

POULTRY FARMING POLICY AND POVERTY REDUCTION: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE DAKKADA PROGRAMME IN AKWA IBOM STATE (2015 – 2023)

Anietie Jonah UDOH*

BSc (Hons), MSc, University of UYO

<p>Corresponding Author Anietie Jonah UDOH</p> <p>BSc (Hons), MSc, University of UYO</p> <p>Article History</p> <p>Received: 29 / 01/ 2025</p> <p>Accepted: 11 / 02 / 2025</p> <p>Published: 14 / 02 / 2025</p>	<p>Abstract: Despite the abundant human and natural resources for development, Africa as a whole and Nigeria in particular is still confronted with poverty, which remains the preeminent contender for development attention. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number one calls for the end of poverty in all forms by 2030, and this is a major development objective in Akwa Ibom State as the government distributed 50 day old chicks with 6 bags of feeds and 6.2m Naira to 700 farmers across the 31 Local Government Areas in the state. Three (3) objectives and three (3) research questions were raised. On the primary source of data collection, 86 poultry farmers were randomly selected from the three (3) selected Local Government Areas within Akwa Ibom State, and administered copies of questionnaires to respondents in the study, 72 copies of questionnaire were properly filled and returned. The questionnaires were structured and required the respondents to express their opinion using Likert scale variant to assess poultry farming policy and poverty reduction under the Dakkada Programme in Akwa Ibom State for the period 2015 to 2023. The study found that improving sustainable livelihood opportunities for small holder poultry farmers is the most effective way to lift rural people out of poverty. It also showed that poultry farming policy under the Dakkada programme contributed immensely to improve the living standard of the citizens of Akwa Ibom State as well as reducing the level of poverty. The study also recommended that efforts to support and sustain poultry farming in Akwa Ibom State should become paramount and not to divert fund meant for it to other things outside the policy, given the importance of poultry farming in meeting the nutritional needs of the population and also safeguarding against potential food shortages in the state.</p> <p>Keywords: FARMING POLICY; DAKKADA PROGRAMME; POVERTY REDUCTION.</p>
<p>How to cite: UDOH, A. J., (2025). POULTRY FARMING POLICY AND POVERTY REDUCTION: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE DAKKADA PROGRAMME IN AKWA IBOM STATE (2015 – 2023). <i>IRASS Journal of Economics and Business Management</i>. 2(2), 31.45.</p>	

Introduction

One of the major challenges confronting Nigeria as a nation, as well as Akwa Ibom as a State is poverty. Although there are several interventional policies aimed at poverty reduction, the persistence of high rate of poverty in Akwa Ibom State has been attributed to high rate of unemployment (37.7%) that characterizes the state (Umoh and Ekpo, 2023). It is important to note that the 1945 - 1995 concept of rural development policy and programmes by Fairbairn (1998) was seen as a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community through active participation and engaging the community. Imperative of poverty reduction consciously underlines accelerated pace of rural development. Moreover, Third National Development Plan (1980 – 85) attempted to address the widening gap between rural and urban development by targeting balanced development between them. It is observed that development policy of the 1980s focused on efforts to increase rural productivity and income, diversify rural

economy and generally enhance the quality of life in the rural areas (Udoh, 2017). The Fourth National Development Plan (1986 – 90) which pictured the government policy as solving rural problems emphasized the policy of Integrated Urban/Rural Development (URD), which aimed at reducing population pressure on the urban centers by raising the quality of life in the rural areas through correcting investment imbalance between the two (Udoh, 2017). Successive administrations in Akwa Ibom State have put up programmes such as Akwa Ibom State Agricultural Development Programme (AKDEP); Akwa Ibom State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (AKRWASSAN); Akwa Saving and Loan Limited; as well as implementing Federal government programmes which include National Poverty Eradication Programmes (NAPEP) and National Directorate of Employment (NDE).

From 2015 to 2023 the government of Akwa Ibom State established St. Gabriel's Coconut Company in Mkpato Enin LGA;

Tooth Pick Factory in Etinan LGA; Syringe Manufacturing Company and Electric Metering Assembling Plant in Onna LGA. It also revamped Peacock Paint Manufacturing company located at Ikot Ekang in Etinan LGA. All of them were intended to alleviate the problems caused by poverty in the state of Akwa Ibom. Through entrepreneurship empowerment programs like the Women Agro Entrepreneurship Development Program (WAEDEP), My Entrepreneurship Goal Program (MEGP), and the Akwa Ibom State Covid-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (AK-CARES) Program, more than 85,000 entrepreneurs received training, certification, and start-up funding between 2015 and 2022 (Okpongette, 2023). Unfortunately, issues including nepotism, inadequate funding, a lack of basic infrastructure facilities, and a failure to follow up on government interventional programs have continued to impede the state's efforts to reduce poverty (Ekong, 2017; Odeh, 2016).

The adoption of “Dakkada” development initiative was borne out of the desire to create wealth, provide employment opportunities, reduce poverty among the youths and make them useful to themselves and the society (Okpongette, 2023). The eight (8) years of Mr. Udom Emmanuel government (2015 – 2023) adopted the Dakkada development initiative as the people oriented programmes for human capital development in the state. Dakkada Initiative Agenda of 2016 promised gainful employment to youths and women by getting them involved in commercial farming (and help them exploit their youthful energies and expertise in the agricultural sector). The programme targeted small and medium poultry farmers with the aim of raising production level, and increasing their income, creating employment and improving the standard of living of the youths as well as the women of Akwa Ibom State (Okpongette, 2023).

According to Salami, Ewulo and Adewole (2021), poultry farming has been considered to be one of the most lucrative agricultural businesses in Nigeria. In Nigeria and throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, the demand for livestock products—including poultry—is rapidly rising due to urbanization and population expansion. According to studies, one of the agricultural sectors in Nigeria that is expanding the fastest is chicken farming. (Umoh and Ekpo, 2023; This Day Newspaper, 2017). Because of the great demand for chicken and eggs in Akwa Ibom State's marketplace and even in households, raising chickens is very profitable and has become a powerful source of animal protein in addition to beef, fish, and pig.

In Nigeria, poultry farming has produced and continues to produce a lucrative economic opportunity for entrepreneurs to offer (a fantastic) job opportunity to the unemployed youth. Since it's simpler and less dangerous, the majority of business owners decide to create day-old chicks and sell them to farmers. According to Salami, Ewulo, and Adewole (2021), although chicken production is (quickly) growing, it does not appear to be sufficient to satisfy local wants. The large disparity between supply and demand for the chicken product indicates insufficiency, which may be caused by a number of factors, such as the low capital that poultry farmers face throughout production.

One of Nigeria's most sophisticated animal agricultural industries is poultry farming. According to a study on national food expenditure in Nigeria, the annual cost of poultry and food items related to poultry is over N800 billion, with Akwa Ibom State being one of the major states in the industry. This represents more

than 20% of Nigeria's total food expenditure (Poultry Sector Study Nigeria, 2022). Poultry is a good agribusiness for most farmers to invest in because of its large market and high demand.

