

# Government Expenditure and Poverty Reduction in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study has empirically investigated the impact of public expenditure on poverty reduction in Nigeria using Ado – Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State as a case study. A total of one hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were distributed in the Local Government (10 in each ward) to collect data, out of which the researcher was able to recover one hundred and fifteen (115) copies. The descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentage were used to analyze the demographic characteristics of the respondents while the Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) test was used to analyze each of the hypothesis at 5 percent level of significance. The result of the Chi-square test revealed that public expenditure on education, health and agriculture has significant impact on poverty reduction. The study therefore recommends that government should increase its expenditure on infrastructure, such as in transport and communication sector, road and power, since it would reduce the cost of doing business as well as raise the profitability of firms. The government should also encourage education, health and agricultural sector through increased funding as well as ensuring that the resources are properly managed in order to raise the production capacity and accelerate economic growth and reduce poverty.

**Keywords:** Government Expenditure, Poverty Profile, Ekiti State

## Introduction

In absolute terms, poverty suggests insufficient or the total lack of basic entails like food, housing and medical cares. It embraces the inadequacy of education and environmental services. Consumer goods, recreational opportunities, neighbourhood amenities and transport facilities. In relative terms, people are poverty stricken when their income fall radically below the community average (World Bank 2000). This implies that such people cannot have what the larger society regards as the minimum necessity for a decent living.

However, poverty in Ekiti State, as in other part of Nigeria is currently a matter of urgent policy concern. Nigeria, the most populous country in Sub-Sahara Africa, is blessed with enormous human and material resources. Yet about 70% of Nigeria living less than 1 dollar (#162) per day. The Human Poverty Index (HPI) stood at 41.6 percent (World Bank, 2006) which increased from 42.8 percent in 1992 to 65.6 percent in 2006. The rural component increased from 45.1 percent in 1996 to 67.8 percent in 1999 (World Development Report, 2001). As a corollary, the proportion of the non-poor fell from 82.8 percent to 41.8 percent from 1996 to 2006. On the other hand, the proportion of the core poor increased from 3.0 percent in 1996 to 25.2 percent in 2006. Similarly, the proportion of those who are moderately poor increased from 14.2 percent in 1996 to 33.0 percent in 2006 (FOS 2006). This problem of high incidence of poverty at the national level mirrors the situation at the state, local and community level.

Ekiti is one of the 36 states in Nigeria created on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1996 with Ado-Ekiti as the capital. It is made up of 16 local government areas with a total population of about 2.384 million National Population Commission (NPC, 2006). It is basically a homogenous agrarian sub-ethnic group of Yoruba race whose major occupation is agriculture. About 36.8% of Ekiti people engage in agriculture. Ekiti state is an agriculture based economy with the production of food and cash crops providing employment and income for more than 75 percent of the population. Ekiti men are predominantly farmers while women engage in trading.

## Review of Literature

The economic crisis of 1980s was as a result of external debt, instability and misallocation of scarce foreign exchange, slow rate of capital formation, fiscal indiscipline, corruption and the negative effect of the structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of 1986 have retarded the country's economic growth and development, thus causing an increase in the rate of poverty. (Adegoke, 2000)

Hunted by these problems, Nigerian government since early 1990s has employed a proliferation of efforts to combat poverty. Some of which were fiscal, financial and non-financial. By 1999 when the civilian government came into power under the administration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, statistics had it that more than 70% of Nigerians, lived in poverty. That was why the then government declared in November 1999 that the #470 billion budgets for year 2000 was to relieve poverty (Okpe and Abu, 2005). Before the National Assembly even passed the year 2001 budget, the Nigeria government increased the allocation in poverty alleviation programme by 150% (Adegoke, 2009). All these programmes targeted at reducing the level of poverty have not yielded any positive result. There is a lack of consensus on both the empirical impacts of size of government on poverty reduction.

Ekiti state government has also embarked on several policies at combating the menace of poverty in the state among which are: Ekiti State Micro-Credit Scheme, Ekiti State Community Based Empowerment and Rural Development Agency (EKCEPRA) among others. One notable reason why previous studies, such as Okpo and Abu (2005), Adegoke (2009) and Olaniyan and Bankole (2005), on poverty reduction in Nigeria have not yielded any positive result is that most of these studies made use of secondary annual time series data of which the incidence of poverty was not captured or measured. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to employ primary data analysis to investigate the poverty profile of Ekiti using some selected local government area of Ekiti state such as Ado, Are, Iyin Ekiti Local Government Areas.

