

PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL LEARNING
IN CHURCH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR POVERTY ERADICATION IN NIGERIA

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PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL LEARNING
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The task of poverty eradication requires the joint action of various agencies (IFAD, 2001). In Nigeria, there is a lack of alternative institutions to counter the social processes entrenched in local settings that lead to poverty (Obadan, 2002). The main purpose of this study is to investigate the potentials of Church-based organizations (CBOs) as alternative mechanisms for poverty eradication. I begin by defining poverty from a country perspective and argue that modernistic tendencies have led to a limited understanding. I proffer a communitarian approach for understanding the meaning of poverty and its eradication strategies. I examine the organizational dynamics of a diocese in order to explore the elements within its structure that favor social inclusion in relation to the Roman Catholic Social Justice Agenda.

I use Social Learning theory as a theoretical framework to assess how a diocese learns to build on the capacity of individuals and groups as stakeholders that influence poverty eradication at the local level. I build on the role of religious emotions and spiritual values in improving the professional practice of a diocese toward poverty eradication. I also investigate how the means of communication play a role in improving social learning within a diocese, tracing the old social learning tradition from individual cognitions to the new understanding of social learning in social group dynamics. Based on the shifting paradigm in development, I analyze the implications of social learning for CBOs in designing learning for individuals and groups.

I further review the concept of Participation and its role in poverty eradication, tracing the historical evolution of participation from the basic needs approach to the populist model that emphasizes broader processes of governance within organizations. The implication of this paradigm shift for CBOs is that a diocese as an organization can learn to become a social change agent by reviewing its “structures” and its understanding of “power.” I set out to investigate the Catholic diocese of Ogoja Nigeria, to explore its potential to involve people in social development and the fight against poverty.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Peter Abue was born in the village of Idum-Mbube in Ogoja, Nigeria, surrounded by conditions of illiteracy, disease, and inter-village rifts. Raising a family of nine children, his Christian parents sought a good life for them, believing that education and the ability to share with others was the best way to live life to the fullest. After high school, Peter was determined to seek something beyond himself, and he figured education would provide answers to the contradictory issues that surrounded life. While he was certain that education was a good tool toward this discovery, he was also convinced that such education is possible because, if his parents could afford it within the limits of an impoverished setting, then anybody could do the same. In order to combine this quest for a good education with his conviction to share his life with others, Peter enrolled to study for the priesthood and was ordained a Catholic priest in 1985. He was later sent to the United States, where he began to question the imbalances and inequalities he saw in life. He became a volunteer for Gospa Missions in Evans City, Pennsylvania, with a special interest in building liaisons between the US and his rural community in Ogoja, Nigeria. He later studied telecommunications in Dallas, Texas, and also earned a Masters Degree in mass communications from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He returned to Nigeria and took up community-oriented projects; editing a local newspaper, directing communication, coordinating development projects, seeking to raise awareness about community development. With the help of Gospa Missions, he founded an orphanage school, and later a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the children of rural Africa.

Since coming to Cornell University in 2001, Peter has learned to better explore issues that have always captivated him: Why are some people so rich and others so

poor? Why do parallels and margins of difference exist among peoples, communities, and nations? Why are some communities more organized than others? What role does the education of adults play in transforming poor rural communities? And recently, with growing interests in the role of the religious sector in Nigeria, his special focus has become a micro-level analysis of possible correlation between church-based organizing and poverty eradication. His conviction is that for true citizenship to evolve, an organized system of education based on common values must be put in place in rural and sub-rural communities, and this will enable long-term change to evolve. Though the impact of this development action could be enormous if augmented by external resources, local communities themselves can develop strategies to eradicate their poverty, based upon viable growth paths, with little outside intervention.

To

Thomas J. Rutkoski

On fire for God and His Church:

Your love for the Catholic Church and the rural children of Ogoja is
a challenge to my ministry of service to God and humanity.

And to your dear wife

Mary B. Rutkoski

For standing by you, always

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The intellectual, financial, and emotional support of many individuals and organizations has made this research possible. I will like to first and foremost thank God Almighty for choosing me as His instrument to undertake this intellectual journey for purposes best known to Him.

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May God bless and reward you all immensely.

My mission

Life itself is a precious and uncertain journey.

To that end, I shall live each hour with gratitude to God, and enthusiasm to learn from other people and things that surrounds me.

I will listen always, teach from the heart and lead when necessary.

I will not be afraid to risk, share and love as long as I live.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Action Learning and Reflection (ALR)
Action Research (AR)
Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)
Age grades (AGs)
Basic Christian Communities (BCCs)
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
Catholic Social Teaching (CST)
Christian Men's Organization (CMO)
Christoffel-Blinden Mission (CBM)
Christian Women Organization (CWO)
Church Groups (CG).
Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA)
Community-Bases Institutions (CBIs)
Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR)
Concern Universal (CU)
Double-loop Learning (DL)
Evangelii Nuntiandi (On Evangelization in the modern world) (EN)
Redemptoris Missio (Mission of the Redeemer) (RM)
Farmers' Council (FCs)
Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM)
Gross National Product (GNP)
Information Communication technology (ICT)
Informal Working Group on Participatory Approaches and Methods (IWG-PAM)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
Islamic Relief (IR)
Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC)
Learning Process (LP)
Local Government Area (LGA)
Local Government Council (LGC)
Man of Order and Discipline (MOD)
Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
National Council of Churches (NCC)
Natural Resource Management (NRM)
New Testament (NT)
Old Testament (OT)
Participatory Action Research (PAR)
Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST)
Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs)
Populorum Progressio (on the Progress of Peoples) (PP)
Poverty Eradication Strategy (PES)
Small Christian Communities (SCCs)

Social Justice Agenda (SJA)
Single-loop Learning (SL)
St Vincent DePaul Society(SVP)
Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP)
Susu (Community cooperative mobile banks)
Technical Rational Model (TRM)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
University Committee on Human Subjects (UCHS)
Village Community Development Association (VCDA).
World Bank (WB)
Women groups (WGs)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. Problem Statement

Poverty is a pervasive and complex problem in the developing countries of sub-Saharan Africa. In the rural regions of Nigeria, its indicators include low family incomes, poor remuneration for workers, inadequate housing, prevalence of diseases, acute water shortage, a pervasive unemployment rate, low producer prices, poor market outlets, and a lack of road networks to enhance transportation of farm produce (Abue & Baldeh 2000, see Appendix D). Wealth created in rural areas is easily engulfed by the capitalist-oriented state economy, while restrictions are placed upon the capacity of the local people to develop (Ekpo, 1991). According to the rural poverty report of 2001 by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the task of eradicating poverty requires sustained and consistent, yet flexible, joint action. IFAD maintains that efforts to reduce rural poverty must be multi-targeted because the challenge of ending poverty in developing countries has many dimensions (IFAD, 2001).