As the global and national economic trends suggested the importance of self-discovery most importantly by the youth and women who form a greater percentage of the population. Dakkada brought purposeful programmes that positioned the people of Akwa Ibom to be more useful to the society through talent development and skills acquisition including Dakkada Digital Skills Training, AIY iTrain Programme, Dakkada Football Team (Dakkada FC), Udom's Dakkada Skills Centre, Dakkada Initiative where the state government employed and involved youths and women in commercial farming, and help them exploit their youthful energies and expertise in the agricultural sectors, Dakkada Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society (DMCS) where many poultry farmers received grant and loan as significant intervention to boost strides in poverty reduction. This study focused on assessment of poultry farming policy and reduction of poverty under the Dakkada development initiative in Akwa Ibom State (2015 – 2023).

Statement of the Problem

In Akwa Ibom State, poultry production has not kept up with the sharp rise in domestic demand and consumption (Udoh, 2017). However, given that Nigerian poultry farmers earned an average of N397,768.36 (per year), it was determined that chicken farming was profitable (Onyemekihian, Okwukenye, and Joy, 2023). Farmers testified that their poverty was lessened to a manageable degree because to the money they made from raising chickens.

Poultry production is said to have the potential to alleviate poverty by providing additional income to farmers, particularly women, who use fewer inputs. Food security, poverty reduction, and ecologically conscious resource management are all greatly aided by poultry farming. Poultry farming is estimated to account for 70% of jobs in rural Akwa Ibom State. This is because most people living in rural areas have some experience with raising poultry. Poultry farming in Akwa Ibom State generates jobs in both the formal and informal sectors in addition to its importance as a food source and its sizeable contribution to the nation's GDP. According to the UN, food insecurity arises from a lack of consistent access to food, which lowers nutritional quality, disrupts regular eating habits, and may have detrimental effects on people's nutrition, health, and general well-being. With the withdrawal of fuel subsidies and the floating of the currency amid high levels of poverty and malnutrition in Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria's food inflation has accelerated since 2019 (Bunmi, 2023).

According to FAO (2019), poultry farming needs a high level of operational maintenance, and this requires financial support because the quality of their production depends on how well they are managed. This is because the birds have to be fed two times a day as well as **maintaining good sanitation** and quality water for drinking. FAO (2019) further argue that “from time to time, poultry farm will be visited by a veterinary doctor who will administer drugs and injections to them in order to keep them healthy. Failure to do this will expose the birds to all manner of diseases”.

Additionally, chicken produce can be packaged as organic manure and supplied to vegetable farmers (Ijaya, 2008; PAN 2017). Every product that a chicken farm produces has a very

strong year-round market. There will never be any issues selling any of the products. In Nigeria and Akwa Ibom State, poultry farming is a highly profitable enterprise. Akwa Ibom State has a "large market for poultry products." Poultry farming is an effective occupation for Akwa Ibom farmers. Businesses like bakeries, eateries, lodging facilities, and others use eggs to make cakes, scotch eggs, and a variety of other foods that are suitable for human consumption (Poultry Sector Study Nigeria, 2022). The Akwa Ibom people enjoy using eggs in baking, bread, and yams. Another benefit of chicken layers is that they can be sold for more money than they were originally purchased after a year and a half of laying eggs. Higher economic value for the birds can be obtained by timing the sale of old layers—that is, layers that have reached the end of their laying cycle—to fall during a holiday like Christmas or Easter.

Since farmers learned how profitable poultry farming might be, Akwa Ibom State has seen an increase in the number of poultry farms. Thanks to the Dakkada development project, many of these farms now have hundreds of thousands of layer birds. A hen's egg production has also been increasing; on some farms, the production cycle results in 320 eggs or more. Poultry farmers are quite concerned about growing depletions, and the effect of the more vaccines is clear. As a "bio-security measure," distinct sites for growing and brooding are being used apart from laying units.

In particular, chicken farming in Akwa Ibom State has been growing quickly in recent years thanks to government assistance programs, and it is regarded as one of the commercialized (capitalized) subsectors of Nigerian agriculture (Etim, 2023). The fact that poultry has numerous advantages over other animals can be used to explain the popularity of poultry production. Poultry birds are adept at converting feed into protein that may be used in meat and eggs. The return on investment is substantial, while the cost of production per unit is comparatively cheap. In addition, poultry flesh is soft and widely accepted by customers, irrespective of their religious convictions. Additionally, because of the short production cycle, capital is not locked up for an extended length of time. Furthermore, compared to other sources of animal protein, eggs, one of the main outputs of chicken production, are more reasonably priced for the average individual (African Economic Outlook 2012; Aboki et al. 2013).

Although some rural poultry farmers have noticed a growing demand for poultry production maintained under more modern and hygienic conditions, the majority of producers in Akwa Ibom State still use traditional rural poultry farming systems, which explains the rise in domestic production of poultry meat. Most poultry producers run their businesses on a traditionally small scale. These farming operations are frequently typified by antiquated machinery, subpar production methods, and poor hygiene control.

The issues faced by poultry farmers in Akwa Ibom include variable feed prices, growing labor expenses, and pharmaceutical costs, all of which contribute significantly to the input costs of chicken production. To boost chicken production efficiency, which will naturally result in lower production costs, improvements in husbandry, management, and breeding are required (Connolly, 2014). However, a number of issues plague even poultry producers that use more commercial agricultural practices. According to Ohajinya, Mgbada, Onu, Enyia, Henri-Ukoha, Ben-Chendo, and Godson-Ibeji (2013) and Esiobu, Onubogu, and Okoli (2014),

some of these issues include a low capital base, the ensuing lack of equity capital, ineffective management, disease and parasite infection, high feed costs, technical and economic inefficiencies, poor quality of day-old chicks, and a lack of extension and training facilities. These issues necessitate the infusion of resources to enhance Akwa Ibom State's poultry output from an economic and production perspective.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, investing in agriculture is considered more effective in reducing poverty than investing in any other sector (Aboki, Jongur and Onu. 2013; USDA 2014). This is due to the fact that a prosperous small farm employs untrained workers. Rural farming creates revenue that is spent in rural communities and boosts rural economies, both of which promote peace and security. Programs to support this in Akwa Ibom State and, of course, Nigeria are frequently thwarted by political channels, which can thwart government initiatives to develop rural communities, which are essential to eradicating poverty and hunger and to achieving the first Sustainable Development Goal.

In consideration of the potential of poultry farming in addressing poverty reduction in Akwa Ibom State, the Dakkada policy intervened in the poultry farming sector for the purpose of poverty reduction. The recent national household survey that is available at the Global Data Lab indicated that Akwa Ibom people living below the poverty line were 78.3 in 2015, 75.41% in 2019 and 71% in 2023 respectively (Etim, 2023).

Objectives of the Study

This study's primary goal was to assess the Dakkada Program in Akwa Ibom State (2015–2023) with an emphasis on poultry farming policy and poverty reduction.

The particular goals were to:

- i. Examine the impact of the Dakkada poultry policy on poultry farming in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. Describe poultry policy instrument of Dakkada and its effectiveness in addressing the problem of poverty reduction in Akwa Ibom State.
- iii. Assess the extent of poverty reduction following the implementation of Dakkada poultry farming policy in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

- i. In what ways has the Dakkada poultry policy impacted poultry farming in Akwa Ibom State?
- ii. How effective is the poultry policy instrument of Dakkada in addressing the problem of poverty reduction?
- iii. To what extent has the implementation of the poultry farming policy reduced poverty level in Akwa Ibom State?

