# *CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND WEALTH CREATION PROGRAMME (PAWECA) IN ADAMAWA STATE*

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**Keywords**

Challenges, Constraints, Implementation, Poverty Alleviation, Wealth Creation Programme (PAWECA)

**Abstract**

***Research problem:*** *The Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Programme (PAWECA) was introduced in Adamawa State to empower citizens and reduce poverty. However, its effectiveness has been undermined by persistent challenges, including corruption, inadequate funding, and weak institutional capacity, raising concerns about its ability to achieve sustainable poverty reduction and wealth creation.*

***Methods/theory:*** *The study was guided by Social Capital Theory, which highlights the role of trust, networks, and institutional structures in achieving development goals. A survey research design was employed with a sample of 400 respondents drawn from beneficiaries and stakeholders of PAWECA. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analysed through descriptive and inferential techniques.*

***Results:*** *Findings indicated that corruption, mismanagement of funds, inadequate manpower, and weak coordination among implementing agencies were the most pressing challenges. In addition, poor funding and limited institutional capacity significantly constrained programme performance, reducing its impact on poverty alleviation and empowerment outcomes.*

***Conclusion:*** *The study concludes that PAWECA's sustainability and effectiveness are threatened by systemic and structural weaknesses. Unless these constraints are addressed, the programme will continue to fall short of its objectives in Adamawa State.*

***Key Contribution to Knowledge:*** *This research provides empirical evidence on institutional and financial barriers to poverty alleviation programmes, underscoring the importance of governance, accountability, and institutional strengthening in development initiatives.*

***Recommendation:*** *The study recommends the establishment of a centralized coordinating body to streamline the roles of implementing agencies, enhance accountability, and ensure adequate funding for PAWECA's effective delivery.*

## Introduction

Poverty alleviation and wealth creation initiatives such as PAWECA are essential components of broader social development efforts aimed at addressing societal issues and improving the quality of life for vulnerable populations. These programs are designed to reduce poverty, empower citizens economically, promote social inclusion, and stimulate grassroots development. In Adamawa State, as in many parts of Nigeria, such interventions are implemented by government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international partners to address persistent socio-economic challenges (Ajala, 2019; Iheonu & Obiezu, 2018).

However, despite their significance, the effective implementation of programs like PAWECA is often undermined by numerous challenges and constraints. Chief among these are inadequate funding, which hampers the scale and sustainability of interventions (Adekunle, 2017), and corruption, which diverts resources meant for beneficiaries (Adeyemi, 2019). Additionally, weak institutional capacity, poor coordination among stakeholders, and bureaucratic inefficiencies further limit the success of such programs (Oshionebo et al., 2020).

This study, therefore, seeks to critically examine the key challenges and barriers affecting the effective implementation of the Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Programme (PAWECA) in Adamawa State. It aims to assess the implications of these constraints on program outcomes and propose actionable strategies for overcoming them. By doing so, the research intends to provide insights that can guide policymakers, development practitioners, and implementing agencies in enhancing the design, execution, and impact of poverty alleviation efforts.

Through a focused analysis of PAWECA's implementation challenges in Adamawa State, this study contributes to the growing discourse on social development and economic empowerment in Nigeria. It offers evidence-based recommendations to strengthen program delivery, ensure accountability, and promote sustainable development in line with national and global development goals.

## Statement of the Problem

Poverty remains one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges confronting Nigeria, particularly in the northern states such as Adamawa, where a significant portion of the population lives below the poverty line. In response to the rising levels of poverty and unemployment, the Adamawa State government introduced the Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Programme (PAWECA) with the aim of empowering citizens economically, enhancing livelihood opportunities, and promoting sustainable development. However, despite the establishment of PAWECA and similar interventions, the incidence of poverty and youth unemployment in the state remains high (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2022).