State policies explain poverty using a score of factors, ranging from the colonial legacy, tribalism, lack of financial resources, low level of technology, large populations, mass corruption, and lack of skilled manpower, to military factors and economic mismanagement (Fafowora, 2002; Tandler, 1997). Factors such as these have been found to be overtly rational, simplistic, reductionist, and elitist, as are macro analytical terms such as Gross National Product (GNP), rise of personal or household incomes, industrialization, technological advancement, and social modernization (Sen, 1999). With such explanations, the problem of poverty has eluded explanation, and this has led to a lack of change in the socio-economic order of developing countries, especially at the local level (Szirmai, 2002).

Whereas the reality of rural poverty in Nigeria is pervasive, institutions that address the real causes and, by extension, nuanced eradication strategies are lacking (Obadan, 2002). The few institutions that exist are poorly designed and therefore ill-equipped to address the effects of poverty. The lack of alternative institutions to counter the social processes mostly entrenched within rural settings in developing countries prevents a social deconstruction of the meaning and understanding of poverty and prevents the negotiation of a more-nuanced solution to the problem. The larger issue here rests in the lack of strong organizational elements within community-based institutions (CBIs) to fulfill this potential. The organizations that perform much of the work of community-based development suffer from poor structures and a lack of accepted performance standards that characterize high-performance organizations (Zdenek & Steinbach, 2002).

2. Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of this study is to explore the potential of Church-based organizations (CBOs) as alternative mechanisms for poverty eradication in Nigeria. The term “CBO” in this study refers broadly to the diocese or parish as civil society structures in the Catholic tradition designed to fulfill particular roles at the educational, health, and socio-economic development levels. I assume that as civil societies, CBOs can collaborate in the development process, empowering ordinary citizens to take charge and transform society (Evans, 1997), by promoting learning of a distinct nature that leads to poverty eradication (Migdal, 1988). Because past interventions have not tied development to the spiritual realm, Churches as civil intervention agents have not awakened to the reality of employing broad-based mechanisms to adequately challenge corporate led global development. I contend that CBOs can effectively address the problem of poverty in developing countries if the organizations are well-designed.

More recent literature suggests that Churches are transforming their roles as institutions of community development (Anglin, 2004; Owens, 2004; Sherman, 2000; Zdenek & Steinbach, 2002). By fostering organizing traditions that strengthen the human spirit and create social capital, equal opportunity, and sustainability within communities, churches are using spiritual values drawn from Biblical concepts to give individuals a “sustainable” reason to come together for action (de-Vries, 1998; Palmer, 1993; Rogers, 1990). Common values such as justice, truthfulness, peace, charity, and so forth, help CBOs overcome traditional constraints in a process of pedagogical self-discovery (Korten, 1990; Perkins, 1995; Putnam, 1993). This study inquires into these potentials among Church-based organizations in developing countries, especially Nigeria.

To achieve the overall objective of this study, I investigate the following specific objectives:

- Examine the structures that shape churches as organizations and determine whether these structures are vehicles that formalize participation and favor social inclusion of the poor. How does power in CBOs affect participation at local settings?
- Investigate the elements of the Catholic Social Justice Agenda to assess how these can lead the diocese toward participation for poverty eradication. How does this agenda affect social development at the grassroots?
- Assess how emotions and spiritual values influence individuals and groups to become interdependent stakeholders in their development process, since individuals and groups as stakeholders within the diocese can collaborate to eradicate poverty within a social learning process.
- Examine the role of the means of communication in the application of social learning for poverty eradication in the diocese.

3. Review of Conceptual Chapters of Dissertation

I begin the conceptual discussion on poverty and the organizational dynamics of CBOs as a further analysis of the problem statement in Chapter 3 by investigating the real causes of poverty in rural settings of developing countries. First, I analyze how the present discourse is centered on a limited understanding of poverty. This limitation has been perpetrated by a developmentalist approach that treats poverty as “a financial and technical problem, often preoccupied more with its own growth than with people” (Korten, 1990, p. 193). Globalization’s advocates have aggravated the problem of poverty through a patronizing complacency (Plender, 2003), at local contexts in developing country settings with corresponding effects of social disorder and economic crises (Diaz-Bonilla, 2003). Based on data from the diocese of Ogoja, I argue for poverty eradication in broader terms (Sobrinho, 1981), through a new professionalism that expands the substantive freedoms of peasants toward social inclusion (Sen, 1999). I examine the organizational dynamics of the diocese in relation to social change. What are the patterns of social inclusion in poverty eradication in the diocese, and what are the elements that underpin the Social Justice Agenda (SJA) as a poverty eradication mechanism in the diocese?

I further discuss the theoretical framework of this study based on the social learning theory and its utility for eradication of poverty in Chapter 4. To find out how social learning as a concept affects the changing role of CBOs, I examine how churches organize for poverty eradication at the local level through individual and group dynamics. How do CBOs build on emotions and values to improve their professional practice and catalyze social change? What is the role of the means of communication in the evolution of social learning for poverty eradication? I trace social learning as a theory from the old social learning tradition, which focuses on individual cognitions, to the new understanding of social learning in social group

dynamics. Core concepts of the new social learning link individual and collective learning together, suggesting a meaningful involvement of stakeholders in development. Based on the shifting paradigm of development, I analyze the implications of social learning for Church-based organizations (CBOs) through the ability of a diocese as an organization to purposely design learning experience for its individuals and groups.

In Chapter 5, I critically explore my research question, applying the concept of participation and its paradoxical use to both justify the extension of control and the building of capacity of viable communities (Mosse, 1996). I trace the historical evolution of participation, showing the changing role of intervention agents for development and poverty eradication. I examine how the concept of power helps to shape the image of CBOs and involve the laity in local contexts. I explore the changing role of a diocese as the main structure of development in relation to the challenge of small Christian communities. What are the effects of these shifting roles for participation in the diocese in relation to poverty eradication strategies? How does the emphasis on these new understandings of power and structure meaningfully involve other stakeholders in poverty eradication?

4. Justification for the Study

Beginning in the 1940s, a modernist mentality that envisaged capitalist development through significant intervention by the state (Rostow, 1960) and a neo-liberal agenda that fuelled the capitalist mentality through reliance on private enterprise and the market (Jenkins, 1992) emerged in the development discourse. In the 1980s, there was a corresponding shift that resulted in more emphasis on people, especially adults, fashioning their livelihoods. Less emphasis was placed on the technologically oriented “linear model” (Chambers & Jiggins, 1987; Kline & Rosenberg, 1986; Röling, 1988). Researchers were beginning to ask questions about the role of adults in their own

development, insisting on “reversals” in learning and practice (Chambers, 1983), because traditional models failed to deliver the goods in terms of agricultural and rural development (Röling & de-Jong, 1998). Traditional models tended to exclude local people in developing country contexts from decisions affecting their lives. Formal educational models helped to foster objective mentalities that “put people in adversary relationships with each other and the world,” making formal education “a slave of an economic system that attempted to control and manipulate the human heart” (Palmer, 1993, p. 23).

