

The Effects of Change Agents on Rural Household Economy in Ikwo Local Government Area (LGA) of Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Prof. Chinyere C. P. Nnorom¹, Dr. Emmanuel Chimezie Eyisi¹, Dr. Ethelbert Okoronkwo¹,
and Oko Chima Enworo¹

¹Department of Sociology, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu Alike Ikwo.
P.M.B 1010, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: Prof. Chinyere C. P. Nnorom¹, +234 (0) 803319426. E-mail:
ccpnorom@yahoo.com

Introduction

Interventions in African societies in the past century have whittled down the basic functions of the family. Colonialism and concomitant issues such as Christian religion, western education, law enforcement, health and other agencies have both limited and transformed the central role of African families. This is compounded with rural industrialisation, rural infrastructure and agencies that have created wage labour for both men and women in the communities. This situation has restructured the pattern of economic relations in the families. The opportunity provided for women as part of the providers of family resources may have the tendency of creating incipient conflicts in the family.

The families in Ikwo Local Government Area have the possibility of reflecting the above tendencies. A cursory observation in the study area appears to indicate that the introduction of manufacturing industries, mining operations, government agencies, and educational institutions, particularly Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike (AE-FUNAI) have not only disarticulated the basic economic activity (agriculture), but has also disrupted the stable nature of families as an economic production and social integration unit. The study, therefore, addresses the patterns of family economic structure engendered by the nature of the crises of transition the families in Ikwo are undergoing.

Family in most developing societies, as an institution, has been deleteriously impacted by globalisation. This has affected the pattern of family economic structure and relationships. The point is that women have increasingly become equal providers in the household economic resources. The roles previously performed by the family as an economic unit have been taken over or modified by industrialization with devastating consequences on the family fabric.

The family institution also interfaces with other social institutions in a symbiotic, mutually reinforcing relationship. Thus the family has been impacted in an unprecedented dimension as the traditional political, social, religious and educational institutions face turbulent social transformations as engendered by globalisation and industrialization. Apart from being constricted from extended to mainly nuclear families with limited network of relations and influences, the family has also lost its political and social integration functions in the society. The place of AE-FUNAI and other change agents in Ikwo in the light of the above views raise questions that are vital to the study.

This paper explores the effects of change agents on rural household economy in Ikwo LGA. Issues highlighted include the productive opportunities available to families as a result of the change agents, and other household dynamics in Ikwo LGA.

Hypotheses

1. The introduction of change agents in Ikwo communities has brought about an increase in earning capacity of families.
2. The engagement of parents in paid employment in the communities has adversely affected their roles of parental care for their children.

Literature Review

Family for most of us constitute essentially an economic productive unit (Conrad, 2006). Historically, families tended to be large, extended, patriarchal and majorly patrilineal in nature. Marriages were conducted to keep property in the hands of the family and to raise children for working on the family farm (Giddens & Sutton, 2014).

Over the years, the family structure has been changing in terms of roles, size and authority relations. Many factors have contributed to this including industrialization, global capitalism and large scale migration of people across cultures (Philip, 2006). Talcott Parsons (1956) has argued that the family does not in itself, except on few instances, engage in economic production; it is not a significant unit in the political power system; and it is not a major agency of integration of the larger society. Other sociologists have argued that modernity and industrialization transformed rather than removed the economic functions of the family. Ronald Fletcher (1966), for instance, argued that even as families lost its function as a unit of production, it still maintained a vital economic function as a unit of consumption.

Modernization and industrialization have also affected the forms and structure of the family. William Goode (1964) has argued that industrialization undermines the essence of the extended family. This, according to him, has to do with: movement of individuals between different regions; higher levels of social mobility and the erosion of functions of the family. Haralambos and Holborn (2014) opine that family isolation arises from geographical mobility which is associated with industrialism, so that a nuclear family focus is characteristic of many modern societies.

Another dimension to the essence of industrialization and modernization to family changes has to do with the issue of dual careerism. It is essentially a situation where husband and wife regard work (possibly outside home) as very important for their self-fulfilment. It mainly results when the new profession conflicts with family assignment. Financial stability is one of the most important motivating factors for dual careerism especially for women in order to augment the spouses' income (Rapoport, 1986). The major drawbacks to dual careerism include: severe career sacrifices especially for women; balancing of work and personal life and possibility of changes in the family power structure with consequences on the stability of the family (Duddlestone and Owen, 1977).