Several studies have indicated that the implementation of poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria often suffers from systemic challenges. These include inadequate funding, poor policy coordination, lack of stakeholder engagement, weak institutional capacity, political interference, and issues of corruption and mismanagement (Adeyemi, 2019; Oshionebo, Usman & Ibrahim, 2020). These challenges significantly undermine the effectiveness, transparency, and sustainability of interventions like PAWECA. Furthermore, many intended beneficiaries either lack awareness of the program or are excluded due to unclear selection criteria, insufficient monitoring mechanisms, and poor feedback systems (Ajala, 2019).

In the case of PAWECA in Adamawa State, there is a growing concern that despite substantial resources allocated and numerous beneficiaries recorded on paper, the overall impact on poverty reduction and wealth creation remains minimal. This raises critical questions about the design, implementation, and monitoring of the program. The lack of comprehensive studies examining the specific constraints hindering PAWECA's effective delivery in Adamawa State constitutes a significant research gap. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the major challenges and constraints facing the effective implementation of the Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Programme in Adamawa State. The specific objectives of the study are to:

i. Examine the major challenges and constraints hindering the effective implementation of the Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Programme (PAWECA) in Adamawa State.

ii. Evaluate the effects of inadequate funding, corruption, and limited institutional capacity on the performance and outcomes of PAWECA in Adamawa State.

iii. Propose evidence-based strategies for policymakers, government agencies, and development partners to improve the design and implementation of PAWECA and similar poverty alleviation initiatives in the state.

## Conceptual Clarification

### Social Development Programs

Social development programs are instrumental in addressing social issues and fostering sustainable development in Nigeria. These programs encompass a diverse range of initiatives and interventions that target poverty reduction, education, healthcare, gender equality, social protection, and community development (Ikechukwu-Ifudu, 2020; Olowu & Wunsch, 2004). They aim to enhance the well-being of individuals, promote social inclusion, and create opportunities for marginalized groups. In Nigeria, social development programs are implemented by various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international development partners, and community-based organizations. These programs strive to improve access to quality education and healthcare services, reduce poverty and inequality, empower women and vulnerable groups, and promote community participation and self-sustainability (Makama et al., 2019; Bello, 2019).

The landscape of social development programs in Nigeria is characterized by a wide range of interventions, such as conditional cash transfer programs, vocational training initiatives, healthcare delivery systems, and community development projects (Ajayi et al., 2020). These programs are designed to address the multifaceted challenges faced by the Nigerian population, including high poverty rates, limited access to basic services, gender disparities, and social exclusion.

Understanding the scope and objectives of social development programs is crucial for identifying the challenges and barriers that hinder their successful implementation. By examining the strategies, policies, and interventions employed within these programs, researchers can gain insights into the factors that contribute to their effectiveness and impact (Ezeh, 2018).

Social development programs in Nigeria encompass a wide range of initiatives aimed at addressing social challenges and promoting sustainable development. These programs target various sectors, involve multiple stakeholders, and address key areas such as poverty reduction, education, healthcare, gender equality, social protection, and community development. Understanding the landscape of social development programs provides a foundation for analyzing the challenges and barriers that need to be addressed to enhance their successful implementation.

## Goals of Social Development Programs

Social development programs in Nigeria are implemented with specific goals in mind, aiming to address various social challenges and promote inclusive and sustainable development. These programs encompass a wide range of interventions and initiatives that target poverty alleviation, improvement of access to quality education and healthcare, empowerment of marginalized groups, promotion of gender equality, and enhancement of community well-being. Understanding the goals of these programs is crucial for assessing their effectiveness and impact on society.

Poverty Alleviation: Social development programs aim to reduce poverty levels by implementing poverty alleviation strategies such as cash transfer programs, microfinance initiatives, and vocational training schemes (Ajibade & Adebayo, 2018; Ogunnubi et al., 2020). These programs aim to improve the economic conditions of individuals and communities, providing them with the necessary resources and opportunities to uplift themselves from poverty.

Access to Education and Healthcare: Ensuring access to quality education and healthcare is a central goal of social development programs. These programs focus on improving school enrollment rates, providing scholarships and grants, upgrading educational infrastructure, and enhancing healthcare services in underserved areas (Ajayi et al., 2020; Iwokwagh & Atama, 2019). The aim is to enhance human capital development and improve the overall well-being of individuals.