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the existing knowledge in the field of sociology of development, policy developers and students in faculty of Agriculture. Furthermore, this study will provide input to policy and lawmakers to enhance and boost their ability to make

efficient policies and programmes that will address the need of the citizens to improve their wellbeing and human capacity development. It will provide a stem for the Executives and other governmental agencies to reach out to the avenues of enhancing food and nutritional security, while contributing to household and human capital development of Akwa Ibomites, in accordance with Robert Solow indication that capital accumulation in an economy, and how people make use of it, is important for determining human capital development of the nation. The study will bring immense value to farming, as well as increasing people's knowledge of poultry farming that can ease economic strain in not only Akwa Ibom State, but Sub-Saharan Africa and the world at large.

Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in Abak, Etim Ekpo, Oruk Anam Local Government Areas were purposefully selected for this study. Though there are other Local Government Areas with vulnerable individuals who are struggling with cost-of-living which is a result of demographic changes, workforce development, infrastructure, access to capital, transportation, social insurance, facilities, education, low administrative capacity, lack of awareness and adequate access to social protection, fiscal constraints etc., as well as other Local Government Areas experiencing extreme poverty in disproportionate high level. But, because the study adopted a multistage sampling technique, where these three Local Government Areas were purposively selected to assess the impact of Dakkada policy in these areas. Variables measured in the study were mainly on poverty reduction through poultry farming. The study population comprised poultry farmers, stakeholders, government officials in charge of Dakkada programmes in Akwa Ibom State and opinion leaders who were the beneficiaries, agencies and participants of the programme.

Clarification of Terms

For clarity, the following terms were operationally defined:

- **Poultry Farming:** This is a type of animal husbandry where domesticated birds including chickens, ducks, turkeys, and geese are raised for their meat or eggs. Furthermore, the process of producing poultry goes through multiple steps before the final goods are delivered to customers. These procedures involve raising birds from hatch to optimal performance as well as gathering and processing eggs and broilers afterward.
- **Poverty:** Poverty in this study is defined as the inability to provide or source basic needs. And, this is measured through food security, healthcare services and child nutrition.
- **Poverty Reduction:** Poverty reduction refers to a set of measures both economic and social that are intended to lift people out of poverty or minimize its trend. The measures include: the amount of income needed to cover basic needs as well as the standard of living in these Local Government Areas before/after the Dakkada policy.
- **Poultry Farming Policy:** A set of laws, regulations, and agreements that moderate the interactions between the farming industry and society is known as poultry farming policy.

- **Dakkada:** Dakkada is a principle that is connected to something abstract. It means to "get up" and live better and be greater than what Akwa Ibomites were before.
- **Rural Farmers:** Rural farmers are the people who live and farm in the outskirts of the city, and lack basic infrastructural facilities as well as having awareness or become informed of social phenomenon through indigenous means like town criers, churches/mosques and community leader.
- **Livelihood:** Livelihood refers to a means of securing the necessities of life.
- **Healthcare Services:** Healthcare services are any services (i.e., acute-care, diagnostic, surgery and therapeutic inpatient hospital services) provided by a health care practitioner or professional as well as any individual working under the supervision of a healthcare professional.
- **Childhood Nutrition:** this refers to any dietary needs of healthy children under 5.

Literature Review

Overview of Poultry Farming Policies in Nigeria

Poverty is still pervasive in many parts of the world, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, despite the Millennium Development Goals, which the international community has committed to achieving by 2015, and the Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 and provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. These goals center on unlocking an enormous human potential to end poverty in all its forms everywhere in the world by 2030 (Bali Swain and Yang-Wallentin, 2020). People who make less than a specific income that is acknowledged as the bare minimum required to meet their fundamental needs are frequently referred to as the poor. According to Levy (1991) and Macro Poverty Outlook (2022), this is estimated to be US\$275 for the extreme poor and US\$370 for the moderate poor annually. Although poverty reduction raises people's standard of living and gives them the resources to meet their fundamental needs, Nigeria is still at risk of hunger and poverty. According to the World Bank (2003), Jonathan Lain and Tara Vishwanath (2022), and Africa Western and Central (2023), almost 60% of Nigerians live on less than \$1 per day. "Nigeria ranks 109th out of 125 countries with sufficient data to calculate 2023 Global Hunger Index (GH) scores," claims Bunmi (2023). Nigeria has an extremely high level of hunger, as indicated by its Index score of 28.3. Economic downturns are a more pervasive cause than corruption, conflict, inflation, labor unrest, and climate change, which are all major contributors to this predicament. Nigeria is ranked 163rd in the Human Development Index (HDI), which is also a low ranking (Bunmi, 2022). The nation's insufficient access to essential social services is reflected in the low HDI score. Nigeria's HDI score of 0.535, according to Bunmi, stayed the same. In 2021, the country's life expectancy was 51.7 years, its mean years of education was 7.2, its projected years of education were 10.1, and its per capita income was \$4,790.

The UN defines food insecurity as the absence of consistent access to food, which reduces dietary quality, disrupts regular eating habits, and may have detrimental effects on people's

nutrition, health, and general well-being. With the withdrawal of fuel subsidies and the floating of the currency amid high levels of hunger and malnutrition in Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria's food inflation has worsened since 2019 (Bunmi, 2023). According to Meier's (2002) comprehensive conceptualization of development, which was cited by Okereke and Ekpe, development encompasses more than just the acquisition of industries. It also includes modernization ideals like increased productivity, social and economic equality, modern technical know-how, better institutions and attitudes, and a logically coordinated policy apparatus.

Although the importance of poultry production is acknowledged, Akanni (2007) believed that the main obstacles to the overall performance of poultry producers are unfriendly government policies and a lack of funding for the purchase of basic poultry equipment and materials, which results in low production levels. Because they generated a substantial income that might give their lives purpose, poultry farming was determined to be profitable. According to poultry farmers, the money they made from raising chickens significantly reduced their degree of poverty (Onyemekihiam, Okwukenye, and Jov, 2023). Nonetheless, research has shown that raising chickens can help alleviate poverty by meeting people's basic needs while also advancing the societal economic trend. However, no research has been done to look at how the Dakkada program of Akwa Ibom State's chicken farming policy affected or successfully helped to lower poverty in the state's suburbs. Therefore, this study's findings are meant to serve that aim.

Policy instrument of Dakkada and its relevance to addressing the problem of poverty reduction

The Akwa Ibom State government implemented certain policy tools in the ministry of agriculture to address some poverty issues through poultry farming. Increasing poultry production also creates opportunities for upstream and downstream investment, as well as growing the demand for feeds and other inputs globally. Credit ceilings, sectoral credit allocation, interest rate restrictions, special deposit imposition, moral persuasion, government deposit movement, stabilization securities, exchange controls, and more were among these tools. The State Government has chosen this strategy in order to achieve its main goal of producing accurate and current data for performance monitoring and economic planning.

The problem of childhood malnutrition was also addressed by poultry farming strategy. Stunting affects 159 million children under the age of five worldwide, or almost 25% of all children. According to Onyemekihian, Okwukenye, and Jov (2023), 38% of children under the age of five in Nigeria are stunted, and many more have growth stalls. A multitude of detrimental health effects, such as impaired cognitive, immunological, and metabolic function, are linked to stunting, which is a sign of a persistent dietary deficit (Bardosh, Hussein, Sadik, Hassen, Ketema, Ibrahim, McKune, and Havelaar, 2020). Although nutrition-specific interventions are essential to addressing the ongoing issue of child malnutrition, they are only expected to reduce the worldwide incidence of stunting by one-fifth when taken as a whole. Since poultry farms produce 80% of the food supply in sub-Saharan Africa and sustain the livelihoods of 2.5 billion people worldwide, there has been an increasing awareness of agriculture's ability to alleviate undernutrition (Salami, Ewulo, and Adewole, 2021). However, there is still no

proof of how nutrition-sensitive agriculture affects the nutritional outcomes of children (Bali Swain and Yang-Wallentin, 2020). Given its ability to address many agriculture–nutrition pathways at once, the development of poultry farming has been acknowledged as a promising option for enhancing children's nutrition in rural areas (Bunmi, 2023).