Families in Ikwo are not spared as many have undergone challenges of transition engendered by change agents. This study is therefore, motivated by the changes in the household economy brought about by the change agents in ways that reflect the shades of opinions from the literature reviewed.

Methodology

Research Setting

The research setting is Ikwo LGA of Ebonyi state in South-East of Nigeria. The population as at 2012 is 218,969 (National Population Commission, 2010). There are thirteen communities in Ikwo. It is mostly a rural society with traditional institutions that ensured a well regulated, extended, communal, patriarchal and gerontological family values. In the past decades, the communities have witnessed interventions that have upstaged these values without changing the traditional economic and political institutions. This has been the root of the basic contradictions in the society. Major educational and economic institutions in the study area include: a university, higher colleges, modern rice mills, government bureaucracy and other government agencies and infrastructural facilities.

Population and Sample Size of the Study

The population of the study constituted of married men and women who are both resident in the communities and also work in the change agent organizations of the communities surveyed. Five communities were purposively selected based on their hosting of the change agents (educational, economic and bureaucratic institutions). From these communities, respondents were randomly selected to elicit responses. For purposes of questionnaire administration, all married male and female workers were sampled from the change agent organizations. Our choice of adult married persons is justified by the fact that the study is focused on the effects of the involvement of spouses in paid employments on the economy of rural households.

Data Collection

Primary data for the study were collected through 159 self administered questionnaires. Also, 5 (five) In-depth Interviews (IDIs) involving 3 female and two male staff of the change agent organizations were conducted as well as 5 (five) Focussed Group Discussion (FGD) sessions comprising eight adults, were organised for 2 women-alone and 3 male-alone groups of workers in the change agents organizations in each of the selected communities to enrich the data for the study. The IDI respondents comprised of community leaders, and top management staff of the organizations in the communities. Also, the FGD discussants were selected from those who work with the change agents. The criteria for inclusion (for FGDs) were workers who had spent a minimum of five years in marriage and at work. Secondary data was collected through library research that involved textbooks, journals, internet materials as well as conventional and social media.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. On the other hand, qualitative data analysis involved data transcription and

scrutiny, arrangement based on the study themes, highlighting of key points, and thematic analysis based on field notes.

Results

The findings reflecting the demographic characteristics of the respondents based on the questionnaires are presented in table 1 and discussed below.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

| Characteristics | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------|--------------|
| <u>Sex</u> | | |
| Male | 91 | 57.2 |
| Female | 68 | 42.8 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |
| <u>Age</u> | | |
| 1-19 years | 2 | 1.3 |
| 20 to 29 years | 13 | 8.2 |
| 30 to 39 years | 78 | 49.1 |
| 40 to 49 years | 40 | 25.2 |
| Above 50 years | 26 | 16.4 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |
| <u>Educational Qualification</u> | | |
| None | 8 | 5.0 |
| Primary | 32 | 20.1 |
| Secondary | 73 | 45.9 |
| Tertiary | 46 | 28.9 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |
| <u>Religious Affiliation</u> | | |
| Christianity | 140 | 88.1 |
| Islam | 3 | 1.9 |
| Traditional | 16 | 10.1 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |
| <u>Host Communities in Ikwo</u> | | |
| Enyim Egalagu | 19 | 11.9 |
| Ndufu Alike | 24 | 15.1 |
| Ndufu Echara | 51 | 32.1 |
| Ekpomaka | 53 | 33.3 |
| Oferekpe (Inyimegu) | 12 | 7.5 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |
| <u>Preference for whom to live with</u> | | |
| Relations | 96 | 60.4 |
| Paid aids | 11 | 6.9 |
| None | 52 | 32.7 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Work, 2019.

From the data in Table 1, there were more males (57.2%) than females (42.8%) working in the change agent organizations. Almost half of the respondents (49.1%) were within the 30-39 years age bracket. This indicates that most of the workers were in a period of their life when they had greater mental and physical energy to contribute to the growth of their organizations. It is therefore a plus for the organizations. Again, 73 persons, representing 45.9% of respondents indicated Secondary School education as their highest education level. This is not surprising, considering the fact that the community is located in a rural area where the level of poverty is high, making access to higher education a problem.