Empowerment of Marginalized Groups: Social development programs prioritize the empowerment of marginalized groups, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and ethnic minorities. These programs promote gender equality, provide skill development training, support entrepreneurship initiatives, and create opportunities for meaningful participation and representation in decision-making processes (Ajayi et al., 2020; Ogunnubi et al., 2020). The goal is to ensure that all individuals have equal access to resources and opportunities for self-development and empowerment.

## Theoretical Framework

### Social Capital Theory

This study is anchored on the Social Capital Theory, originally proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986) and later popularized by Robert Putnam (1993). The theory emphasizes the importance of social networks, trust, norms, and relationships in facilitating collective action and promoting community development. It suggests that social cohesion and interpersonal connections serve as valuable resources for mobilizing support, fostering cooperation, and achieving shared objectives. Putnam (1993)

defined social capital as the features of social organization such as networks, trust, and reciprocity that enable coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. According to this theory, communities with strong social capital are more capable of addressing socio-economic problems, mobilizing resources effectively, and driving sustainable development outcomes (Kawachi, Kennedy & Glass, 1997).

The Social Capital Theory provides a powerful lens through which to understand how community ties and trust among stakeholders can strengthen program implementation. It highlights the role of cooperation, shared values, and informal networks in overcoming institutional weaknesses, promoting participation, and ensuring local ownership of development interventions. Despite its relevance, the Social Capital Theory has limitations. It tends to overlook structural inequalities, power imbalances, and formal institutional constraints that may hinder collaboration or access to resources. Additionally, high levels of bonding social capital (strong ties within groups) can sometimes lead to exclusion of outsiders, reinforcing in-group favoritism and limiting broad-based participation.

In the context of this study, the Social Capital Theory is applied to examine how trust, collaboration, and stakeholder relationships affect the implementation of PAWECA in Adamawa State. The theory helps explain why, in some communities, poverty alleviation programs are more effectively executed than in others often due to differences in the strength of community networks and the presence (or absence) of mutual trust among beneficiaries, implementers, and policymakers. By analyzing how social capital influences program uptake, accountability, and coordination, the study seeks to identify strategies that can strengthen stakeholder engagement and improve the performance of poverty alleviation initiatives in the state. Thus, the theory provides a useful framework for assessing the non-material, relational factors that influence development outcomes and supports the formulation of practical recommendations to enhance the success of PAWECA and similar interventions.

## Research Methodology

This study employed a survey research design to investigate the challenges and constraints affecting the implementation of the Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Programme (PAWECA) in Adamawa State. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized in gathering relevant information. Secondary data were obtained from scholarly articles, academic textbooks, theses and dissertations, government reports, and official publications. Additional information was sourced from credible online materials. Primary data collection methods included the administration of structured questionnaires with selected participants across the state. The target population for the study is the entire population of Adamawa State, which is estimated at 4,902,100 according to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2006).

A sample size of 400 respondents was selected for the study, which is considered statistically appropriate based on the sampling guideline provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Their model suggests that for a population of one million or more, a sample of at least 384 is sufficient for generalizability. Due to the lack of ward-based population classification (Omojorabi, 2016), polling units were used as a basis for distributing the sample across selected Local Government Areas (LGAs). The proportion of questionnaires allocated to each LGA was determined by the number of wards within the area. The following formula guided the sample distribution:

$$\text{Adamawa sample size} = \frac{number\ of\ Local\ government}{number\ of\ local\ government\ 1} \times \frac{400}{1}$$

Table 1: Distribution of Sample Size by Local Government Area

| S/N | Local Government | Sample Size |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Maiha | 34 |
| 2 | Mubi North | 47 |
| 3 | Mubi South | 40 |
| 4 | Michika | 31 |
| 5 | Gombi | 34 |
| 6 | Song | 37 |
| 7 | Jada | 54 |
| 8 | Ganye | 31 |
| 9 | Demsa | 34 |
| 10 | Guyuk | 24 |
| 11 | Madagali | 34 |
| | Total | 400 |

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

Respondents from each of the selected LGAs were chosen using the simple random sampling technique, ensuring equal chances of selection and minimizing bias. Data gathered through questionnaires analyzed using quantitative statistical methods. The results were presented in tables using percentages, means, and standard deviations to summarize and describe the findings. Each table was followed by interpretation and analytical commentary to explain the implications of the data in relation to the study objectives.