Olaniyan and Bankole (2005) conducted a research on Human capital, Capabilities and poverty reduction in rural Nigeria. They found out that health and education have significant effect on poverty reduction in Nigeria. Their findings suggested a conscious effort at the policy level to reduce poverty by increasing public expenditure on health and education so as to improve the human capital of individuals and consequently reduce poverty.

Adegoke (2007) carried out an econometric study on the role of education in alleviating poverty in Nigeria. She found out that there was a bi-directional relationship between expenditure on education and poverty reduction in Nigeria. She concluded that expenditure on education which has gone very low in Nigeria contributed to worsening situation of poverty, whether measured in income term or non-income term.

Ayeni (2005) carried out an empirical research on the impact of government expenditure on poverty reduction in Ekiti state, Nigeria using multiple regression analysis. He found out that education as an investment has positive relationship with job creation which consequently can help to reduce poverty.

Akinsanya (2004) investigated the impact of government expenditure on poverty reduction in Ekiti state Nigeria, using multivariate regression analysis and concluded that government expenditure on agriculture is positively related to poverty reduction in Ekiti state. However, his findings also showed that government expenditure on education has a negative and significant relationship with poverty reduction in Ekiti state.

### **Health and Poverty Reduction**

Health is a good form of human capital formation and there exists substantial agreement in the literature on the relationship between capability and poverty (Strauss and Thomas, 2008). It is assumed that improvement in health leads to improvement in life expectancy which is a robust indicator of human development. According to Yusufu (2000) a good health policy is a means by which government can at once, ensure that manpower is generated in the right mixes, distributed in accordance with national priorities and ensure that highest level of labour productivity. Health improvement influences morbidity and labour force productivity whereby exchanging the process and speed of economic development and poverty reduction. Most developing countries have given serious attention to the provision of public health, education and social welfare services in which Ado-Ekiti is not left out. Ekiti state government in recent time established Basic Health Centers in all the sixteen local government area of the state. This is because they

believe that such measures could improve the quality of life of their people and their efficiency as productive agent thereby accelerating the general socio-economic development of their nations.

### **Education and Poverty Reduction**

Education is said to be the most crucial means of improving skills, capabilities and eradicating poverty. Appleton (2007) confirmed that using cross-sectional data series, household with a higher level of education are less likely to be poor. It has also confirmed the finding that return to education raises with the level of education.

High quality and market relevant education is capable of offering a genuine solution to most economic problems including poverty. Education and training are generally indicated as the most important direct means of upgrading the human intellect and skills for productive employment. However, it is worthy to note that not all forms of education can have meaningful effect on human capital for education to contribute to human capital formation. Such form of education must be capable of leading to skills improvement (Okojie 1995).

Olaniyan (2004) revealed that the rising poverty trends in many households can be traced to the refusal to send their children to school. Indeed, low level of income of parents account for a very strong reason why parents have withdrawn their children from school (Ray, 2000). This suggests that poverty is one of the main causes of child withdrawal from school into child labour.

The intrinsic value of education in raising individual capabilities and freedoms, and consequently contributing to higher income cannot be over emphasized. It has been severally documented that labour is the main asset obtained through education (World Bank, 2000). Indeed, the World Bank (2001) showed that investment in education and other forms of human capital formation particularly health is an important element of poverty reduction strategy.