The only degree awarding tertiary institution in the study area, being the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu Alike, commenced academic activities not too long in the year 2012, and married couples can hardly enrol into such program given their economic predicament. In terms of religious affiliation, 140 respondents (88.1%) indicated they were Christians, while 3 respondents (1.9%) indicated Islam as their religion, and 16 respondents representing 10.1% indicated that they were adherents of the traditional (indigenous) religion. That as much as 10% are adherents of the traditional religion is significant, considering the onslaught of Christianity [and other foreign religions] as a major force of social change in most rural areas in Nigeria.

Also, the spread of respondents based on communities and change agents is as follows; Enyim-Agalegu, 19 (11.9%), Ndufu Alike, 24 (15.1%), Ndufu Echara, 51 (32.1%); Ekpaomaka, 53 (33.3%), and Inyimegu (Oferekpe), 12 (7.5%). Therefore, the total number of respondents is 159. Another significant finding here is the fact that most of the respondents' (60.4%) households preferred to live with their relatives, as opposed to others (32.7%) that preferred living without a relative or a paid aid, while only 6.9% of respondents preferred to live with paid aids. This seems to indicate a strong presence of the African value of extended family in the study area, among other factors.

Change Agent Organizations and the Nature of Economic Activity

Table 2 contains data on the nature of the change agent organizations and their spread in the communities from which our sample was drawn.

Table 2. Communal Spread of Change Agent Organizations

| Host Community | Nature of Organization | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|---|------------|--------------|
| Enyim Agalegu | Mining | 19 | 11.9 |
| Ndufu Alike | Educational institution | 24 | 15.1 |
| Ndufu Echara | Educational institution & LGA Secretariat | 51 | 32.1 |
| Ekpaomaka | Milling industries | 53 | 33.3 |
| Oferekpe (Inyimegu) | State water supply facility | 12 | 7.5 |
| Total | | 159 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Work, 2019.

Based on the data in Table 2, Enyim Agalegu community is the host community to First Pilot Salt Mining Company (previously known as Royal Salt Ltd). This is confirmed by the 19

respondents (11.9%) selected from the organization. Ndufu Alike community hosts the Alex Ekwueme Federal University as indicated by 24 (15.1%) of respondents, while Ndufu Echara community hosts the Ebonyi State College of Education as indicated by 51 (32.1%) of the respondents selected from the organization. Hence, 75 respondents representing 47.2 % of the total sample indicated that the change agent organization in their community is an educational institution. Ekpaomaka is the host community to Ebonyi Rice World Ltd, and Ebonyi State Rice Mill, and this is confirmed by 53 (33.3%) respondents who indicated that the change agent organization in their community is a milling industry. Finally, Inyimegu (Oferekpe) is the host community to the Oferekpe Water Scheme, Ebonyi State, just as Ndufu Echara community is also host to Ikwo LGA Secretariat. The last two organizations are subsumed under ‘others’ based on the responses of 12 (7.5%) of respondents.

The Organization and Nature of Economic Activity

To highlight the nexus between work in the change agent organizations and other household economy dynamics, relevant questions in this regard were sought for and the responses are contained in Tables 3 and 4. First, we present data comparing the job types among respondents.

Table 3. Job Types among Respondents

| <u>Variable</u> | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Nature/Type of Present Job</u> | | |
| Labourer | 21 | 13.2 |
| Office Assistance/Clerical duties | 30 | 18.9 |
| Teaching/Administration | 38 | 23.9 |
| Technical duty | 37 | 23.3 |
| Managerial duty | 33 | 20.8 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |
| <u>Nature/Type of Former Job</u> | | |
| Farming | 95 | 59.7 |
| Trading | 34 | 21.4 |
| Others | 30 | 18.9 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |
| <u>Job Combine</u> | | |
| Yes | 103 | 64.8 |
| No | 56 | 35.2 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Work, 2019.

Data in table 3 shows that respondents are evenly spread across the different job types provided by the presence of the change agent organizations. These include Office Assistance/Clerical duties (18.9%), Teaching/Administration (23.9%), Technical duties (23.3%), Managerial duties (20.8%), and labourers (13.2%). Our findings further show that prior to their present job, most of the respondents (59.7%) were engaged in farming as their

major occupation. Interestingly, despite their present job in the change agent organizations, majority of the respondents (64.8%) still combined their current job with the previous job. To explain this trend, qualitative data was retrieved from the FGDs and IDIs.