A new paradigm in development has emerged, emphasizing the role of people and their capacities to collaborate with each other using the common values that propel them. Effectiveness of development has become dependent on the free agency of people (Bunch, 1996; Chambers, 1983) and their interconnectedness to opportunities of common values (Chambers, 1983; Sen, 1999). By applying common values within the daily practices of their lives, adults within CBOs corroborate already existing paths to community development. Values such as truthfulness, freedom, justice, charity, and peace are helping to strengthen the human spirit to the point that greed and egotism play a lesser role (Korten, 1990). The new vision is to recreate communities that are active, changing, and transforming as well as helping people find a balance between holiness and integrity in their lives (Ammerman, 1997). In developing country contexts, adult education should seek to move people toward values appropriate to their future, not their colonial past (Nyerere, 1968).

This study builds on adult education and the role of values by emphasizing the subjectivist character of knowledge construction as a result of adult learners’ individual knowledge. Meaning is built on the strategic experiences of learners, with interpretations of such meanings on the world around them (Cunningham, 1992; Spiro

& Jehng, 1992). Adult education seeks to ameliorate the excesses of society by building capacity in people. According to Darkenwald and Merriam (1982),

If there is to be an overarching function of the adult education enterprise, it is to assist adults to increase competence, or negotiate transitions in their social roles (worker, parent, retiree etc.), to help them gain greater fulfillment in their personal lives, and to assist them in solving personal and community problems. (p. 9)

Thus adult education is a venture that promotes learning for adulthood (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982),¹ and this venture is called “adult” education not because it is confined to adults but because adulthood—maturity—defines its limits. The whole of life is learning; therefore, education can have no endings (Lindeman, 1926, p. 4). As a people-oriented learning model, adult education may appear on the surface to be unconnected or unrelated to learning. However, the experiences and meanings brought to contexts by adults does impel them to organize and change their contexts toward empowerment and sustainability (Clark, 1995; Dobell, 2002; Parson & Clark, 1995; Pimbert, 2002; Röling & de-Jong, 1998; Woodhill & Röling, 1998). This would “lead participants to take a new and conscious stance towards their problems” (Freire, 2000, p. 36).

Following the paradigm shift, Table 1 suggests a conceptual thread for this study:

¹ Courtney (1989) also explains adult education as a term from five basic and overlapping perspectives: 1) as the work of certain institutions and organizations, 2) as a special kind of relationship, 3) as a profession or scientific discipline, 4) as stemming from a historical identification with spontaneous social movements, and 5) as distinct from other kinds of education by its goals and functions (pp. 17–23).

Table 1: Conceptual thread of dissertation

	Poverty	Social Learning	Participation
Paradigm shift from Approach A to B	From econometric consideration	From individual cognitive learning	From capital formation approach of the 1950s
	To social inclusion and social relations	To learning in socio-cultural contexts	To the human factor approach of the 1970s
The implications of this paradigm shift for development	Poverty as social inclusion, seen beyond household incomes, addresses embedded contextual practices.	Social learning is seen beyond individual cognitions to <i>recognition</i> of interdependent stakeholders	Participation is seen beyond the traditional view of satisfaction of basic needs to the human factor approach and broader processes of governance
(Approach C) Referred to as 3rd Approach of poverty eradication, uses CBOs	CBOs build on biblical and church traditions, to implement values of the Social Justice	CBOs build on the role of religious emotions to include individuals or groups as stakeholders	CBOs build on the learning process to review power and structures within a diocese to include local contexts.

According to Table 1,

1. A paradigm shift from Approach **A** to Approach **B** in development affects poverty, social learning, and participation.
2. The general implication of this paradigm shift for these concepts is that development now embraces an emerging social pattern that seeks to include multiple stakeholders among other factors in Approach **B**.
3. I propose Approach **C** (third approach) that builds on Approach **B** and apply the emerging patterns to Approach **C**. I corroborate Approach **C** with spiritual values, religious emotions within an organizational learning context in CBOs.

A “third approach” builds on the former approaches of social learning and participation to suggest solutions to the problem of poverty, using CBOs as intervening agents. This approach is not exclusive. Nor does it reject former

approaches, but improves on their limitations, to serve a more analytically global purpose. It can be applied across varied contexts; locally and broadly across all CBO contexts. The third approach employs ethically engaged institutions to mitigate structural imbalances that exist within and outside of organizational contexts. This approach proposes to counteract the unfair norms often embedded within particular contexts, by taking the concept of social inclusion further. It centers the discourse on the capabilities of locally anchored church-based initiatives in implementing the Social Justice Agenda (SJA). It is based on Biblical values, early church traditions, and the lessons learned from early reformers. By seeing the poor as those “who confront the church and society with the direction in which the solution to the problem is to be found,” this approach addresses poverty as an authentic theological basis for understanding Christian practice, (Sobrino, 1984, pp. 94–5). Taking these perspectives stems from my understanding that, in the past, CBOS have tended to base their organizing on mere charity and welfare alone, employing a select group of clergy with minimal involvement of lay adults. My approach is essentially grounded on an adult education view that supports adults organizing beyond mere charity (Perkins, 1995) or transfer of material resources to those in need (Korten, 1990, p. 223). It points to a more participatory model that builds on social interactions by adults.

5. Epistemological Assumptions

The role of religion in development is a key component that informs this study. Studies of religion abound, but few have addressed the consistent attention that religious groups have paid to the development process. I assume that religion (also used synonymously with faith or spirituality) and consequently the groups propelled by religion do have considerable influence on development work. Though sometimes perceived in controversial terms, religion does complement and motivate development, and several cultures and historical epochs have witnessed religious

institutions as agents of development through advocacy, empowerment, and service delivery. Various development scholars have observed that religion does have an intrinsic value and contributes directly to various dimensions of human well-being (Sen, 1999). In their “Voices of the Poor,” Narayan and his colleagues (1999) synthesize conceptions of well-being articulated by approximately 60,000 people in 60 countries who consider themselves poor and find that “harmony” with transcendent matters was regularly considered to be part of well-being. Scholars of different epochs have sought to explain this phenomenon in various ways.