Malnutrition in rural areas can be prevented by encouraging people to keep a few egg-laying chickens for their houses, according to research (Jensen and Dolberg, 2003; Bali Swain and Yang-Wallentin, 2020). This will not only provide for the family's nutritional needs but also enable the sale of the remaining eggs to generate much-needed money for the education of the kids (Gueye, 2009). Sonaiya & Swan (2004) defined rural poultry farming as a flock of little more than 100 birds, regardless of whether the birds are of an improved or unimproved breed, and are raised in intensive or widespread farming methods.

Particularly in youngsters, nutritional status is a crucial indicator of life quality. Accordingly, knowing children's nutritional state has a significant impact on how well future generations develop (Bardosh, Hussein, Sadik, Hassen, Ketema, Ibrahim, McKune, and Havelaar, 2020). One of the most frequent reasons for low school enrollment, high absenteeism, early dropout, and subpar classroom performance is health issues brought on by inadequate nutrition in primary school-age children (World Bank, 2003 and Africa Western and Central, 2023). According to Jonathan Lain and Tara Vishwanath (2022), one of the causes of the high rates of child mortality seen in underdeveloped nations was and still is childhood malnutrition.

As long as a sizable portion of Nigeria's rural population continues to live in poverty and experience the ongoing upheaval brought on by political instability, the war against malnutrition may continue for a very long time. Thus, the examination of children's nutritional status by healthcare services is an ongoing process that necessitates multiple reassessments, particularly in a dynamic setting.

Poverty reduction following the implementation of the poultry farming policy

By offering a low-cost source of protein in the form of meat and eggs, poultry farming helps rural farmers reduce poverty (Fattah 1999; Aklilu et al. 2008) (Adongo (2004); Copland and Alders (2005); Mack et al. 2005). Rural residents are disproportionately affected by the effects of unemployment and poverty. Poverty limits rural communities' ability to make investments in their own community development. Poverty reduction has been a major objective for world leaders through the United Nations, as evidenced by its designation as the first of the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations (a), 2010:1). Agriculture is thought to account for over 70% of jobs in rural areas of developing countries (The World Bank, 2013). However, the majority of poverty still occurs in rural regions, and this situation is likely to persist for several more decades (United Nations Water Assessment Programme, 2014:62).

While sustainable chicken farming requires specialized knowledge, they are relatively easy skills that may be taught to rural populations with little to no formal schooling. Most rural dwellers have some knowledge of large-scale chicken husbandry because it is common for them to keep a poultry farm in their houses. Increasing the number of semi-intensive chicken farmers in

rural areas is intended to help them augment their diet and earn some cash, both of which will improve their level of living. Ending famine in rural areas can be achieved by encouraging people to keep a few egg-laying hens for their houses. A twelve chickens kept in a battery of covered cages may produce eleven eggs a day. A family may easily manage such a unit. The leftover eggs could be sold to raise much-needed additional money in addition to helping the family satisfy their basic nutritional needs (Gueye, 2009:115). Rural poultry is defined as a flock of no more than 100 birds, possibly of an improved or unimproved breed, farmed using intensive or extended agricultural practices (Sonaiya & Swan, 2004:1).

The international community has promised to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, but poverty still exists in many parts of the world. The term "poor" is commonly used to describe those who earn less than a certain amount of money that is recognized as the absolute minimum needed to support their basic necessities. This is expected to be US\$370 for the moderate poor and US\$275 for the extreme poor each year (Levy, 1991). The country is still vulnerable to hunger and poverty even while poverty reduction improves people's quality of life and provides them with the means to meet their basic needs. More than 60 percent of Nigerians earn less than \$1 a day, according to the World Bank (2003). Approximately 75% of the world's poor live in rural areas. For most of these people, livestock are an important part of their livelihood. The poultry industry plays a major role in food production in the livestock sub-sector of the State economy.

Healthcare is another indicator of poverty reduction brought about by the Dakkada strategy. Restructuring national, state, and local government policies to address the health care system of rural residents should be a top priority because health is a vital aspect of household well-being (Macro Poverty Outlook, 2022). In rural areas, where the population is huge, has low incomes and levels of education, and is more prone to reside in medically underserved locations, access to healthcare services and the health of rural farmers are key concerns. According to Bunmi (2023), being in good health is a prerequisite for leading a fruitful life. "Health is a state of complete physical, social, and mental well-being and not merely an absence of a disease or infirmity," according to the World Health Organization (2003). According to research, poor health has an impact on agricultural output because it impairs farmers' physical capacity to work, their ability to use resources efficiently, and their capacity to accept new ideas, all of which have a detrimental effect on the welfare of their entire household (Aminu and Asogba, 2020). Additionally, studies revealed that the great majority of farmers, particularly those in rural areas, were unproductive at their jobs due to a variety of health issues, including skin disorders, rheumatic aches, muscle weariness, and malaria.

In rural places, the accessibility of health care resources typically decreases as geographic separation rises and population density falls. The rural healthcare model focuses on providing primary care and emergency care locally in smaller and more remote counties where small patient volumes will not support full-service hospitals. Referrals to distant urban care centers for specialized care result in higher financial and travel costs for rural residents in more remote areas than for urban residents seeking specialized treatment (Poultry Sector Study Nigeria, 2022).

Alternatively, they might use less healthcare or replace specialists with local generalists.

Despite more variation in death and disability rates, research indicates that rural farmers have greater rates of age-adjusted mortality, disability, and chronic disease than their urban counterparts. According to Aminu and Asogba (2020), among all vocations, farming has one of the highest rates of occupational fatalities. Farm children are also at a heightened risk of fatal accidents. Farmers also have a higher chance of developing respiratory conditions related to their jobs, hearing loss from noise, skin conditions, and some types of cancer linked to chemical use and extended sun exposure. Akwa Ibom State's and Nigeria's policymakers should create policies that enhance the quality of healthcare services, the accessibility of medical facilities, the availability of medications, and the attainment of increased efficiency and long-term funding for rural farmers. Closing the gap and disparities in both health outcomes and access to high-quality and cost-effective health care can aid in the design and implementation of effective policy solutions.