For instance, a female FGD participant¹ in Ndufu Alike said:

What we are currently paid is too meagre. Currently, we are paid ₦6,000 monthly, but if this amount should be increased to ₦35,000 it will improve our lives tremendously.

This view is shared by another female FGD participant in Ndufu Alike said, who said:

Most of those from this community currently working here are casual staff that are given a monthly stipend of ₦6,000. We only have one or two junior staff and no senior staff at all.

Thus, to cope with the financial needs of the household, another female FGD participant said:

The land that was taken away from families is large. Only a little portion of the land belonging to us is left...We now get land on lease at a price from nearby communities and cultivate for the farming season. As a result, we don't cultivate much as we used to before our lands were taken away for the establishment of this organization

According to a 50 years old female informant in an in-depth interview at Ndufu Echara:

...most people still practice farming using the income they get from the organization to support their farming.

At Ekpaomaka community, a male participant in the FGD told us that:

What I do now is that I pay labourers to do the work I used to do in the farm, and it is the little stipend I earn from this my present job that assists me with such expenses. As it stands, it is difficult to be fully involved in farming as I used to because I spend most of my time working here.

Another male participant in the FGD at Ekpaomaka community gave another perspective to the reason why they combine the present job with farming. According to him,

We cannot avoid our farm work because of the nature of government work in Nigeria. For instance, if the labour unions call for strike action, as is often the case, all we have to do is to go to our farm and sustain our household with products from the farm until such industrial conflict is resolved.

¹At an exchange rate of ₦350 per dollar, ₦6,000 translates to \$17, while ₦35,000 is \$100.

However, in Anyim Agalegu community, farming had become difficult because of contamination of the land and water sources by the lead and salt mining company. We were told by an informant that :

You see, if you go into the village you'll see that their farmlands and water sources have been contaminated by lead. There is no good water, not even their fish, all have been contaminated. They don't have good water except they buy pure (sachet) water, and there is no where they manufacture pure water here except maybe at Abakaliki (the state capital) At times you go to shops, there is no water. So, every of their land, their land and everything is spoilt because of the mining operations here.

Next, we extracted data on the contribution of the change agent organizations to household income.

Table 4. Contribution of the Change Agent Organizations to Household Income

| Variable | Previous Job Frequency (%) | Present Job Frequency (%) |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <u>Income</u> | | |
| ₦1:00 to ₦10,000:00 | 52 (32.7) | 16 (10.1) |
| ₦10,001:00 to ₦20,000:00 | 48 (30.2) | 33 (20.8) |
| ₦20,001:00 to ₦30,000:00 | 21 (13.2) | 41 (25.8) |
| ₦30,001:00 to ₦40,000:00 | 10 (6.3) | 29 (18.2) |
| ₦40,001:00 to ₦50,000:00 | 16 (10.1) | 13 (8.2) |
| Above ₦50,000:00 | 12 (7.5) | 27 (17.0) |
| Total | 159 (100.0) | 159 (100.0) |
| <u>Job that contributes more to Family Income</u> | | |
| Previous job | 43 | 27.0 |
| Present job | 116 | 73.0 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |
| <u>Reason for answer above</u> | | |
| It pays more | 74 | 46.5 |
| Stable income | 51 | 32.1 |
| Less stressful | 34 | 21.4 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |
| <u>Present Job Increased Family Income by Spouse's Wage</u> | | |
| Yes | 111 | 69.8 |
| No | 37 | 23.3 |
| Don't know | 11 | 6.9 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Work, 2019.

We found out that despite the fact that different people earned different amounts as their monthly take home pay, depending of their position in the organization, the average earning² in their present job in the change agent organizations when all the respondents were combined was ₦35,000, in comparison to an average of ₦25,000 they earned³ from their previous jobs. In fact, 73% of respondents agreed that their current job contributed more to their family than the previous job. In their view, the present job pays more (46.5%), provided steady income (32.1%) and was less stressful (21.4%). The foregoing indicates the transformative impact of the change agent organizations in the communities. In support of this finding, 69.8% of respondents agreed that the organization in their area had increased overall family income by virtue of the spouses' wages.