Because this research is on development, I approach my definition of the role of religion from a sociological development perspective. My definition of religion is broad-based and basically stems from the view of Emile Durkheim (1857–1917), a classical sociological theorist, because his views on the role of religion emphasize its social as well as communitarian nature and its realization through joint action (Durkheim, 1995). In *The Elementary Forms of Religious life*, Durkheim (1995) emphasizes that religion serves to reinforce community integration:

A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden, beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them. (p. 44)

Durkheim (1995) highlights four key principles in his postulation of religion that I will use as a basis for explaining the role of religion in my dissertation. First, “religion” by its very meaning has a social nature and relates to the present in terms of *observable phenomenon* rather than the other-worldly or supernatural. Second, he uses “unified system” to imply that religion has an internally ordered system of values that people cherish, practice, and attach great importance to. Third, he uses “sacred things” to imply the awe that religious practices bring to the practitioners, indicating the notion of a different reality, a forbidden ness, a removal from the ordinary. Last, Durkheim

uses the term “church” or moral community to depict the joint action often embarked upon by religious people, culminating in a unity that brings them into common action, a phenomenon Durkheim calls *social organization* based on clans. From this Durkheimian understanding I borrow the idea of “religion” as inseparable from the idea of “Church,” making it clear that religion is an eminently collective and social venture.

Durkheim (1995) goes further to interpret the fundamental role of religion in community integration, showing that religious life both expresses and constructs the logical life of humankind. Though Durkheim makes his claim as a secondary issue, his entire text is permeated with his insistence that the elemental categories in which we think—time, space, number, cause, class, person, totality—all have their origins in religion. Religion for Durkheim contains a *collective representation* of shared mental constructs with the help of which society constitutes itself. Durkheim proffers a theory of how human beings view each other and the natural world around them through the process of putting these collective representations into action. Religion therefore enables human beings to deal with collective forms of conduct.

For Durkheim, religion exists because human beings exist and arouses passionate interest in all peoples. If it is perceived as incompatible with scientific rationality and secular political life, such an incongruent notion does not passively wither away into self-evident defeat as people imagine. If religion is opium that puts people to sleep, it is such that awakens them to a different and fundamental reality. Durkheim’s argument for the reality of religion is grounded in his ethnographic study of the totemic religion of aboriginal Australia. Durkheim’s query of the Australians and their totems put society as a first form and religion as reason’s first harbor, with science as an offspring of religion. Durkheim (1995) investigates the distinctive traits

of human kind (reason, identity, and community), without treating them under the heading of religion.

Thus insofar as religious force is conceived of as embodied in the totemic emblem, it seems to be external to the individual and endowed with a kind of transcendence; and yet from another standpoint, and like the clan it symbolizes it can be made real only within and by them. (Durkheim, 1995, p. 223)

By shuttling between positive science and the faith implications of religion, the Durkheimian perspective is well-grounded on the true function of religion, which is to act and to live. For this reason, I cultivate this discipline as a foundation of my research.

Another aspect of religion emphasized by Durkheim (1995) relevant to this research is his application of the use of religious rites and rituals to the development of collective unawareness and action. Through rites and rituals, religion attains its moments of collective *effervescence* when human beings themselves are transformed through ritual doing. At moments like this, the religious force is experienced outside the individuals, and disables them, making them so dependent on the moral community. Durkheim calls this the *collective conscience* with a symbolic representation of the totemic being standing at the center of things. At times like this, the force of religion can lead to great lengths of community action. Durkheim postulates further that the rites that come with religion come with such force on the individual that they are independent of the individual, and their reality can be transforming both in conscience (mental) and in consciousness (physical):

As a structuralist interested in improving the functioning of society of his time, Durkheim believed that society and religion reinforce each other to define the individual. Society could be redirected (structured) through changes in the collective morality. He believed that the essential problems of modern society were moral in nature and that the only real solution lay in re-enforcing the strength of the collective

morality, since society cannot go back to the good old days of the powerful collective consciousness characterized by mechanical solidarity. Though Durkheim's methodological choice of studying *totemism* as a lens through which to understand religion in my view puts other perspectives like the Judeo-Christian religion in its embryonic form, the reality of religious forces is soundly demonstrated, no matter how imperfect the symbols with whose help they are conceived of may be. To give attention to Durkheim's rhetorical leap is not to dwell on his limitations as a systematic thinker, but to amplify his voice, using his basic argument to jumpstart solutions to some key postmodern problems.

Why religion is becoming important in development work

In the wake of post-structuralism and postmodern thinking, religion needs to be defined according to broader, more communitarian perspectives rather than merely as a relationship with the transcendental. Constant dwelling on the latter view of religion leads to the perception of religion as a concept outside of science. The postmodern age is an age of multi-vocality, contested meanings, and paradigmatic controversies, and social science research increasingly tends to define religion through scientific inquiry and historical research (Lincoln & Guba, 2003). I seek to reverse this trend in my dissertation by seeing religion in broader perspective, thus seeking to put religion back into social science research, while ascribing to it the important role it deserves in development work. Other authors have agreed that because religious individuals and groups are increasingly becoming positive intervening variables in the lives of communities in both local and global contexts, religion is becoming increasingly important to development work. According to Putnam (2000), religious groups and individuals are seeking to "provide an important incubator for civic skills, civic norms, community interest and civic recruitment" (p. 66). This often happens because

religiously active men and women learn to give speeches; run meetings manage disagreements and bear administrative responsibility. They also befriend others who are in turn likely to recruit them into other forms of community activity. In part for this reasons, church goers are substantially more likely to be involved in secular organizations, to vote and participate politically in other ways and to have deeper informal social connections. (Putnam, 2000, p. 66)

Putnam (2000) also sees a tie between religion and altruism, with religiosity rivaling education as a powerful correlate. Professionals working in secular organizations and governments are most often motivated to altruism in part by religion, and they see their engagement with development as an outgrowth of their values. In most cases, their beliefs do impact their professional behavior. A study of religious health care NGOs in Uganda found that, despite being paid lower wages, staff of religious institutions and not-profit organizations are more likely to charge less and to use additional funding to decrease fees, and increase services, rather than to raise their own salaries. Thus the study concludes that religiously-based staff members seem partly driven by altruistic concerns, and that such behaviors quantitatively improved their performance (Reinikka & Svensson, 2003). In any institution (religious or secular), religious professionals invariably stress the need for respect and dignity among staff and partners and thus an alternative process of collaboration (Myers, 1999). This faith may have an instrumental effect because people remain motivated even as they witness imperfect progress.

