes, workshops on widowhood and a number of trade fairs were also put in place.

An overall view of the performance of the rural economy since the inception of the Programme suggested some improvements, all of which may not be attributable to the BLP alone. Among these were the growth in income per capita and agriculture in 1988-89; moderation of rural price inflation and unemployment rates of mostly illiterate rural women; marginal improvement in the nutrition status and health of the people; overall awareness of the need for immunization and birth control techniques; marginal improvement in the level of literacy of the rural women, and remarkable improvement in recreational opportunities of a few rural dwellers.

However, the contribution of the Programme to rural economic performance could have been more meaningful barring some problems and challenges which faced the

programmes. Among them were inadequate funding, weak base for the provision of extension, input supply, credit and marketing services; socio-cultural factors which limit women's participation and access to land and an overwhelmingly poor state of infrastructures. Among the challenges identified were the weak prospects for over-coming future constraints such as attitudinal changes, the weak base for technological improvements and financing of the projects, given the general trend in the incomes of the people; the degree to which the limits to the market opportunities of programme beneficiaries, and administrative lapses observed could be overcome.

The conclusion, is that BLP has the potential to improve the standard of living of women, children and the rural people within the medium- and long-term, provided enough commitment is given both to the funding, planning, implementation and overall management of the Programme. This calls for a progressive shift from the current ad-hoc policy approach to the Programme, to a redirection of public economic and social expenditure programmes towards the goals and objectives of the BLP.

Recommendations

In the light of these observations and conclusions, the following recommendations are made for policy consideration.

Administration

- (a) The organisation should be made to retain its present administrative structure where the First Lady is the National Chairperson, the wives of the State Governors and the Local Government Chairmen are the chairpersons in the states and Local Government Areas, respectively. This should be so in order to retain the goodwill and personal touch being generated by the programme both locally and internationally. The idea of transferring the affairs of the BLP to the presidency is a laudable one. But we fear that if the personal touch of the various wives of the Heads of Government are removed, the Programme might not survive or become lifeless like other well-meaning past public programmes such as the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the Green Revolution etc. In fact, it is generally accepted that personal interest of the top figures in government tends to make individuals perform better especially when they are actively involved in the execution of the Programme.
- (b) The executive capacity of the Programme must be strengthened in all the facets of its administration, be it at the national, state or local government level. The newly-established National Commission for Women (NCW) should assume the apex role of co-ordinating the objectives of BLP especially to help in mobilising the women folk towards the attainment of self-fulfilment. The State chapters under the Directorate of Women Affairs in each state should help to establish secretariats for BLP in each of the Local Government for monitoring of the activities of the rural communities. The Centre for Women Development in Abuja should emerge as the technical arm of BLP through which

the state and local government activities will be linked. As deprivations vary from one community to another, community centres should be established to cater for the needs of rural women in the immediate neighbourhood. However, the jobs of the state coordinators should be well defined to avoid a situation where their dynamism could be stalled by bureaucracy.

- (c) Monitoring of BLP projects and programmes should be on a continuous basis. This should be done at Local and State Government levels and co-ordinated by the National Commission for Women.
- (d) Women should have the freedom to compete and participate actively in governance. In a democratic setting, competent women should emerge to serve both at the National, State and Local Government levels.

Finance

- (a) Budgetary allocation should be made on an annual basis by all tiers of government in support of the administration of BLP through the National Commission for Women (NCW) to facilitate the implementation of the programmes particularly the staging of fairs and enlightenment campaigns.
- (b) As part of efforts to promote the activities of BLP more funds should be allocated to DFRRRI for that institution to be able to open up more communities and provide basic infrastructural facilities.
- (c) A special target fund should be created for women in the People's Bank as well as proposed Community Bank with a specified percentage of credit earmarked for them.
- (d) NERFUND should make special loans available for the execution of some key Cottage Industries that have been identified as potential foreign exchange earners.
- (e) There is need to introduce some form of credit guarantee and insurance schemes for small scale industrialists and farmers who normally lack the required collaterals to improve their access to formal credit. Banks should accept group guarantee as yardsticks for candidacy for loans instead of insisting on provision of tangible security.
- (f) The support of multilateral, bilateral and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should be solicited for more assistance for BLP and other programmes.