A female informant in an In-depth Interview session at Ndufu Echara said [rather ironically]:

Yes, this organization has helped people in this community. People have earned much as a result of this organization, but not for my family, because none of my family member is a staff

On probing further, the woman in question said:

Are they hidden? They have built houses, bought cars and accomplished other things like buying motorbikes, especially women. They all train their children with their salary. In fact, it has improved the status of women. At the end of the month, women that work in these organizations are able to buy things for their children and they feed better than those without such jobs. They use their motorbikes to convey their children to school, making life easier for them. Without such a good job, even as a mother, you cannot motivate your children to attend school. This job has also helped most women earn some respect and be treated with dignity by men.

A female cleaner, and participant in the FGD session at Ndufu Echara, said:

When my husband died, I was coming here to look for job, so I can feed my children. Initially, I was allowed to clear grasses for payment occasionally. I came severally to be employed until I was offered employment as a casual staff. This job has assisted me pay for my children's school fees and other needs. Before this job, things were too difficult for me and I did not know what to do. I had no hope. Although things are still difficult for me, but now it is better than that time. When I am converted to a permanent staff, I know that things will improve.

² At an exchange rate of ₦350 per dollar, ₦35,000 translates to \$100.

³ At an exchange rate of ₦350 per dollar, ₦25,000 translates to \$71.

A male participant in the FGD session at the Ekpaomaka Rice Mill had this to say:

This organization is a welcome development. The income I earn from this job helps me take care of household needs, especially taking care of my children and paying labourers to do my farm work unlike before when I relied on farming alone.

Another male participant at the FGD session at Ekpaomaka stated that:

This new job has led to a drastic reduction in the number of men that wander from one community to another in search of manual labour to earn money which often affected family harmony. It has also offered us an avenue for extra income instead of reliance on proceeds from farming alone

On the other hand, most respondents working in change agent organizations in Anyim Agalegu had a negative view on the contribution of the organization to household income. For instance, a 30 years old male informant in an in-depth interview session in the community said:

Every day, we get to understand that this company is making ₦ 10 million daily. The Indians came in and started using us as modern slaves in our own country. I am among those collecting ₦37,000 as a graduate. How do you expect somebody to cope? It is not helping. It really lowers the status of a man in the family. Thank God that I have an understanding wife else, it would have created disharmony in my household.

Furthermore, the participants in the FGD at Anyim Agalegu community which was for males only, shared similar views. For instance, one said:

Some people have worked here for up to eight years but some of them, their basic salary as degree holders is ₦28,000 and many others are paid a monthly stipend of ₦10,000. What is the meaning of that? Yet, they still treat you like a slave.

Another male participant in the FGD at Anyim Agalegu community stated his stance thus:

The money I used to get in my previous place of work is higher, yet I spend more time and energy here. What I earn here is so meagre that it is adversely affecting the upkeep of my household. Currently, the only thing that makes me a man is my genitals. I am called the head of my household, but I am no more the breadwinner.

Expropriation of Land, Non-Compensation and Economic Impact on Households

A major theme that came as part of the research findings has to do with the expropriation of land from the communities in which these organizations were located without compensation. The economic impact of such action is highlighted better in the IDIs and FGDs that follow after the table.

Table 5. Land Acquisition and Forms of Compensation

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Family land acquisition</u> | | |
| Yes | 100 | 62.9 |
| No | 59 | 37.1 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |
| <u>Compensated for Land (N=100)</u> | | |
| Land acquired on lease | 18 | 18 |
| No compensation was paid | 56 | 56 |
| Monetary compensation was paid | 26 | 26 |
| Total | 100 | 100.0 |
| <u>Family member works in the Organizations</u> | | |
| Yes | 93 | 58.5 |
| No | 66 | 41.5 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |
| <u>Community people work in the Organizations</u> | | |
| Yes | 87 | 54.7 |
| No | 72 | 45.3 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Work, 2019.

Clearly from Table 5, land was acquired from a greater number of families by the communities hosting the change agent organizations. This is reflected by the responses of 62.9% of the respondents who indicated that their land was acquired by the organization they work in. Unfortunately, majority of the respondents (56 or 56%) were not given any form of compensation, despite the expropriation of their land by the change agent organizations. A close form of non-monetary compensation for the land taken away could be the employment of extended family members or kins as we see in the table from the responses of 58.5% of respondents. The issue of land, compensation and impact on households is captured in the IDIs and FGDs and some of the excerpts are presented below.