The social ties embodied in religious communities show that connectedness, not merely faith, is responsible for the beneficence of church people. Religious involvement is an especially strong predictor of volunteering and philanthropy among individuals. When churches themselves do things that require funds and volunteers, it is the religious adherents themselves who are more likely to contribute time and money to activities beyond their congregation. According to Wald (1987), excluding

contributions to religious causes, active involvement in religious organizations is among the strongest predictors of both philanthropy and volunteering. This is because

religious ideals are potentially powerful sources of commitment and motivation. Human beings will make enormous sacrifices if they believe themselves to be driven by a divine force. (Wald, 1987, p. 29)

Thus far, religion's influence on development has not been a primary topic in most international reports on issues such as health, trade, children, food security, water, population, and so forth, although it has received occasional mention. According to the *2004 Human Development Report*, if development aims at expanding the freedoms people value and if religion is so valued, then religious freedom should be part of development (UNDP, 2004). Maxwell (1999) found more-nuanced interactions of religion and development located in specific religious institutions. Further visions of development arise in the liberation theologies, which criticize structural injustice and call for greater religious engagement in political and economic situations to ensure an equitable development process. In the Roman Catholic Church, the Social Justice Agenda articulates key faith-based views of development in which there are contributions of the spiritual disciplines and ethical values to human fulfillment (SOCIAL AGENDA, 2002). As the new millennium dawns, there is a need to move the discourse on religion to more practical matters relating to the local initiatives of church-based organizations (CBOs) as civil societies. This is what this research addresses.

CBOs as understood in this research

As understood in this research, Church-based organizations (CBOS) represent the diocese or parish as a model in the Roman Catholic tradition, whereby individuals and groups together contribute to develop themselves within a particular context. A significant amount of literature now addresses churches as critical agents in civil

society support for development priorities, especially in developing countries.

According to the Global Civil Society Report 2004/5 (Alkire, 2004),

There is no way we can understand the logic, strategies and dynamics of civil society anywhere in the Third World, unless we bring the transcendental dimension back into our analysis. Religious devotion practiced in churches is a fundamental motive from any social movements in the south, from Latin America to Africa and South Asia. (p. 45)

In South Africa, the mobilization by Churches in support of the anti-apartheid campaign and the jubilee campaign for debt-relief forgiveness is arguably central to the political visibility of these issues. In Latin America, churches mobilized citizens in support of literacy (Archer & Costello, 1990). The World Bank findings revealed that for the poor “in Benin, church affiliated organizations represent the most prominent and effective protection network (Kliksberg, 2003, p. 58). In most developing countries, churches have organized themselves to influence grassroots development; ranging from major religions such as Christianity and Islam to mainline denominations such as Catholics, Methodists, Anglicans, Baptists, and Episcopalians, among others. There is also a new upsurge of different Pentecostal churches, all assuming an air of importance in development work. All of these groups are often generally referred to as “Churches.” This is because they organize themselves at various times and locations to respond to issues of faith, as well as to become significant purveyors of education, service delivery, and non-market goods. In this research, I investigate this idea, seeing churches as significant intervening agents of development.

I distinguish between Church-based organizations (CBOs) and the often used term “faith-based organizations” (FBOs) for purposes of clarification. My understanding of FBOs is that, unlike CBOs, they are neither founded within geographical locations nor necessarily geared toward constant worship. However, FBOs are also involved in significant development work, with their motivation or

funding sources deriving from their faith. These distinctions have their overlaps, however. For example, CBOs are also FBOs insofar as they are involved in development work based on faith values, while FBOs such as the Islamic Relief (IR), Catholic Relief Services (CRS) or the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) who deliver significant resources based on their affiliation with particular churches or religious institutions, are also CBOs. The determining mark of CBOs, nonetheless, is that their basic organizing is anchored within particular structural or institutional locations.

According to the universal call to Christianity, all churches have a twofold task of salvation of souls on the one hand and a call to reform structures on the other (faith and action). In the Roman Catholic tradition, the mandate to reform structures is fulfilled specifically through educational, health, or economic development. I choose the Roman Catholic tradition as a locus to define CBOs because of my assumption of its broad-based approach in dealing with this twofold task of the Christian calling. The Roman Catholic diocese or parish structure is the defining characteristic of CBOs in this research. Within this Catholic tradition, CBOs also vary in shape and size based on the diocese, parish, and village churches or small groups located within a diocesan setup. Various Christian churches have sought to address this twofold task, using their various approaches.

Sider (1999a) identifies four models or approaches related to the Christian tradition of addressing the question of how churches in general balance faith and action: the individualistic evangelical model, the Radical Anabaptist model, the dominant ecumenical model, and the secular Christian model (p. 28). I argue that Sider's models fail to show a broad analysis of Christian perspectives and are therefore unsatisfactory for explaining the Christian approach. I instead propose a set of comprehensive categories within the Christian perspective, with views on the

church, society, and the individual. My four approaches are: the Evangelical approach, the Liberal approach, the Catholic approach, and the Secular approach, and I outline their distinctive views on relevant topics in Table 2 following.

The Evangelical approach sees evangelism as the primary mission of the church, with the salvation of souls as its basic concern. In this approach, there is virtually no continuity between social justice now and the coming kingdom. The Liberal approach believes in the claim that the conversion of individuals and the political restructuring of society are both central to evangelism and salvation. Unlike the Evangelical approach, the Liberal approach does tend to give less emphasis to the vertical relationship with God, arguing that individuals need to be deeply embedded in socio-economic structures. The Secular Christian approach sees evangelism as merely politics and sees salvation as achievable only through social justice. This approach abandons the uniqueness of Christ and, in some cases, even the belief in God, with the horizontal concerns totally eclipsing the vertical. The above approaches are more based in the west and are making inroads into sub-Saharan Africa. However penetrating their impact may be, there is need to temper their methods with a more balanced approach. I argue that the Catholic approach serves this needed intervention.

Table 2: Epistemological assumptions of Christian approaches

Christian Approaches		Source of knowledge	View of the church	View of society	View of the individual	Major Documents/ proponents
1	Evangelical Approach (Individualistic)	The Bible, Enlightenment's view of the individual, Greek thought.	Evangelism & salvation of individual souls is the Church's primary mission	Greek thought influenced view of society as preeminently spiritual/non-material	Enlightenment's view of regenerated individuals as salt and light in world	Billy Graham Hal Lindsey Dwight Moody The Lausanne Covenant of 1974.
2	Liberal Approach (Ecumenical)	The Bible, human experience, The <i>Protestant Ethic</i> of Rationalism.	Objects of evangelism are persons and structures, with less emphasis on evangelism and more on sociopolitical engagement	Conversion of individuals and political restructuring of society are central part of evangelism and salvation	Persons are not isolated individuals but are embedded in socio-economic structures	WCC, Liberation theologians, most mainline Protestant, some Roman Catholic theologians
3	Catholic Approach (Conservative)	The Bible, human reason, Church traditions, human experience.	Evangelism is central to the Church and entails personal conversion and taking of the gospel into every area of society	The kingdom is central to the gospel and realized in church and society.	There is dignity in the human person and decisions should be made at the closest possible level of the individuals affected.	Ecclesial documents, Papal encyclicals Social Justice Agenda, individual theologians.
4	Secular Approach (Christian)	Human reason, Western secularism, The Enlightenment, modern science, technology.	Humanization of society and the rejection of the uniqueness of Christ	Focus on the search for peace, justice and human well-being	Western secularism's enlightenment rejection of the supernatural enthrones selfhood.	Jose Miranda, William Hockings, John Hicks, Paul Knitter, Marian Bohlen