### **Research Method**

#### **The Study Area**

Ado-Ekiti is the capital city of Ekiti state of Nigeria which was created on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1996 alongside five other states in an exercise that brought the number of state in Nigeria to 36. The state was carved out of the old Ondo State and covers the former Ekiti zone of the Old State. There are sixteen (16) LGAs in the state, it is divided into three Senatorial Districts namely; Ekiti central, Ekiti North and Ekiti South, Ekiti central comprises; Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti West, Efon, Irepodun/Ifelodun and Isero. Ekiti North comprise of Ido-Osi, Ikole, Oye, Ilesemese and Moba while Ekiti South comprise Gbonyin, Ikere South West, Ise Orun, Emure and Ekiti East local government. Ekiti State is located between longitude 4.45<sup>0c</sup> and 5.45<sup>0c</sup> East of the Greenwich Meridian and Latitude 7.15<sup>0c</sup> and 8.5<sup>0c</sup> north of the Equator. The state is bounded in the North West by Kwara, the Northern by Kogi state, and in the South by Ondo State by the 1991 census, the population of Ekiti State was 1.65million. the estimate population on October 1, 1996 was put at 1.75 million and that for 2000 was 1.97 million. The estimated population in 2006 population census was put at 2.38 million (NPC 2006), the people are mostly Christians (59 percent) and Muslims (25 percent) while some are still traditional religionist (16 percent) (Odumosu, 2000).

The Ekiti as a people form one of the largest sub-ethnic groups in Yoruba land. They are the most cultural homogeneous sub-group among Yoruba and speak a Yoruba dialect known as Ekiti. The people live mainly in towns. Expectedly, the state has many towns, large and small, ancient and modern. This reflects the Yoruba cultural preference for living in large urban settlement, even when their occupation settlement well linked with network of roads, the majority of which are asphalt-tarred. Among the states in Nigeria, Ekiti has the reputation of being easily the most advanced in terms of educational attainment of the people.

#### **Population and Sample of the Study**

The population for this study is made up of the inhabitants of Ado-Ekiti, Are-Ekiti and Iyin-Ekiti local Government Area of Ekiti State.

The sample for this study was hundred and twenty (120) participants drawn from all the eleven (11) wards of Ado-Ekiti local government Area of Ekiti State, Are-Ekiti local Government and Iyin-Ekiti Local Government. 120 respondents form the sample for this study.

### Research Instrument

The instrument used for the collection of the data for the study is a self-constructed questionnaire tagged “Poverty Profile in Ekiti State”. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Section A consists of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while section B consists of the questions on the selected variables for this study (Education, Health, Infrastructure and Agriculture).

The completed questionnaires were collected, coded and analyzed; using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages to describe the demographic characteristic of the while the Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) test is used to analyze the impact of health expenditure, education expenditure and expenditure on infrastructural facilities on poverty reduction in Ekiti State.

### Results and Discussion

#### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in the tables below:

**Table 1: Sex Distribution of the Respondents**

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Male	64	53.3
Female	56	46.7
Total	120	100.0

*Source: Author's Computation*

From the above Table 1, it could be noted that sex distribution of the respondents revealed, 64 are male and 56 are female. Moreover, the male distribution accounts for 53.3% of the population while the remaining 46.7% accounts for female respondents.

**Table 2: Age Distribution of the Respondents**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
15-26 Years	87	72.5
27-40 years	25	20.8
41-49 years	6	5.0
50 years and above	2	1.7
Total	120	100.0

*Source: Author's computation*

The age distribution in Table 2 shows that 72.5% of the respondents falls into the age bracket of 15-26 years while 20.8% of the respondents falls within the age bracket of 27-40 years. In the same vein, 5% of the respondents falls into the age bracket of 41-49 years. However, 1.7% of the respondents fall into the age category of 50 years and above.

**Table 3: Marital Status of the Respondents**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Single	99	82.5
Married	13	10.8
Divorced	6	5.0
Widowed	2	1.7
Total	120	100.0

*Source: Author's computation*

Table 3 above shows the marital status distribution of the respondents. From the table, 82.5% of the respondents are single while 10.8 are married. However, the divorced respondents account for 5% of the population while the remaining 1.7% of the respondents are widows.

**Table 4: Educational Background of the Respondents**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
No formal education	9	7.5
Primary School Leaving Certificate	4	3.3
Junior Secondary School Certificate	8	6.7
WASSC/SSC	19	15.8
ND/NCE/DIPLOMA	40	33.3
First Degree	33	27.5
Higher Education	7	5.8
Total	120	100.0

*Source: Author's computation*

Table 4 above shows the educational qualification of the respondents. The table shows that 7.5% of the respondents has no formal education at all. However, 3.3% of the respondents have acquired primary school leaving certificate while 6.7% of the respondents have acquired the junior secondary school certificate educational qualification.