The only senior member of staff of one of the educational institutions we interviewed told us that:

People have been denied their farming activities. They feel they are being denied their source of survival, which is natural. At the same time, they are also happy that their place is being developed. But then, they also feel that they are hungry while the development is going on, because there is nothing to 'pat their back'...So, because of that they are not happy. And, go and do your investigation, without my presence here, these structures (points to houses) could not have been possible. 'Isi mmadu ga abago' (people could have lost their lives). But because of God's wisdom, my presence saved the situation. But the people are not happy.

Furthermore the senior staff in question said:

If the management can listen to me, meet the Governor [tell him], give us ₦ 40 million for the school. Tell him, 'oga (sir) thank you' we are very grateful. Use ₦ 20 million and pay compensation to families whose land was taken and yet to be paid compensation. If I tell you, University problem doesn't allow me sleep. I have even suggested that the school can use ₦ 20 million and commence payment of the compensations and the Vice Chancellor will feel relaxed.

Our findings suggest that workers in the change agent organization in Ndufu Alike community were the worst hit in terms of non-compensation for land taken from them. For instance, a 38 year old female informant in an in-depth interview in the community said:

This organization took all our family land and I am really sad. I find it hard to do my usual farming job again. Feeding is now a big problem for my household because we don't have a farmland on which to cultivate, and we don't have any other source of livelihood. When we lost all our land, I started engaging in manual labour wherever I could find such, until I was employed here as a cleaner, and you know that we are paid ₦6,000 as our monthly stipend, which is lower than what I used to earn from my previous farming job...Till date, no body has explained anything to me and hunger nearly killed my children. We were later told that our land is now school land, but no one has ever given us any form of monetary compensation.

A 50 year old widow from the same community and who is also a casual staff told us that:

The school took most of our land, and we don't have land again for our farming which is our major occupation. We now buy most of our food in the market since our land is gone.

Another female participant in FGD at Ndufu Alike community stated that:

Almost all the families in this community lost their land as a result of the establishment of this organization. Unfortunately, after taking such a large expanse of land and rendering households poorer, the government refused to pay any form of monetary compensation to those affected.

A 36 year old female participant in the FGD at Ndufu Alike community narrated her ordeal and that of others that lost their land to the change agent organization in their community, thus:

Some people have died both in Ndufu Alike and Ndufu Echara communities as a result of excessive thinking after their land was taken from them to establish these organizations. Such people have no hope of surviving. They took all our family land and we are currently using a small mud house apartment as our dwelling within the school premises. My mother-in-law nearly died of heart attack as a result of shock after all our land was taken away by this organization without compensation. She was taken to the hospital for medical attention until she got a bit better. However, today she can hardly move as a result of complications from the sickness after our land was forcefully taken from us.

A woman in her mid-forties who took part in the FGD at Ndufu Alike told us that:

This issue of taking away land without compensation is a big blow. For instance, two of my sons went to Abakaliki (the state capital) to stay with a relation and recently, they completed their secondary school education. However, the calamity is that they do not have a place to call their home again because we do not have land anywhere else, neither do we have the money to buy one.

The conflict being bred among households as a result of this situation was highlighted by another female panellist in the FGD at Ndufu Alike, to the effect that:

In recent times, our community has recorded a high level of conflict among households because most women expect their husbands to take good care of them and their children, but since the men have no lands on which to work or lease, there is nothing they can do. They can hardly provide food and other needs for their households. Most of our husbands have turned to alcohol addicts as a result of frustration. And the problem is that sometimes they vent their frustration on others, including their wives. This has also forced some women to engaging in extra income-yielding jobs that is physically demanding to make sure the stability of the family is maintained.

The issue of land acquisition was less traumatic to other community selected for this study. For instance, at Ekpaomaka community, an FGD participant retorted:

The land acquired for the establishment of this Rice Milling Company is large, but the community still have sufficient land left for members of the community, and families whose land was taken were given monetary compensation. I can say that the issue of land acquisition by the government for this company is not much of a problem for our community.

Another male member of the Ekpaomaka FGD panel told us that

The acquisition of land did not affect so many families. My family land was affected. Presently, members of my family pay for land on lease from neighbouring communities in order to cultivate crops. But the major problem is that this company pays based on production, and we often stay for a month without production because government authorities pay little attention to maintenance of equipment that will enable us produce regularly. This situation results in conflict in the household because your wife and kids believe that you are not doing enough to care for them.

Test of Hypotheses

The outcome of the two hypotheses tested for this study is presented below.