Research and Development

- (a) The Raw Materials Research and Development Council and other National Research Institutes should make their research findings available in simplified forms to rural women.

- (b) The development of foundaries should be encouraged to fabricate proto-type machineries and their spare-parts as well as farm implements.
- (c) Development and improvement of local technologies should be widespread between co-operatives with similar products within and outside the states. For examples the BLP Chorkor Fish oven (a fish processing technology) developed in Rivers State should be shared with other fish producing states while the foundry technology for the firing of ceramic and pottery in Anambra State should be extended to other states.

Marketing

- (a) Government should provide storage facilities such as silos for grains and cold stores for seafoods for use in the rural areas.
- (b) More BLP markets and shops should be opened both in the rural and urban centres in order to publicise and popularise the use of the products of BLP both locally and internationally.
- (c) Trade Fairs should be organised both at the urban and rural communities for the purpose of creating awareness, sense of togetherness and opening avenues for commercial activities.

Social Programmes

- (a) The Land Use Decree should be amended to make more land available to rural dwellers especially for farming and industrial activities. Special preference should be given to women via appeal and moral suasion to Traditional Rulers and community leaders to ease land acquisition procedures and problems.
- (b) BLP enlightenment campaigns should be extended to the grassroot especially to dwellers in the remote villages/communities and clans.
- (c) Women and other rural farmers should be enlightened on where, when and how to get vital information on farm inputs and extension services.
- (d) Population control activities should be intensified. This should involve sex education, delayed marriages until the age 18, spacing of children (minimum of three years gap) and stoppage of child-bearing for women at the age of 35 years. The women centres should be used for spreading information on family planning techniques and devices.
- (e) The rural women must cultivate the right attitude to reduce the economic imbalance between them and the menfolk. Thus some socio-cultural beliefs, religion, superstition which tend to inhibit self-actualisation on the part of women must be discarded.

**BLP'S AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND EXTENTION AND SERVICES
IN NIGERIA AS AT JULY 1990**

Table 1

Type of Activities	Target	Achievement	Expenditure (Naira)
A. EXTENSION SERVICE			
1. Seed distribution (tons)	1,278.1	183.03	1,249,637.5
2. Seedlings (Million)	492.31	188.54	7,350,000.00
3. Palm Produce (Hectare)	45.0	—	20,000.0
4. Rice (Million kg.)	36.0	5.0	100,000.0
5. Fish Pond	700.0	2.0	80,000.0
6. Fertilizers (tonnes)	104,310.0	9,974.23	1,644,147.0
B. LIVESTOCK			
1. Goatry	29.0	10.0	396,648.0
2. Piggery	842.0	1.0	5,000.0
3. Snail farming	600.0	1.0	129,960.0
4. Periwinkle farming	700.0	1.0	50,000.0
C. DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SERVICES			
(General)	400.0	200.0	64,600.0
1. Model farms/Villages etc.	42.0	2.0	34,000.0
2. Land Clearing	6.0	710.0	—
3. Irrigation	394,700.0	2,154,392.0	1,031,064.0
4. Waiting Station	8,089.0	28.0	325,000.0
5. Solar Energy	10,000.0	44.0	24,000.0
6. Water Transportation	1.0	1.0	—
7. Others	14.0	1.0	150,000.0
D. MARKET SUPPORT SERVICES			
1. Trade by barter	500.0	2.0	10,000.0
2. Storage	3,363.0	1,791.0	833,816.0
3. Credit Granted	—	233.0	1,531,000.0

Source: CBN Survey of BLP activities (August 1990).