The Catholic approach tends to lay more emphasis on the vertical relationship with God, while also combining a commitment to evangelism with the full authority of scriptures and historic and traditional orthodoxy. It views the kingdom as central to the Gospel and as realized in church and society. To bring out this approach, this study investigates the views of papal encyclicals in the Roman Catholic tradition that define salvation broadly as “liberation from *everything* that oppresses man...”.(p. 9)² Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (“On evangelization in the modern world”) (“EN,” 1995)³ and Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (“Mission of the Redeemer”) (“RM,” 1991) are some of the papal encyclicals that depict salvation as a central concept that brings the good news into all strata of humanity. Evangelization according to *Evangelii Nuntiandi (EN)* happens through the lifestyle of the Christian community (p. 41): verbal proclamation (p. 42), the liturgy (p. 43), catechetical instruction of the new Christians (p. 44), and socio-economic liberation (pp. 29–31). Here, the laity evangelizes as they transform economics, politics, the media, family, art, and education according to the Gospel (p. 70). On account of these broad-based underlying epistemological assumptions, I choose a particular diocese within the Catholic Church as a model for development, and investigate how much or little it applies the notion of “communitarian” religion or “broad Christianity” within its organizing perspective. I adopt the constructivist and participatory research agenda as a methodological approach in order to test whether the basic assumptions espoused by the Roman Catholic tradition will hold.

² Papal encyclicals are often reprinted. They are often quickly available in *Origins: CNS Documentary Services*. For a summary of Roman Catholic thought on evangelization, see Avery Dulles’s “John Paul II and the new evangelization,” *America* 166(3, February 1, 1992), pp. 52–57.

³ Subsequent citations in this section are all from *Evangelii Nuntiandii* (1995) except where otherwise indicated.

6. Limitations of the Study

Institutions in general are perceived as perpetuating unequal access to resources. New challenges face local institutions in accepting the organic process of establishing self-reliant groups at the local level (Mosse, 1988). The persistence of indigenous systems does not often ensure the support of the entire community, and this can be counterproductive. Existing local institutions are replete with local biases, inequities, and distorted versions of community.

There are constant clashes with the dominant paradigm of rural development, as state-based initiatives in the past have tended to “suffocate local institutions” at the expense of individual initiatives under the guise of modernization. Local management is often substituted for by state (Pretty, 1995b, p. 136), leading to increased dependence of local people on formal state institutions (Jain, Kemper, & Thoits, 1985).

New challenges face organizations in general in accepting the organic process of development and establishing self-reliant groups at the local level. Organizations face issues such as developing a financing capacity with resources of their own, developing a structure for electing representatives, obtaining recognition as a legitimate voice, and developing self-reliance for the planning, management, and provision of effective services (IFAD, 2001).⁴ Applying the above elements within a hierarchical structure such as the Roman Catholic Church has been problematic in the past.

The institutional framework of the Roman Catholic Church does not easily favor the introduction of innovations. In the past many of the church’s social teachings have been neither well-published nor put into practice, rendering the CBOs inadequate

⁴ Uphoff, Esman, and Krishna (1998) enumerate eight of the distinctive challenges that face organizations to include, namely, the use of catalysts, starting with informal organization and evolving a formal structure, mobilizing a new kind of leadership, forming small groups at base, using a problem solving process, starting with a limited number of tasks, and making provision for horizontal diffusion.

in dealing with issues of poverty. Because of these underlying constraints, this research needs to adopt a morally convincing and acceptable model of development that will be favorable to all audiences.

On an individual level, as an investigator, a native-born member of the local context, and an affiliated member of the Church-based organization under study, I am aware that the internal structures of these settings could becloud the objectivity, validity, and reliability of my research. However, according to Jules Pretty (1995b), in the final analysis, “authenticity” as a concept will be determined by how a heightened sense and de-construction of the social reality under study has occurred. That will determine trustworthiness of data (Pretty, p. 43).

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Introduction

The overall purpose of this study is to explore how Church-based organizations (CBOs) facilitate poverty eradication. The organizational structure and processes employed to facilitate social learning and participation are empirically examined, using the key research question: “What mechanism does the diocese use to involve people in their own development”? Social theories that identify participation and social learning as important elements inform the theoretical framework of the study, while data collected from Ogoja diocese in Nigeria systematically explores these concepts. In this chapter I discuss the methodological framework of the study. First, I describe the study area in its situational context as a backdrop to inform the choice of my research paradigm. Next, I discuss the qualitative approaches and methods used for data collection and analysis, thus to accomplish my research objectives.

2. Research Methodology

(a). Description of Study Area

Ogoja region is in Cross River State, Nigeria. Its population is 1, 315, 862 (2003 population), with $\frac{3}{4}$ of the population of Cross River State living in the northern Ogoja region. The inhabitants of this area belong to one of the oldest provinces in the defunct South Eastern State, formerly called Ogoja province. Its major people (characterized by different and distinct languages) are Afrike, Agbo, Bahumuno, Bakor, Bekwerra, Bette, Etung-Ejagham, Igede, Ikom, Mbembe, Mbube, Obanliku. Ukelle, Yache, Yakurr, and Yala. Probably on account of the multi-lingual nature of this region, Ogoja has remained a predominantly low-level, disadvantaged area. Incessant inter-ethnic wars and riots have been recorded in the past with a some loss of lives and

property. Unlike most of its neighboring old provinces, which have been carved out as separate state capitals by subsequent administrations, Ogoja has been relatively neglected over the years because of its minority status (Abue & Baldeh, 2000).