Impact of the Dakkada policy on poultry farming in Akwa Ibom State

In developing nations, a large number of impoverished women, young people, and retirees engage in (and are proficient in) raising poultry. Therefore, there appears to be a clear correlation between poultry treatments and the improvement of family status, as well as related improvements in nutrition and other advantages for the whole family (Quisumbing and McClafferty, 2006). According to Jensen and Dolberg (2003) and Onyemekihiam, Okwuokenye, and Jov (2023), poverty is not just a financial issue; it often has multiple underlying causes. This illustrates how a number of factors, such as vulnerability, lack of power, physical weakness, and isolation, can exacerbate poverty by reinforcing one another. According to Onyemekihiam, Okwuokenye, and Joy (2023), poverty, vulnerability, and assets are strongly correlated. Hazards like severe weather (such as protracted dry spells or floods) or unforeseen family events like illness, job loss, death, and other household incidents can be linked to vulnerability. Social networking in underdeveloped nations requires covering the high expenditures of occasions like weddings and funerals; if these costs are not covered, networks may disappear. Chua, Mosley, Wright, and Zaman (2000) assert that the costs of educating children are quite high. In a downhill spiral, additional vulnerability-causing elements may interact and reinforce one another. This is referred to as "the deprivation trap and integrated rural poverty" by Jonathan Lain and Tara Vishwanath (2022). An entry point is necessary for processes that could lead to escaping the trap. This is where investing in poultry farming could be a helpful tool because research has shown that many low-income women, young people, members of the lower classes, and those with limited financial resources engage in poultry farming (Riise, Kryger, Seeberg, and Christensen, 2005; Bunmi, 2023).

The production of eggs is a major benefit of poultry farming because, despite the tiny output, it provides the household with frequent, if not daily, supplies of nutrients with high biological value (Seeberg, 2003). It goes without saying that some households in Akwa Ibom State only allow their small children and pregnant or nursing mothers to eat eggs, while other families restrict their youngsters from doing so. In terms of economics, eggs

are more easily divided and less unequal than meat. When sold, they can generate significant little profits that can be used to pay for everyday necessities like food to enhance and diversify the diet or other household goods like soap and toiletries.

Research indicates that raising chickens helps rural farmers make more money and create jobs. It was discovered that rural farmers selected poultry farming as a secondary employment. Poultry farming provides jobs, particularly for women, young people, and retired civil servants, and small poultry farmers make between \$300,000 and \$400k annually as a net return (Bounds and Zinyemba, 2018; Bunmi, 2023). In terms of enhancing livelihood, poultry farming boosted food habits, knowledge and skill, savings, social standing, recreational opportunities, family health and sanitation, and the empowerment of women and youth (Bounds and Zinyemba, 2018).

The rural portions of Akwa Ibom State are rife with poverty. The establishment of jobs, education, and skill development are required to raise the standard of living for the rural population of the state. The government, business community, trade unions, and industry all agree that creating jobs is essential for the people of Nigeria, which has a high unemployment rate (Riise, Kryger, Seeberg, and Christensen, 2005; Bunmi, 2023). Policies related to poultry farming contribute to the creation of jobs in both the formal and informal sectors, in addition to the fact that it is an important source of food and a substantial contributor to the nation's GDP (Bounds and Zinyemba, 2018). In Nigeria, Africa, and Akwa Ibom State, poverty is common in rural areas. One strategy to raise the standard of living for those living in rural areas is to emphasize poultry farming skills, education, and job creation. The poultry industry not only contributes significantly to the nation's GDP and is important as a food source, but it also helps to create jobs in both the formal and informal sectors. About 80% of its establishments are Small-, Medium-, and Micro-Scale Enterprises (SMMEs) (Udoh, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the assumptions of the Investment-led Power-Reducing Employment Paradigm developed by Umo (2012). Umo states a five-stage forward moving process that can lead to either poverty reduction and wealth creation or whose backward process will result in impoverishment and affliction. The five-stage model according to Umo (2012) include: investment, Employment, income, poverty and wealth. It is certain that a country can reduce poverty by improving its investment climate to encourage private investment which can increase employment and reduce unemployment; the employment in turn would lead to increase in income which the first three stages can invariably reduce poverty. If there is a collapse within these three models, a country should expect increase in poverty and lack of wealth in an economy by the reason of reduction in investment, employment and income.

Employees and business owners typically benefit from successful investments. Regardless of whether the company caters to the wealthy or not, that is accurate. Investors would also profit from a profitable business that sold chicken to other households. We never count on an investment increasing the income of the already wealthy to trickle down to others when evaluating the predicted development benefit of that investment. It must be made clear that other factors, including any shift in inequality in a nation

like Nigeria or Akwa Ibom State, are likely to have an impact on the relationship between investment and poverty reduction, making it unstable across time or space. One must undoubtedly use caution when interpreting statistical correlations as suggesting that there is a straightforward causal relationship between investment and the elimination of poverty (World Bank, 2024). If this is the case, it may indicate that a policy or intervention that increases investment without these additional factors may have less of an effect on reducing poverty.

In just a few decades, China lifted 850 million people out of extreme poverty, according to the World Bank (2018). They made this feasible by promoting various forms of private investment. China recently began allocating funds for poverty alleviation; for decades, growth was prioritized over all other considerations. Nonetheless, it is clear that poverty can only decrease when a state's income increases or is allocated more fairly, and while investment is not required for growth, it is widely accepted that it plays a key role in reducing poverty.

It is noteworthy that there is a correlation between investment and poverty reduction because both are influenced by other factors, and a causal relationship may exist between the two. For instance, it is believed that advancements in healthcare and education have a favorable impact on economic growth that goes beyond the individuals who gain from them directly. Additionally, there is proof that monetary transfers benefit non-recipients. Furthermore, an economy's output is determined by the interaction between its labor and capital. Additionally, technology is believed to boost worker productivity and raise labor's output potential (Michael, J. Boyle, 2023). It is clear that changes in technology have a big impact on how well a country's economy runs generally. Furthermore, an economy's overall output is determined by the interplay between labor and capital. Lastly, according to neoclassical growth theory, technology increases labor productivity, which raises overall output by improving worker efficiency. Consequently, the neoclassical growth model's production function is employed to gauge an economy's equilibrium and rate of expansion.

In order to effectively reduce poverty in any country, policymakers should implement institutional and economic changes to increase productivity, optimize resource use, and give priority to the fundamental needs of the populace. Through the Dakkada project, the poultry farming strategy aims to promote gender equality and inclusivity while establishing a multi-sectoral intervention to assist local farmers in connecting to markets and services to advance economically and socially.

Methodology

Research Design: Questionnaire items were given to respondents as part of the study's descriptive survey research design, which used a qualitative approach to data collecting and analysis. Both primary and secondary sources provided the data. Focused Group Discussions (FGD) served as the primary source of data, and relevant literature, including books, journal articles, government documents, and online resources, served as the secondary source.

The Study Area: The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom State, where the Poultry Farming Policy was implemented as part of the Dakkada Program to combat poverty. One of Nigeria's 36 states, Akwa Ibom is located in the country's south-south

geopolitical zone. The state capital is Uyo, and there are 31 local government districts in the state. Akwa Ibom North East, Akwa Ibom North West, and Akwa Ibom South Senatorial Districts are the three (3) senatorial districts that make up the state. In 2022, Akwa Ibom's population was estimated by the National Population Commission (NPC) to be 7,200,000 (NPC, 2023). The state is bordered to the north by Abia State, to the east by Rivers State, to the west by Cross River State, and to the south by the Gulf of Guinea. Ibibio, Annang, and Oro are the three main ethnic groups and languages in Akwa Ibom State. Christianity is the most common religion. The state has very few additional faith-based groups. Trading, farming (mostly for upland residents), fishing (for riverine coastal residents), artisanship, and white-collar occupations are the main economic activities. You may reach Akwa Ibom State by air, land, and sea. Rich in arts, crafts, and culture, it offers visitors captivating experiences. It is the main source of income and oil production for the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Abak, Etim Ekpo, and Ika Local Government Areas were chosen as the study areas. The estimated population of the Abak Local Government Area is 177,500, with a population density of 1063/km² and an area of 167.0 km². The estimated population of Etim Ekpo Local Government Area is 135,200, with an area of 200.4 km² and a population density of 674.6/km². In contrast, the estimated population of Ika Local Government Area is 92,900, with an area of 116.3 km² and a population density of 798.8 km² (NPC, 2023).