Moreover, the table further revealed that the respondents who have acquired the West African Secondary School Certificate and Secondary School Certificate (WASSC/SSC) educational qualification are 15.8%, 33.3% of the respondents have acquired the National Diploma and National Certificate of Education (ND/NCE) Diploma educational qualification. In the same vein, 27.5% of the respondents have acquired their first degree (B.Sc.) while the remaining 5.8% of the respondents have acquired their higher educational qualifications; these higher educational qualifications are M.Sc., Ph.D.

**Table 5: Occupational Distribution of the Respondents**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Civil Servant	14	11.7
Not Engaged	82	68.3
Private Worker	22	18.3
Artisan	0	00.0
Farmer	2	1.7
Total	120	100.0

*Source: Author's computation*

Table 5 shows the occupational distribution of the respondents. The table revealed that 11.7% of the respondents were civil servants while 68.3% of the respondents were not engaged in any vocation.

**Table 6: Monthly Income Distribution of the Respondents**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Below 4500	59	49.2
4500-8000	15	12.5
8000-18000	27	22.5
18000-50000	15	12.5
50000 and above	4	3.3
Total	120	100.0

Source: Author's computation

Table 6 shows the monthly income distribution of the respondents. The table shows 49.2% of the respondents fall into the monthly income category of below 4500 monthly while 22.5% of the respondents fall into the monthly income category of 8000-18000, 12.5% fall under the monthly income category of 4500-8000 and 8000-18000. However, 12.5% fall under the monthly income category of 4500 – 8000 and 18000 – 50000 respectively. Moreover, 3.3% of the entire respondents fall under the monthly income category of 50000 and above.

**Table 7: Accommodation Distribution of the Respondents**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Owner's Occupied House	55	45.8
Rented Apartment	65	54.2
Total	120	100.0

Source: Author's Computation

Table 7 shows the accommodation distribution of the respondents. The table shows 45.8% of the respondents falls under the owner's occupied house category while the remaining 54.2% of the respondents fall under the rented apartment category.

**Table 8: Chi Square Analysis of the Impact of Government Education Expenditure on Poverty Reduction**

S/N	Items	$X^2$	$X^2_{0.05}$	Degree of freedom (df)	Remarks
1	Adequate funding of education has made more people to have access to good educational facilities and acquire skills	130.083	9.488	4	Significant
2	Poor funding of education can serve as an amour against poverty	80.133	7.815	3	Significant
3	The free education programme of the government has enabled more people to be educated	69.667	7.815	3	Significant
4	The number of public schools in Ado – Ekiti are adequate to meet the demand of the public	36.333	9.4888	4	Significant
5	Are the public schools libraries well equipped to meet the demand of the student's	68.167	9.4888	4	Significant

Source: Author's Computation

From the Chi Square result in Table 8 above, the chi – square calculated ( $X^2$ ) is greater than the chi – square tabulated ( $X^2_{0.005}$ ), hence, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. We therefore conclude that, public expenditure on education has significant impact on poverty reduction in Ekiti State. This result can however be attributed to the state government dedication to funding the educational sector.

**Table 9: Chi Square analysis of the impact of government health expenditure on poverty reduction**

	Items	$X^2$	$X^2_{0.05}$	Degree of freedom (df)	Remarks
6	Is the medical service enjoyed in Ado, Are, Iyin Ekiti good enough to lead the improvement in their income	13.667	9.488	4	Significant
7	Does the medical service at the general hospital are relatively cheaper than those of private hospitals	52.083	9.488	4	Significant
8	Does the number of general hospitals and basic health centres adequate to meet the demand of the public	33.500	9.488	4	Significant
9	Public hospitals are well equipped to cater for any kind of ailment	22.917	9.488	4	Significant

Source: Author's Computation

From the Chi Square result in Table 9 above, the chi – square calculated ( $X^2$ ) is greater than the Chi – square tabulated ( $X^2_{0.05}$ ), hence, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative. We therefore conclude that, public expenditure on health has a significant impact on poverty reduction in Ekiti State.