Conversely, Ogoja region has high potential to increase social development based on its natural resources. With a land mass of 1156.08 km², Ogoja region boasts of natural mineral wealth, and geological studies carried out in the recent past reveal large deposits of clay, rock salt, limestone, gold, and uranium (Ogar, 2000). There are existing natural resources, including resources such as the natural waterfalls at Agbokim, and the Obudu Cattle Ranch, which is internationally acclaimed as a tourist center with potential for meat processing and dairy industrialization, the famous Nkarasi Monoliths, housing an age-old tradition of natural stone carvings; the Okwango forest reserve, noted for different categories of endangered species; the Ikom North East wood reserves, with good quality and seasoned wood. There are more than fifty ill-equipped saw-mills spread all over the diocese. The gathering of wild fruits, seeds, and vegetables by young women in the forested parts of Ogoja diocese abound. These resources remain untapped due to the poor network of local institutions in the region, making subsistence agriculture the mainstay of the people. There are 18 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Cross River State, 11 of which are in Ogoja region. Figure 1 shows a map of the Ogoja region with its 11 LGAs.



Figure 1: Map of Ogoja region showing LGAs.

Annual rainfall in Ogoja between January and December is estimated at 1672.92m at an altitude of 117.38 meters. About 70% of the population is engaged in rain-fed agriculture, with the agricultural systems characterized by low productivity. This is due to factors such as poor soils, extensive land use, lack of essential farm inputs and extension services, and the use of traditional labor-intensive mechanisms. *Yam and Cassava* are among the staple foods of the communities, while most of the communities in Ogoja produce rice as cash crop, which is often sold out. Cropping agriculture is clearly the single most important source of income for the communities across Ogoja, with crops attracting very low dividends because of the poor prices offered by middlemen, and poor market outlets and inadequate storage facilities (Abue & Baldeh, 2000, p. 23).

Town halls are built from community levies such as age grades. The age-grade system, often used to organize communal labor, is very functional within communities in Ogoja region. There is a system of decentralized governance whereby information is conducted to grassroots through traditional representatives. This system is called the Local Government Council (LGC) and has become the main structure of political administration in the area. Local Government Councilors represent the wards (drawn by villages and clans). Each Council within the Local Government Area (LGA) is headed by a political figure (Chairman) and a traditional leader (Paramount Ruler). Table 3 indicates the 11 LGAs that fall under the area of this study (Ogoja region). In this table, I demonstrate through statistical figures, the number of institutions founded by government and catering for given populations in Ogoja.

Table 3: LGAs in Ogoja region showing institutions founded by the government

(Deaneries)	LGAs	Population	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Hospitals	Clinics
Ogoja	Ogoja	137,382	28	15	4	15
	Bekwarra	67,144	17	6	-	10
	Yala	180,775	17	15	1	14
Obudu	Obudu	87,879	21	17	2	8
	Obanliku	59,109	13	9	1	5
Ikom	Etung	50,784	11	8	-	6
	Ikom	163,367	21	13	2	19
Boki	Boki	167,378	23	22	-	7
Yakurr (Ugep)	Yakurr	156,562	12	12	2	9
	Abi	90,553	14	8	1	10
	Obubra	154,929	27	13	1	11
Total		1,315,862	187	137	14	114

Source: Abue & Baldeh, 2000

These figures show that there is a high level of awareness in the area of education, with a total of 187 primary and 137 secondary schools. This reveals that 70% of the youths readily embrace western education. There are three tertiary-level educational institutions in Ogoja, not represented in Table 3. The challenge has always been the

unavailability of technical and professional training institutes to provide appropriate skills to the teeming youth population. According to PRA findings, there are many setbacks against the crusade for mass literacy. These include the ill-equipped nature of institutions, inadequate teaching and learning materials, poor remuneration for teachers, and a lack of parental patronage for the striving youth population (Abue & Baldeh, 2000).

The Catholic diocese of Ogoja

Founded in 1921, the Catholic diocese of Ogoja in Cross River State encompasses 5 deaneries.⁵ As far back as its foundation in 1921, the diocese has established structures such as schools and hospitals to enable development in the area. The diocese has founded 80% of the total number of primary and secondary schools, hospitals and clinics now serving the total population of about 1.4m people. Most of them were confiscated by government during the civil war in Nigeria and never returned. Presently, those that exist cater to the teeming population. Table 4 reveals that the diocese has so far founded 28 primary schools, 14 secondary schools, 11 hospitals, and 9 adjoining clinics (for medical operations and health-care delivery in rural villages), though most of them are ill-equipped. There is an impact created by these institutions in the area of social development despite the fewness in number.

⁵ A deanery is a specific ecclesiastical region within a diocese created among few others to enable better administrative planning by the bishop and his college of deans who are often placed to take charge of each deanery.

Table 4: Deaneries in Ogoja diocese showing number of institutions

S/N	Deaneries	Population (1996)	Mission Primary Schools	Mission Secondary Schools	Mission Hospitals	Mission Rural Clinics
1	Ogoja	385,301	8	6	2	3
2	Obudu	146,988	5	3	2	2
3	Ikom	215, 151	6	2	1	1
4	Boki	167, 378	3	1	-	1
5	Ugep	402,045	4	2	1	2
Totals		1,315,862	28	14	5	9

Source: Abue & Baldeh, 2000

There are 5 deaneries in Ogoja diocese; Ogoja, Obudu, Ikom, Boki, and Ugep (Figure 2). Each of these deaneries holds a good number of parishes and outstation villages. Presently there are 36 parishes located in various parts of the diocese, with each parish headed by a Parish Priest and administered by a Parish Pastoral Council. Parishes also have several administrative set-ups like finance committees, laity councils, women groups, youth groups and a host of other pious groups and associations. Most of these associations and groups are operative both at the diocesan and outstation (village) level. There is a well coordinated hierarchical administrative structure from the diocesan level to the outstation level.

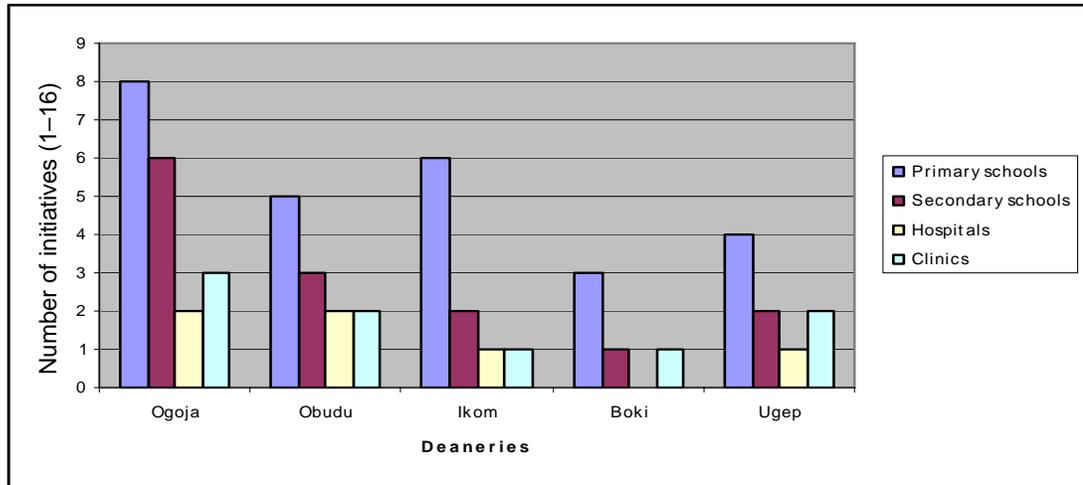


Figure 2: Deaneries in Ogoja diocese showing institutional levels

(b). Research Paradigm/Methodology

This study adopts constructivism as a research paradigm. From an ontological perspective, the constructivist paradigm assumes that realities are understood as “multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the construction” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 110–111).