Population of the Study: Seventy-two poultry producers from the three Local Government Areas that were chosen made up the study's population. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the Local Government Areas. There are 86 people living in the Local Government Areas of Abak, where 31 poultry farmers were chosen, Etim Ekpo, where 28 poultry farmers were chosen, and Ika, where 27 poultry farmers were chosen. Seventy-two (72) respondents were chosen from the specified Local Government Areas to make up the study's population, with twenty-four (24) respondents chosen from each Local Government Area.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique: The study used a multistage sampling technique. Three (3) Akwa Ibom State Local Government Areas were purposefully chosen for the initial stage. Two (2) clans from the five (5) clans of the Abak local government area, two (2) clans from the four (4) clans of the Etim Ekpo local government area, and two (2) clans from the three (3) clans of the Ika local government area were chosen for the study in the second stage, which used a straightforward random technique and farmers' registration. Three villages were chosen from each of the chosen clans in the third step, which used a quota sampling technique. Four (4) poultry producers from each of the three (4) chosen villages were chosen at random in the fourth stage. Seventy-two (72) poultry farmers out of the 78 total Dakkada poultry farming policy recipients in the areas participated in the study.

Data Collection Technique: Data were collected from the respondents using questionnaire. The eight groups consisted nine poultry farmers who benefited from the Dakkada poultry farming

initiative. Members of the group were involved in a discussion on the vital variables of the study by two research assistants also selected from the study area. Besides having personal experiences of the subject matter of the study and perhaps challenged by the intensified outcome of poultry farming policy and reduction of poverty under the Dakkada programme, the research assistants were trained on the objectives and techniques (needed to be) used (in their course of interactions with the respondents). The research assistants were selected from the seventy – two poultry farmers in the study areas. Data were collected from the respondents on both their background characteristics and attitude to the state of difficulty that needed to be resolved. Data on the background characteristics of the respondents were tabulated and presented in table.

Instrumentation: The questionnaire items, were the main instrument for collecting primary data, and these were designed in sections as well for the collection of qualitative data for the study. The questionnaire items were structured alongside with in-depth interview (IDI). Section 'A' handled the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, while Section 'B' and 'C' focused on questions that bother the study objectives which were designed on open ended and closed ended by nature, which required indicating their opinion from the likert scale to reduce different and absurd responses.

Methods of Data Analysis: During the course of this study, the basic percentage approach is used to analyze the primary data collected through questionnaire items. Both primary and secondary sources provided the data. Focused Group Discussions (FGD) served as the primary source of data, and relevant literature, including books, journal articles, government documents, and online resources, served as the secondary source.

Ethical Issues: The study asserted absolute research ethics. Verbal informed consent was received from the respondents, and they were informed about the research objectives. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed. There was no deception of any kind, and participations were voluntary. The procedures in collecting the data did not cause any physical or emotional harm. The respondents were informed about their right to stop participating at any time they wish to change their mind.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

In this study, information gathered from the field was presented and examined based on questionnaire replies. The profiles of the respondents which are: sex, age, educational qualification, religious affiliation and monthly income area were presented. The data were presented in a tabular form using simple percentage. Hypotheses of the study were tested using the Chi-Square statistical tool to assess how poultry farming policy of Dakkada programme in Akwa Ibom State contribute to poverty reduction in the state.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents according to local government areas of residence (n = 72)

LAGs	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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Abak	24	33.3
Etim Ekpo	24	33.3
Ika	24	33.3
Total	72	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

The table above indicated that equal participations were given to the three (3) selected Local Government Areas, where 33.3% respondents were allowed to participate in the study.

Table 2: The socio-demographic characteristics of Respondents (n = 72)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	63	87.5
Female	9	12.5
Age Brackets		
18-24	6	8.3
25-29	8	11.1
30-34	9	12.5
35-39	13	18.1
40-44	10	13.9
45-49	12	16.7
50-54	9	12.5
55-59	5	6.9
Educational Qualifications		
Primary	14	19.4
Secondary	37	51.4
Tertiary	21	29.2
Religion		
Christianity	69	95.8
Islam	0	0
African Traditional Religion	3	4.2
Monthly Income (N)		
N30,000 – 49,000	08	11.1
50,000 – 69,000	15	20.8
70,000 – 89,000	21	29.2
90,000 and above	28	38.9

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 2 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. As stated earlier, the respondents represented poultry farmers across the study area to include Abak, Etim Ekpo and Ika LGAs. The data showed that 63 (87.5%) of the respondents were male poultry farmers selected from the three local government areas, while 9 (12.5%) were female. This indicates that more males are involved in poultry farming than females. On the respondent's age, 6 (8.3%) were

between the ages of 18 and 24, 8 (11.1%) were from 25 to 29 years old, 9 (12.5%) aged between 30 and 34, 13 (18.1%) were within the age of 35 to 39, 10 (13.9%) were in 40 and 44 age brackets, 12 (16.7%) respondents were at the age of 45 to 49, 9 (12.5%) were between the age of 50 and 54, 5 (6.9%) were in 55 and 59 age bracket. There was no respondent at the age of 60 years old and above. On educational qualifications, 14 (19.4%) respondents had first school leaving certificate (FSLC), 37 (51.4%) obtained

Secondary school certificates, while 21 (29.2%) had advanced certificates.

On religious affiliation, 69 (95.8%) were Christians, 3 (4.2%) respondents were in African Traditional Religion (ATR) sects. Since the study was conducted in the christian dominated area, there was no Muslim worshiper among the respondents. Monthly income (N) had 08 (11.1%) respondents who earned N30,000 – 49,000 from the poultry farming, 15 (20.8%) respondents had 50,000 – 69,000 per month, 21 (29.2%)

respondents realized 70,000 – 89, 000 every month, while 28 (38.9%) respondents gained 90,000 and above in a month. This indicated that livelihood of respondents were improved, as poultry farmers earned more than what they usually earn based on the interventional poultry farming policy under the Dakkada initiative aimed at reducing poverty in Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, poverty can be reduced if poultry farmers have monthly income to provide for the basic need of their family members.

Table 3: Respondents view on the extent of poverty reduction following the implementation of Dakkada poultry farming policy in Akwa Ibom State. (n = 72).