## Result and Discussion

The data in Table 2 outlines key obstacles limiting the effective implementation of the Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Programme (PAWECA) in Adamawa State. Analysis using mean scores and standard deviations reveals the degree of agreement among respondents on each identified challenge. The statement regarding PAWECA achieving its intended goals had a mean of 2.48, indicating that most respondents either disagreed or were uncertain about the programme's success. This reflects a perceived disconnect between the programme's objectives and its actual performance.

Among the most pressing challenges, poor coordination among implementing agencies (mean = 3.65) and political influence in beneficiary selection (mean = 3.62) stood out, showing strong agreement that these factors disrupt programme execution and fairness. These findings suggest administrative and political issues are major barriers to effectiveness. Beneficiary awareness of PAWECA was extremely low (mean = 0.45), signaling inadequate public communication and outreach. Similarly, a low mean score for transparency (0.68) points to concerns about the

openness and accountability of the programme's processes. Additionally, logistical issues such as transportation and infrastructure challenges were also noted, with a mean score of 3.43, indicating that operational constraints further hinder successful delivery.

Therefore, , Table 2 reveals that PAWECA is affected by several systemic issues, including poor coordination, political interference, low public awareness, lack of transparency, and logistical difficulties. Addressing these challenges is essential for improving the programme's effectiveness and achieving its poverty alleviation goals in the state.

**Table 2: Challenges and Constraints Hindering Effective Implementation of PAWECA**

| Variable | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| PAWECA has achieved its intended goals | 2.48 | 1.12 |
| Poor coordination among implementing agencies | 3.65 | 1.08 |
| Awareness of PAWECA by beneficiaries | 0.45 | 0.50 |
| Political influence negatively affects beneficiary selection | 3.62 | 1.03 |
| Lack of transparency is a major constraint | 0.68 | 0.47 |
| Logistics hinders PAWECA implementation | 3.43 | 1.21 |

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 provides insights into how funding, corruption, and institutional capacity affect the implementation and performance of the Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Programme (PAWECA) in Adamawa State. The findings indicate that financial inadequacy is a significant constraint, with a mean score of 2.31, suggesting that respondents perceive funding as largely insufficient to support effective programme delivery. Corruption and mismanagement emerged as major concerns. The low mean score of 0.69 for the item on corruption's impact reflects a strong consensus that such practices negatively affect PAWECA's performance. Additionally, the high mean of 3.73 for the statement on corruption undermining the programme's credibility reinforces the perception that unethical practices have damaged public trust and transparency.

Institutional capacity was also highlighted as a serious limitation. A high mean of 3.85 suggests widespread agreement that weak institutional structures and inadequate human resources are hindering PAWECA's success. The low rating of 2.37 for staff training frequency points to limited opportunities for capacity development, which may further contribute to inefficiencies. Therefore, the extremely low score for accountability mechanisms (mean = 0.34) indicates a widespread perception that PAWECA lacks proper oversight and transparency measures. In summary, Table 3 reveals that inadequate funding, corruption, weak institutional capacity, and poor accountability structures are critical challenges that must be addressed to enhance the performance and credibility of PAWECA in Adamawa State.