**Table 10: Chi Square Analysis of the Impact of Government Agricultural Expenditure on Poverty Reduction**

	Items	$X^2$	$X^2_{0.05}$	Degree of freedom (df)	Remarks
10	Government agricultural programme has helped to create employment for the teaming population	32.417	9.488	4	Significant
11	The millennium farmers programme have significantly reduced poverty level among farmers in Ekiti State	74.250	9.488	4	Significant
12	Agricultural productivity has helped to improve the standard of living of the citizens	30.250	9.488	4	Significant
13	Food production in Ekiti State have experienced a considerable increase due to the introduction of the millennium farmers programme	43.667	9.488	4	Significant
14	The millennium farmers programme have significantly increased productive capacity of farmers in Ekiti State	43.083	9.488	4	Significant
15	The commitment of the government to agricultural development has helped to reduce rural – urban drift	42.333	9.488	4	Significant
16	The government intervention in agriculture has helped to improve the livelihood of the citizens	25.833	9.488	4	Significant

Source: Author's Computation

From the Chi Square result in Table 10 above, the chi – square calculated ( $X^2$ ) is greater than the chi – square tabulated ( $X^2_{0.05}$ ), hence, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. We therefore conclude that, public expenditure on the agricultural sector has a significant impact on poverty reduction in Ekiti State.

**Table 11: Chi Square Analysis of the Impact of Government Infrastructural Expenditure on Poverty Reduction**

	<b>Items</b>	$X^2$	$X^2_{0.05}$	<b>Degree of freedom (df)</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
17	The infrastructural facilities are adequate to support indigenous factories	42.333	9.488	4	Significant
18	Energy/power supply is regular to enable traders, artisans and households to carry out their economic activities	34.583	9.488	4	Significant
19	The roads are in good condition to aid easy transportation of goods from rural to urban centres	38.583	9.488	4	Significant
20	There are adequate public utilities to meet the need of the people	56.167	9.488	4	Significant

*Source: Author's Computation*

From the Chi Square result in Table 11 above, the chi – square calculated ( $X^2$ ) is greater than the chi – square tabulated ( $X^2_{0.05}$ ), hence, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. We therefore conclude that, public expenditure on the infrastructural development has a significant impact on poverty reduction in Ekiti State.

### Summary of Findings

This study has empirically investigated the impact of public expenditure on poverty reduction in Nigeria, using Ekiti State as a case study. The Chi – square ( $X^2$ ) test showed that all the variables under consideration were statistically significant.

This result can be attributed to the Ekiti State government dedication to the education sector by giving incentives to both the students and the teachers in the secondary schools in Ekiti State. This increased public education expenditure has helped to increase the skills of the citizenry which enables them to earn higher per capita income; this in – turn reduces the rate or poverty in the state.

Public expenditure on health has significantly reduced the rate of poverty in the state. This can be attributed to the recent free health programme organized by the Ekiti State government to help improve the health status of her citizenry; this has further enhance the productive capability of the Ekiti State indigenes which enables them to reduce the incidence of poverty.

Government expenditure on the agricultural sector is statically significant. However, the result can be traced to the implemented agenda of the Ekiti State government to boost the agricultural productivity by giving agricultural incentives like pesticides, insecticides, modern farm implements, etc. which in - turn increase productivity and hence to increase the farmers' earning capacity thereby reducing poverty level in the state.

Government expenditure on infrastructural development has significant impact on the reduction of poverty level in the state. The result is a product of the series of infrastructural development in the state. This has improved economic activities in the state and in one way or the other reduce production cost thereby leading to increased returns from sales; hence, poverty reduction.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the foregoing analysis of the poverty profile in Ado, Iyin and Are Local Government Areas of Ekiti State, this study concludes that public expenditure has contributed to poverty reduction in Ekiti State.



Therefore government should ensure that capital expenditure and recurrent expenditure are properly managed in a manner that it will raise the production capacity and accelerate economic growth and reduce poverty.

Secondly, government should increase its expenditure on infrastructure, such as in transport and communication sectors, road and power, since it would reduce the cost of doing business as well as raise the profitability of firms.

Thirdly, government should encourage the education and health sectors through increased funding, as well as ensuring that the resources are properly managed and used for the development of education and health services in the state.

Furthermore, government should endeavour to embark on viable agricultural policies that will help to increase agricultural productivity in the state. Government should also give incentives to the farmers by subsidizing their farm inputs. This also will motivate the farmers and the prospecting ones to engage in agribusiness.

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