S/N	Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
1.	Does this policy improve your farm productivity?	68 (94.4)	4 (5.6)	72 (100)
2.	Beyond meeting basic needs, does this policy connect you to any potential that can raise your income?	21 (29.2)	51 (70.8)	72 (100)
3.	Does your poultry farm adapt to local culture that can tailor your business to local contexts?	42 (58.3)	30 (41.7)	72 (100)
4.	Has this farm give you access to resources and services, including land, finance, training, input and farm equipment?	58 (80.6)	14 (19.4)	72 (100)

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 3 shows the response of the respondents on the extent of poverty reduction following the implementation of Dakkada poultry farming policy in Akwa Ibom State. The outcome showed that 94.4% of the respondents were on the opinion that poultry farming policy under the Dakkada programme improve their farm productivity by expanding their farms to address basic needs and enhancing provision and access to services as a precursor to improve livelihoods and as an enabling factor of people engagement in productive activities in the rural setting, while 5.6% were on counter opinions. 29.2% of respondents expressed the view that, when properly implemented, the poultry farming policy can link poultry farmers to substantial potential investments in rural infrastructure, health, and education, as well as environmental protection. These investments are essential to sustainable rural development and can improve rural well-being beyond merely providing for basic needs; however, they must be connected to the possibility of increasing income and productivity. While 70.8% were on the opposing side. On cultural adaptation that could meet local context, 58.3% respondents were on the opinion that although

adaptation into a local culture in a digital world is challenging, frustrating and even overwhelming, but for business to be successful, it pays to make cultural adjustment. While rural dwellers may have need for poultry production, the products must conform to the local practices to uniquely meet the local expectation. 41.7% respondents were different in their responses. Further findings on poultry farming policy and improvement of the livelihoods of rural farmers, 80.6% respondents were in affirmation that their poultry farms have become advancement to them and their households, while 19.4% respondents were on the contrary views.

The Dakkada programme emerged from the growing realization of the need to reduce poverty in the rural communities of Akwa Ibom State, and to bring the poor including all aspects of their lives and means of living to the center of development. Fortunately, the beneficiaries of this government gesture expressed the improvement in productivity and the dimensions of poverty reduction which include provision of fund to afford children school fees as well as meeting other needs of the family.

Table 4: Respondents view on policy instrument of Dakkada and its effectiveness in addressing the problem of poverty reduction in Akwa Ibom State (n = 72).

S/N	Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
5.	Do you have access to healthcare services, education market in your community?	56 (77.8)	16 (22.2)	72 (100)
6.	Do you often encounter barriers to the three services above that limit your ability to obtain what you need?	42 (58.3)	30 (41.7)	72 (100)
7.	Do your poultry farm provide financial means to access these services when needed?	38 (52.8)	34 (47.2)	72 (100)
8.	Do you have confidence that those providers in your community can provide quality services as well as trusting that they can use services			

	without compromising privacy?	9 (12.5)	63 (87.5)	72 (100)
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Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4 indicated that 56 (77.8%) respondents were on the opinion that access to healthcare services, education and market are possible in their rural communities, while 16 (22.2%) were on the contrary opinion. 42 (58.3) respondents accepted that They frequently face obstacles to healthcare and education that restrict their access to what they require, such as the financial resources to pay for their services, the means to access and utilize services, like transportation to potentially distant services, and other factors that hinder access to healthcare and education in their rural communities; 30 (41.7%) respondents disagreed. Of the

respondents, 38 (52.8%) agreed that their poultry farms do give them the money they need to get these services, while 34 (47.2%) disagreed. Finally, on farmer's access to healthcare services and education, just 9 (12.5%) respondents affirmed that they have confidence that service providers in their community can provide quality services as well as trusting that they can use services without compromising privacy, while 63 (87.5%) responded with disappointment and lack of confidence on service providers, as well as their inability to provide quality services needed to survive their health challenges and educational limitations.

Table 5: Respondents view on the impact of the Dakkada poultry policy on poultry farming in Akwa Ibom State (n = 72)

S/N	Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
9.	Do your poultry farm provide longer term solutions and promote self-reliance to improve nutrition for your children?	44 (61.1)	28 (38.9)	72 (100)
10.	Can you attest that there is increase in literacy, and life expectancy rates and per capita income in your community as a result of farming policy?	20 (27.8)	52 (72.2)	72 (100)
11.	Do parents ensure that children receive appropriate treatment for moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and severe acute malnutrition (SAM)?	38 (52.8)	34 (47.2)	72 (100)
12.	Is there means to ensure that adequate protection, promotion and support for breastfeeding of infants and young children are available; and, that infants and young children have access to adequate complementary feeding and that children below 6 months who are not breastfed have access to alternative food that is appropriate and adequate?	42 (58.3)	30 (41.7)	72 (100)

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 5 presented respondents view in respect to poverty reduction following the implementation of the poultry farming policy. 44 (61.1%) respondents were at the opinion that poultry farming policy under the While 28 (38.9) respondents had opposing views, the Dakkada program offers longer-term solutions and encourages self-reliance to give your kids greater dietary opportunities. While 52 (72.2) respondents disagreed, 20 (27.8) respondents believed that children in their community always had access to safe, nourishing food that was enough to sustain a vigorous and healthy life. Thirty-four (47.2) respondents disagreed with the notion that children receive appropriate treatment for severe acute malnutrition and moderate acute malnutrition, while 38 (52.8) respondents agreed. 42 (58.3) respondents believed that their rural community provided sufficient protection, encouragement, and assistance for breastfeeding infants and young children; and, that infants and young children have access to adequate complementary feeding and that children below 6 months who are not breastfed have access to alternative food that is appropriate and adequate in their rural domain, while 30 (41.7) respondents rejected such claim.

Discussion of Findings

Poverty reduction following the implementation of the poultry farming policy

According to the forecast data released by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (OECD-FAO) between 2015 and 2024, the growth rate of African poultry meat production has raised to 14.16% (Michael, 2023). The result of the study showed that the Dakkada poultry farming policy contributes to the economy status of the rural dwellers by improving the livelihood, their diets, as well as making the farmers engaged and earn income to reduce poverty in the community. The study also demonstrates how encouraging rural residents to keep a small number of hens and eggs for their homes has helped to prevent malnutrition. Children in rural areas undoubtedly lack access to adequate food, and if appropriate policies and investments aimed at enhancing rural livelihood are not taken into consideration, they may develop unsafe coping mechanisms that jeopardize their nutrition in the future.

This study indicates that children and mothers who have difficulty in breastfeeding should receive more assistance and skilled support, these would rescue these children from greater risk

of serious malnutrition and death. Due to their affordability and nutritional value, poultry are seen as an important vehicle to ensuring all people have access to healthy food. In the case of children specifically, The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) recognized the significance of promoting higher egg consumption and thus initiated a campaign to encourage its increase (Onyemekihiam, Okwuokenye and Joy, 2023).

To prevent malnutrition and premature death, the state government should strengthen its policies with initiatives that support and encourage healthy feeding and care practices for newborns and young children. People who live in remote, dispersed areas should always have access to treatment programs for severely malnourished refugees, as well as facilities for children and feeding (Onyemekihiam, Okwuokenye, and Joy, 2023).

The respondents to the first research question attested that they enjoy raising chickens and their eggs as significant sources of food and income. They found that eating more eggs improved the nutritional status of our children, especially those under the age of two. The protein and mineral contents of eggs, especially calcium, phosphorous, sodium, and potassium, remain stable with less variation, and that eating just one egg per day greatly increases the nutrient intake of young children, which will have a significant impact on their health and nutritional status.

Even though eggs are nutritious, parents do not always let their kids eat them because they think that too many eggs will turn them into future thieves and miscreants. Modern agriculture cannot function without poultry farming, which is essential to the production of meat and eggs and makes a substantial contribution to the food sector as a whole. Poultry farming is particularly significant in Nigeria, as the nation produces the most eggs each year and has the second-largest number of chickens in Africa, which feeds a significant portion of the population. However, the benefits of raising chicken extend beyond its position in the food chain.