**Table 3: Effects of Funding, Corruption, and Institutional Capacity on PAWECA**

| Variable | **Mean** | **Std. Deviation** |
|---|---|---|
| Adequacy of funding | 2.31 | 1.08 |
| Mismanagement/corruption affects performance | 0.69 | 0.46 |
| Corruption undermines PAWECA credibility | 3.73 | 1.09 |
| Limited institutional capacity hinders program delivery | 3.85 | 0.97 |
| Frequency of staff training | 2.37 | 1.14 |
| Accountability mechanisms exist in PAWECA | 0.34 | 0.48 |

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

Table 4 outlines respondents' views on strategies to improve the policy formulation and implementation of the Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Programme (PAWECA). The inclusion of local leaders in planning received a high mean score of 3.92, indicating strong agreement that involving grassroots stakeholders in decision-making enhances the programme's effectiveness and long-term sustainability. The highest-rated item was the importance of regular feedback, with a mean score of 4.17. This reflects a strong consensus that continuous monitoring, evaluation, and communication between stakeholders and implementers are vital for promoting transparency, accountability, and timely adjustments during implementation.

The statement expressing confidence in PAWECA's success if appropriate strategies are adopted recorded a mean score of 3.41, indicating moderate agreement. This suggests cautious optimism among respondents, who believe the programme can succeed, but only if past shortcomings are addressed through the right approaches. Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of inclusive planning, open communication, and strategic policy improvements in enhancing the performance and impact of PAWECA.

**Table 4: Strategies for Policy and Implementation Improvement**

| Variable | Mean |
|---|---|
| Inclusion of local leaders in planning improves impact | **3.92** |
| Regular feedback is important | **4.17** |
| Confidence in PAWECA success if right strategies are used | **3.41** |

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

## Discussion of Major Findings

The analysis of the three tables offers important insights into the major obstacles, effects, and possible solutions for enhancing the implementation of the Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Programme (PAWECA) in Adamawa State. Table 2 identifies key challenges such as poor coordination among

implementing bodies and political interference in beneficiary selection. These issues highlight institutional inefficiencies that hinder the programme's transparency and effectiveness. Additionally, the extremely low awareness level among beneficiaries points to a communication gap that limits participation and community engagement, further weakening the programme's reach and impact.

Table 3 emphasizes the consequences of internal problems like inadequate funding, corruption, and limited institutional capacity. Respondents strongly agreed that these factors significantly affect PAWECA's performance. In particular, the high ratings for funding challenges and corruption suggest that financial mismanagement and lack of capacity are major setbacks, reducing overall programme success and public trust.

Table 4 presents possible strategies for improvement. The high mean scores for involving local leaders in planning and the importance of regular feedback reflect a strong preference for participatory and transparent governance. While there is moderate optimism about PAWECA's success if the right strategies are applied, this underscores the need for strategic reforms in coordination, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement.

Therefore, PAWECA's current limitations are largely due to weak coordination, political influence, institutional shortcomings, and poor communication. However, the findings also point to practical strategies for improvement especially through inclusive planning, stronger accountability, and active community involvement offering a roadmap for enhancing the programme's effectiveness and long-term impact.

## Conclusion

The study has examined the challenges, internal constraints, and strategic opportunities for improving the implementation of the Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Programme (PAWECA) in Adamawa State. Findings from the analysis reveal that the programme is hindered by poor coordination among implementing agencies, political interference in beneficiary selection, inadequate funding, institutional weaknesses, corruption, and limited public awareness. These issues collectively undermine the effectiveness, transparency, and credibility of PAWECA.

However, the study also identifies practical strategies for addressing these challenges. The inclusion of local leaders in planning, the establishment of regular feedback mechanisms, and the adoption of participatory and transparent governance models are seen as critical steps toward improving policy outcomes. There is cautious optimism among respondents that, with the right reforms and strategic adjustments, PAWECA can achieve its intended goals of reducing poverty and promoting wealth creation.

In conclusion, for PAWECA to deliver on its mandate, policymakers, implementers, and development partners must prioritize institutional strengthening, ensure accountability, and actively engage communities in the programme's design and execution. These actions are essential for repositioning the programme as an effective tool for sustainable development and socioeconomic transformation in Adamawa State.

## Recommendations

The study recommends the following thus:

i. State government should establish a centralized and well-structured coordinating body to streamline the roles of implementing agencies.

ii. State government should include local leaders, community representatives, and beneficiaries in

the planning, implementation, and evaluation of PAWECA projects.

iii. State government should increase investment in staff training and capacity development to address institutional weaknesses.

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