Hypotheses 1. The introduction of change agents in Ikwo communities has brought about an increase in earning capacity of families

Table 6. Relationship between Earning Capacity and Sex

| Sex | Amount earned in the present work | | | | | | | Chi-square (P-value) |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------|---|
| | #1:00 to #10,000:00 | #10,001:00 to #20,000:00 | #20,001:00 to #30,000:00 | #30,001:00 to #40,000:00 | #40,001:00 to #50,000:00 | Above #50,000:00 | Total | |
| Male | 3 (1.9%) | 9 (5.7%) | 25 (15.7%) | 22 (13.8%) | 9 (5.7%) | 23 (14.5%) | 91(57.2%) | 35.512 (0.000) Df=5 |
| Female | 13 (8.2%) | 24 (15.1%) | 16 (10.1%) | 7 (4.4%) | 4(2.5%) | 4(2.5%) | 68(42.8%) | |
| Total | 16 (10.1%) | 33 (20.8%) | 41 (25.8%) | 29 (18.2%) | 13 (8.2%) | 27(17.0%) | 159 (100.0%) | |
| Amount earned in the previous work | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 23(14.5%) | 21(13.2%) | 15(9.4%) | 8(5.0%) | 12(7.5%) | 12(7.5%) | 91(57.2%) | Df=5 X ² = 22.033 (0.001) |
| Female | 29(18.2%) | 27(17.0%) | 6(3.8%) | 2(1.3%) | 4(2.5%) | 0(0.0%) | 68(42.8%) | |
| Total | 52(32.7%) | 48(30.2%) | 21(13.2%) | 10(6.3%) | 16(10.1%) | 12(7.5%) | 159(100.0%) | |

Source: Field Work, 2019.

The hypothesis was tested using chi-square. At chi-square value of 35.512, df=5, and p 0.000 shows that this is significant, thus the hypothesis that states that introduction of change agents in Ikwo has increased the earning capacity of families is accepted.

Hypothesis 2.Engagement in paid employment affects parental care for children

Table 7. Engagement in Paid Employment and Parental Role

| Sex | Do you have time for your children like you do before this job | | | Chi-Square (p value) |
|--------|--|------------|--------------|----------------------|
| | No | Yes | Total | |
| Male | 60 (37.7%) | 31 (19.5%) | 91 (57.2%) | 2.746 (.097) |
| Female | 36 (22.6%) | 32 (20.1%) | 68 (42.8%) | |
| Total | 96 (60.4%) | 63 (39.6%) | 159 (100.0%) | |

Source: Field Work, 2019.

The hypothesis was tested using chi-square. At chi-square value of 2.746 , df=1, and p 0.097 shows that this is not significant, thus we reject the hypothesis that states that engagement of parents in paid job affects parental care for children.

Discussion of Findings

The study has shown that change agent institutions in Ikwo Local Government Area have served as a veritable source of socio-economic transformation among households in the area. It can, however, be argued that the direction of the change has remained multi-dimensional. From our Findings, some major themes are prevalent. The foremost of these is patriarchy.

Patriarchal Dominance

In terms of the demographic characteristics of the study area, we see that more males (57.2%) than females (42.8%) work in the change agent organizations. This dominance of men over the women could be a reflection of the wider issue of patriarchy which is prevalent in rural Nigerian communities of which the study area, Ikwo is one. A major finding to support this assumption is represented by the data in Table 6 above on the relationship between earning capacity and sex. The data therein indicates that female workers earned higher income in their present job [in comparison to their previous job] than male workers for income ranges below ₦20, 000. On the other hand, male workers earned higher income in their present job [in comparison to their previous job] than female workers for income ranges above ₦20, 000. The implications of the foregoing are numerous, and include the fact that men have higher qualifications, which earned them job positions with higher pay. Again, it points to the fact that men will have a higher economic power in households and this will give them an edge over women in households in Ikwo. A better earning capacity on the part of the men could translate to ability to make major household decisions, and this power inequality in the household is the major driver of patriarchal dominance with all that it connotes for households in general, and women in particular, especially in rural Nigeria communities.