Policy instrument of Dakkada and its relevance to addressing the problem of poverty reduction

According to the report, the Dakkada initiative's poultry farming tools are advantageous to poultry farmers in Akwa Ibom State's rural areas. According to Rainforest Alliance (2021), the best strategy to help rural residents escape poverty is to increase sustainable livelihood options for smallholder chicken farmers. According to the survey, farmers have increased their revenue and production by using sustainable farming practices and enhancing farm management. The outcome also demonstrated that poultry farmers must establish a living income—that is, the amount of money required to maintain a reasonable quality of living—in order to determine whether their farm is genuinely enhancing livelihoods. It was discovered that majority of rural dwellers have benefited from the programmes designed to improve their livelihood despite lack of information and what they tagged lack of sincerity on government agents.

The result of the study proved that poultry farming policy was an alternative option for poverty reduction, as poultry farmers in rural communities diversified their farms, while some create new farms that bring about a lot of benefits. Nevertheless, few poultry farmers were aggrieved that the money appropriated for this programme were diverted by the politicians, and majority of

the beneficiaries were not poultry farmers, while some of the beneficiaries channeled the money to something else (if at all).

Respondents on research question two were happy for the Dakkada programme, which the implementation made them proud poultry farmers. they did not have any hesitation to say that the government were doing extremely well for supporting poultry farmers. This has made them know that their area is part of the state, because they have now seen how the government is contributing to the welfare of the citizens through the Dakkada initiative. Some of them had been doing small poultry farming to afford their daily meals and take care of their families. Poultry farming policy programme made it possible to understand that poultry farm is good most especially if someone has tangible capital to do the business as expected. good amount of capital equals to good profits in any business. The assistance that they had from the government helped them to utilized the money in such a way that can link them to other potentials that can raise good income for them and their families.

Poultry farmers are doing their best to make sure they give their people the best. After all, they are in a local community, so, if they formed, they are cutting themselves off the local content. Despite the fact that the world is digitalized, the Dakkada poultry farming has made they to meet the need of the local people around them. They were thinking they have been cut off from what is achievable over there, but they thanked God that they are part of the initiative. They are beneficiaries of the government programmes to improve the livelihood of farmers in their rural communities. Life is meaningful and they can match their contemporaries in the urban areas.

Impact of the Dakkada policy on poultry farming

Access to healthcare services is essential for maintaining good health in rural populations, according to a 2020 study by Bardosh, Hussein, Sadik, Hassen, Ketema, Ibrahim, McKune, and Havelaar. The education of children, the provision of clean water, the guarantee of basic healthcare, the empowerment of women and girls, the improvement of childhood nutrition, the support of environmental programs, the involvement of children in conflict, and the prevention of child marriage are just a few of the obstacles that rural residents must overcome. According to the study's findings, rural residents must promptly utilize personal health services in order to attain the greatest potential health outcomes. Additionally, there are metrics that may be used to assess access to healthcare services. Services like primary care, dental care, behavioral health, emergency care, and public health services should ideally be easily and confidently accessible to rural communities. It goes without saying that rural farmers frequently face healthcare obstacles that restrict their access to the care they require. Access to healthcare services implies that they be timely and available, but this is not always the case in rural areas, where access to healthcare is frequently hampered. Even when an adequate supply of healthcare service exists in the rural community, rural residents needs confidence in their ability to communicate with healthcare providers, particularly if the patient is not fluent in speaking English or has limited health literacy. Michael, J. Boyle (2023).

Access to healthcare is further hampered in rural places by social stigma and privacy concerns due to the lack of anonymity. Due to uneasiness or privacy

concerns, people living in rural areas may be reluctant to seek treatment for mental health issues, substance abuse, sexual health issues, unintended pregnancies, or even common chronic illnesses. Personal ties between patients and their healthcare practitioner or other staff members at the facility may influence their thoughts and emotions. Additionally, patients may experience anxiety or worry that other residents—who are frequently friends, family, or coworkers—will observe them using services for medical illnesses that are not usually discussed in public, such as HIV testing or counseling.

According to respondents to research question three, they have access to healthcare services and education remotely, even though they are more likely to have to travel great distances to receive them. However, they are eager to discuss the possibility of having something in their neighborhood. They face particular difficulties since they lack the funds to pay for healthcare, education, and transportation to services, as well as enough time off for their healthcare providers to commute. Residents of places where poultry producers live run the danger of having limited access to medical facilities, as they have much less access to healthcare services. They are less likely to receive screening and preventative care that could avert future health problems because they are still residents of their valued communities. Thanks to the Dakkada project for poultry farmers, the farm can now pay for their children's school tuition and address other family issues.

In a town like this, addressing the issue of healthcare access requires administrators who are both strategic and well-trained. There are health workers that have received training in social justice, economics, leadership, ethics, and even information management. Thus, they can successfully increase access to healthcare for those in need. However, some people are not reliable enough to be trusted with everything.

Summary/Conclusion

From the inception of Akwa Ibom State, political leaders and the government have introduced an increasingly life touching policies leading to poverty reduction in Akwa Ibom State. According to Lennon's (2009) theory, a policy is a governmental, political, or corporate plan or course of action intended to affect and impact decisions, actions, and other matters. This method of summarizing a government's declared aims, formal laws, and regular patterns of action and inactivity is always beset by difficulties, such as a lack of institutional will to follow through on policy decisions. Thankfully, the process of putting policy into practice with more focus is said to lag behind expectations. Corruption, a lack of inclusivity, a lack of continuity in government programs, and a lack of people and material resources were some of the issues with policy implementation that this study found. These frequently result in a growing gap and separation between the intended goals of a policy and its implementation.

New technologies utilized to create items for human use should not be overlooked by the Dakkada program on chicken farming policy. Over the past century, farming practices have undergone substantial transformation, with varying and far-reaching societal consequences. It is clear that certain technical

advancements in food and agriculture promise societal advantages including enhanced climate resilience and disease resistance (Oguntola 2008; Rapheal, Nicole, and Jeffrey, 2020). In order to provide Akwa Ibom State with sustainable food security, the government should establish agricultural policy frameworks and economic ties between agribusiness corporations, agricultural producers, and downstream food systems companies. Additionally, the government should situate its initiatives within the larger framework of the state's economic recovery and development strategy. The goal of the Dakkada programs was to develop economic manpower that would support citizens' Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMSE), shift public perceptions, and establish public-private partnerships (PPP) for the benefit of the state's investors and indigenous population.

Nigeria's poultry sector has a huge opportunity to improve food and nutritional security while fostering economic and household development. There will be a greater need for poultry products as Nigeria's population grows, which will reduce poverty since Akwa Ibom State residents will have to adjust and increase their capacity to meet the growing demand. This will assist rural poultry farmers better manage their farms, control the conditions in their pens, and monitor their financial situation. Given these conditions, understanding the wider relevance of chicken farming becomes even more important. In addition to directly supplying meat and eggs to diets, it is essential to maintaining food security for the expanding population. In order to meet the population's nutritional demands and protect against future food shortages due to climate change, it is crucial to promote and maintain the poultry business in Akwa Ibom.

Recommendations

- Efforts to support and sustain poultry farming in Akwa Ibom State should become paramount and not to divert fund meant for it to other things outside the policy, given the importance of poultry farming in meeting the nutritional needs of the population and also safeguarding against potential food shortages in the face of climate change.
- There should be a clearly defined policy framework with proper guidelines for poverty reduction, especially policy that address that need of the rural dwellers.
- The beneficiaries of the project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation should be involved in all the processes.

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