**BLP COTTAGE INDUSTRIES AND FOOD PROCESSING
IN NIGERIA AS AT JULY 1990**

Table 2

Types of Activities	Target	Achievement	Expenditure (Naira)
1. Looms	40	40	80,000
2. Spices Mills	6	3	N.A.
3. Tailoring	250	195	6,500
4. Catering	50	20	4,656
5. Rice Milling	43	14	740,750
6. Groundnut Oil	96	4	180,000
7. Leather	4	—	—
8. Diesel Engines	20	10	100,000
9. Guinea Corn Grinding	20	10	20,000
10. Fish Smoking	10	2	14,000
11. Pottery	2,086	138	2,191,728
12. Gari Processing	353	54	1,453,333
13. Palm Processing	20	6	108,000
14. Palm Cracking	10	2	46,000
15. Weaving	55	10	1,771,001
16. Corn Milling	10	23	410,000
17. Yam Flour Milling	10	2	18,000
18. Lafun Milling	16	8	9,000
19. Soap Cutting	1,601	19	1,013,000
20. BLP Fish Oven	30	31	260,000
21. Hulling Machine	98	10	30,000

Source: CBN Survey of BLP activities (August 1990).

**BLP'S HEALTH, SOCIAL WELFARE AND ENLIGHTENMENT PROGRAMME
IN NIGERIA AS AT JULY 1990**

Table 3

Type of Activities	Target	Achievement	Expenditure (Naira)
E. HEALTH FACILITIES PROVIDED			
1. Maternity Centre	—	1	10,000
2. Mini Pharmacy	—	25	1,535,000
3. Traditional Birth Attendant Training	14	6	10,000
4. Vaccination and Immunization	—	—	335,000
5. Vasico-Viginal Fistula Clinics	—	2	25,500
6. Mobile Clinic	37	2	2,000,000
7. Health Workers Training	400	300	29,000
8. Other	3	3	14,000
F. DONATIONS TO EXISTING WELFARE CENTRES			
1. Handicapped Homes	34	22	123,175
2. Maternity	—	—	10,000
3. First Babies	—	—	23,000
4. Day Care Centres	724	691	127,000
G. SOCIAL WELFARE AMENITIES			
1. Social Centres	1,609	34	1,192,000
2. Widowhood (Families)	—	154	130,000
3. Employment	100,000	50,000	6,000
H. ENLIGHTENMENT/AWARENESS			
1. Conferences	142	97	170,000
2. Trade Fairs Sponsored	3	1	—
3. Trade Fairs Attended	29	41	1,325,360
4. Workshops Attended	26,040	9,420	424,000
5. Workshops Sponsored	58	31	170,000
6. Training/Education	236,279	51,581	1,003,180
7. Other (Shops)	17	2	34,000
8. Nursery Schools	6	1	76,000
9. Vocational Training	72	1,052	1,003,000

Source: CBN Survey of BLP activities (August 1990).

**FINANCING OF BLP'S ACTIVITIES IN NIGERIA
AS AT JULY 1990**

Table 4

Source	Amount Allocated (Naira)	Amount Received (Naira)	Expenditure (Naira)
1. Federal Government	1,520,000	1,120,000	1,120,000
2. State Government	22,602,200	17,925,600	7,565,600
3. DFFRI	4,381,000	4,631,000	4,331,000
4. ADP	58,000	58,000	58,000
5. NDE	1,700,000	1,700,000	1,180,000
6. Unicef	310,000	310,000	807,793.8
7. McArthur Foundation	N.A.	N.A.	27,627
8. Others (Multilateral)	4,018,400	4,043,400	3,773,400
9. Local Government	500,000	500,000	500,000
10. Self Help	50,000	1,393,000	1,353,000
11. Philantropist	849,000	2,330,000	2,280,000
12. Australian Government	N.A.	N.A.	480,842
13. Fund Raising	225,500	225,500	225,500

Notes: 1. Japanese Government donated 1 Bus.
2. NNPC donated 89 Gas cookers/cylinders.