Change Agent Organizations and the Nature of Economic Activity

The research findings indicate that change agent organizations are fairly well spread in communities in Ikwo Local Government Area (LGA). Some of the change agent organizations found in the study area include a multi-million Naira Mining Company-the First Pilot Salt Mining Company (formerly known as Royal Salt Mining Company), a Federal University, a state College of Education, a government owned Rice Milling Industry and a world-class private Rice Milling Company, as well as a high-powered Water Scheme, and Local government Secretariat. With these organizations, the socio-economic development of the area should not be in doubt. Communities in the area and households are supposed to reap the benefit of being host to these organizations. For instance, it is expected that it will provide employment opportunities for the indigenes, and thereby ease the financial burden on households. Again, it is expected that the communities will benefit from other social responsibilities the organizations are legally expected to provide for the host communities like electricity, pipe-borne water, good roads, security, hospitals, schools, and recreation facilities, among others. However, the change agent organizations in Ikwo have not lived up to expectation in this regard, as none of the organizations have provided any of the infrastructural facilities that can improve the life of households, which a foremost corporate social responsibility of the organizations.

We found a situation in which the locals are only offered jobs in the lower rungs of the ladder. Majority of workers from the communities employed in the organizations, were employed as casual workers, against the labour laws of the country which had urged organizations to stop such arrangement especially after few months. We found that most of the workers had worked in the capacity of casual staff for periods beyond five years in several of the organizations studied. Few of the members of the host community were offered

senior staff positions in the organizations even when in most cases there were people with the qualification for such positions in the organizations. This practice is capable of stunting progress in the study area. Despite these shortcomings, most of the staff in the organizations agreed that the organizations have improved their earning capacity.

Expropriation of Land, Non-Compensation and Economic Impact on Households

The major social problem in the study area is the issue of the loss of land belonging to individuals, families and the community at large. It was discovered that a large portion of the land from which households make their living through farming and other activities have been taken away from them especially by either the Federal or State governments, for purposes of setting up the change agent organizations. In other communities, monetary compensation was made to the affected families. However, for Ndufu Alike community, no compensation was made, according to the respondents, despite the fact that the community appears to have been worst hit by the expropriation of their land to the extent that most of the families have been rendered homeless and economically useless. This has had a very adverse effect on the economic stability found among households in the community.

Test of Hypotheses

At a chi-square value of 35.512, $df=5$, and $p 0.000$ which is significant, we accepted the hypothesis that states that introduction of change agents in Ikwo has increased the earning capacity of families. However, at chi-square value of 2.746, $df=1$, and $p 0.097$ which is not significant, the hypothesis that engagement of parents in paid jobs affects parental care for children was rejected.

Conclusion and Recommendations

These findings point to the potentials of organizations, if well harnessed, for the socio-economic transformation of rural households. Based on the findings, the study recommends as follows:

- ❖ the immediate conversion of all the casual staff of these organizations to permanent staff.
- ❖ fulfilling their corporate social responsibility (CSR) to the host communities, in the form of provision of schools [including scholarships], hospitals, electricity, good road network, and potable water especially in the face of contamination of water sources with company waste like lead, as is the case in Anyim Agalegu community.
- ❖ engaging the indigenes of the community in their payroll in a round table discussion to understand better ways of ensuring a better working relationship.

It is hoped that when these recommendations are implemented, the bottled up grievances of the indigenous workers and other members of the community which might result in preventable loss of lives and property may be avoided. This will truly guarantee economic stability among households and heighten the possibilities of rural household transformation.

References

- Conrad, P. (2006). *Anthropology: the exploration of human diversity*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Duddlestone, A; Owen, D; Hardill, I, & Anne, G. (1977). in Haralambos, M and Horlborn, M (2008); *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. London: Harper Collins.
- Fletcher, R. (1966). *The shaking of foundations: family and society*. Penguin: Harmondsworth.
- Giddens, A. & Sutton, P. (2014). *Sociology*. New Delhi: John Willey and Sons.
- Haralambos, M. & Holborn, M. (2004). *Sociology: Themes and perspectives*. London: Harper and Row.
- National Population Commission (2010). *2006 Population and Housing Census Priority Table Volume IV: Population Distribution by Age and Sex*. Abuja: NPC.
- Parsons, T. (1956), in Giddens, A. & Sutton, P. (2013). *Sociology*. New Delhi: John Willey and Sons.
- Philip, C. (2006). *Anthropology: The exploration of human diversity*. USA: McGraw Hill.
- Rapoport, R. (1986). *Dual career families*. London: Penguin.
- Goode, W. (1964): *The family*. Princeton-Hall: Eaglwood.