Source: CBN Survey of BLP activities (August 1990).

**INCOMES: INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE RURAL
ECONOMY OF NIGERIA**

Table 5

	1965-1973	1974-1980	1981-1987	1988-1989
INCOMES				
GDP Growth Rates	8.4	3.7	-1.7	4.1
Growth Rates of GNP per capita	5.3	1.2	-4.8	1.3
Growth Rates of Agric. GDP	1.4	-1.4	0.6	3.9
INFLATION (Growth in)				
Composite consumer prices	9.1	16.2	10.1	39.6
Urban	-	17.0	14.3	37.2
Rural	-	15.3	15.4	40.0
POPULATION (as at end of period)				
Total Population (Million)	71.2	86.5	108.6	116.0
Total Population Growth rate	2.5	3.2	3.4	3.0
Urban (%)	17.0	27.0	33.0	32.0
Rural (%)	83.0	73.0	67.0	68.0
Female as % of population	48.7	49.0	50.0	50.0
LABOUR FORCE				
Active Population as % of total	51.0	50.0	49.0	49.0
Growth in Labour Force (%)	2.9	3.2	2.7	2.9
Female as % of active population	-	-	36.0	40.0
Unemployment Rate (Composite)	-	-	5.5	5.1
Urban Unemployment Rate (%)	-	-	9.6	8.8
Rural Unemployment Rate (%)	-	-	4.5	4.3
Distribution of Unemployed:				
- Persons with no schooling	-	-	-	-
- Urban (both sexes)	-	-	12.1	13.1
- Urban Males	-	-	10.5	11.5
- Urban Females	-	-	14.4	14.9
- Rural (both sexes)	-	-	23.8	17.9
- Urban Males	-	-	20.4	13.8
- Urban Females	-	-	28.4	23.3

Source: Derived from data compiled from FOS, World Bank Report and CBN.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Table 6

	1965	1980	1987	1990
Daily Calorie per Capita	2,185	2,254	2,146	2,200
STATUS OF CHILDREN				
Children under age 5 as % of population	20	20	20	20
% of Age Group 12–23 months affected by wasting	—	—	21	20
Children under age 5 suffering from malnutrition (%)	—	—	—	—
Babies with low birth weights (%)	—	—	25	24
HEALTH				
Population per Physician	29,530	10,768	6,727	6,237
Population per Nursing Staff	6,160	1,547	1,065	1,020
Population per Hospital Beds	2,214	1,155	1,161	1,101
Females per 100 Males	103	102	102	100
Females per 100 Females between ages 0–4 years	100	100	99	99
LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (YEARS)				
– Female	43	47	53	54
– Male	40	43	49	50
Maternity Mortality (per 1,000 live births)	—	15	13	—
Infant Mortality (per 1,000 live births)	177	118	107	—
ONE YEAR OLD FULLY IMMUNISED (%)				
– Tuberculosis	—	23	41	45
– DPT	—	24	20	25
– Poliomyelitis	—	24	21	30
– Measles	—	55	31	45

Source: Derived from data compiled from FOS, World Bank and CBN Reports.

DEMOGRAPHY, FERTILITY AND EDUCATION

Table 7

	1965	1980	1987	1989
DEMOGRAPHY				
Crude Birth Rate (per 1,000 persons)	51	50	47	45
Crude Death Rate (per 1,000 persons)	23	18	15	12
Percentage of Women of child bearing age	45	43	43	42
Total Fertility Rate per Woman	6.9	6.5	5.4	7.1
Percentage of Women of child bearing age using contraception			5.0	7.5
EDUCATION (Females per 100 Males)				
– Primary	63	70	79	81
– Secondary	51	68	80	83

Source: Derived from data compiled from the FOS, World Bank and CBN Reports.