Constructions are not considered as being more or less true or less true, rather being more or less sophisticated and may change as the people holding them become sophisticated. From an epistemological perspective therefore, constructivism sees knowledge as created among researcher and research participants, with the aim of inquiry being to seek understanding (Guba & Lincoln, 2000).

In line with the constructivist paradigm, this study generates knowledge between the researcher and other research participants within a church-based setting, with the support of earlier established theories of social learning, organizational learning, and participatory research. I define religion in broad perspectives, using social science research to move constructivism closer to participative inquiry. As

Lincoln and Guba (2003, p. 265), further emphasize, there is a branch of philosophy called “axiology” that is now seeking to reinstate religious values and ethics within social science research.

We may also be entering an age of greater spirituality within research efforts ...which may yet integrate the sacred with the secular in ways that promote freedom and self determination. (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 286)

I draw inference from aspects of Action Research (AR) to corroborate the methodological approach of this study. According to Greenwood and Levin (1998),

AR aims to solve pertinent problems in a given context through a democratic inquiry where researchers collaborate with participants in the efforts to seek and enact solutions to problems of major importance to local people. (p. 75)

I identify key assumptions, beliefs, and values that underlie the thoughts, feelings, and actions of participants as dictated by AR. AR is context bound and involves collaborative processes in which all participants’ contributions are taken seriously. It addresses real life problems within an inquiry where participants and researchers co-generate knowledge. Meanings constructed in the inquiry processes of AR lead to social action and construction of new meanings, while greater involvement of local people as stakeholders in meaning-making is enabled by evaluation of both their cognitive and social experiences as social learners (Greenwood & Levin, 1998)

My use of qualitative methods in this research enables me to generate findings that are as close as possible to the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 1998).

In a particular situation in which individuals interact, take action or engage in a process in response to a phenomenon,’ findings that closely relate to the phenomenon often emerge... A principal investigator on a particular phenomenon who collects data, primarily interview data, makes multiple visits to the field, develops and interrelates categories of information and writes theoretical propositions is more likely to generate findings related to the phenomenon. (Creswell, 1998, p. 56)

Such findings are “grounded” in data from the field through the actions, interactions and social process of people (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and have a plausible relationship among the concepts and sets of concepts used in the study, while assuming the form of recommendations as a final outcome (Creswell & Brown, 1992).

i. Methods

Consistent with constructivism and participatory research, I draw upon a range of qualitative data collection tools to generate data that informs my findings. The following tools were used to ensure the necessary depth and breadth of contextual materials (Creswell, 1998):

- (a). Focus group discussions: Focus group discussions were held with key respondents across the deaneries of Ogoja diocese to enable me create organizational space where research participants discussed and debated issues that are hard to tap through ordinary processes. Focus group interviews and discussions were meant to make participants aware that their theories mattered, and they could explore positive avenues with a desire for action as a way to improve the system. Focus groups helped me understand in depth the central phenomena across a variety of contexts.
- (b). Individual in-depth interviews: Selected persons (clergy and lay) were interviewed on individual bases to enable each participant gain a deeper understanding of his or her thoughts, feelings and actions with regard to their role within the diocese as an organization. Individual interviews were among the principal sources of information that provided direct insights on how participants formed their beliefs as well as their views regarding the prevalence of poverty.
- (c). Open-ended questionnaires: Open ended questions were administered to selected clergy and laity in the diocese to elicit participants’ accounts of their own experience of learning situations, allowing them opportunities to produce their own responses.

(d). Observations: Selected scenes in the diocese especially in villages including worship sites, burials, funerals, bazaar ceremonies and group meetings were observed in order to grasp the practical conditions participants grapple with at local contexts. These observations also enabled the definition of a more grounded opinion with regard to the central phenomenon under review.

(e). Textual documents: Texts were solicited from libraries in Cornell University to understudy the theoretical views expressed by participants and thus enable an understanding of the social reality of the local area under study. Such textual analysis also helped to furnish me with patterns inherent within the diocese as an organization.

(f). PRA: PRAs were earlier conducted in Ogoja diocese to specifically study, analyze and appreciate the central phenomenon under study as expressed by the local people themselves. PRA methods included: semi-structured interviews, household interviews resource rankings, participatory mappings, matrix scorings, pie charts, time lines, trend lines, transect walks, seasonal calendars and Venn diagrams (Creswell, 1998, p. 56).

ii. Data Collection

Data were collected in two phases. In my earlier visit (1st phase), data were collected specifically using Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) in collaboration with thirty (30) co-researchers drawn from across the diocese. Data from this first phase was primarily used to analyze poverty within the organizational context of the diocese. The findings of this first phase (See Appendix D) will corroborate findings of the present study.

The second phase of data collection took place in Ogoja, Nigeria in August 2004 through February 2005 (See Appendix B1). During this phase, data were collected basically using focus group and individual interview method, with a rich compendium of research questions (See Appendix A), delving into a range of basic

concepts related to the central phenomenon under study. I also made observation of village scenes together with my co-researchers.

Choices of issues of focus, guiding questions, and research methods used during this second phase evolved from literature reviews during my three (3) year course work. Discussion meetings with my advisory committee members and dialogue with student discussion groups in Cornell University guided my methods of data collection and choice of questions. I received approval letters from the University Committee on Human Subjects (UCHS) as well as the Bishop of Ogoja (see Appendix B2) based on my earlier application for permission to conduct fieldwork in the diocese of Ogoja, using human subjects. I began an 8-month period of data collection in all deaneries, parishes, and groups within the diocese who had already been informed of my research.

On arrival in Ogoja, I used five (5) facilitators from my first phase of fieldwork as co-researchers. Three (3) of these co-researchers had finished their first degree in social science related disciplines, while the other two had successfully completed a diploma certificate. We spent 2–3 full days of observation within each deanery, attending group meetings, worship ceremonies, burials etc and taking field notes, before conducting focus groups or interviews in the deaneries. Choosing participants for interviews and group discussion was carried out collectively by the team of co-researchers at the end of observations in each deanery. We identified key groups and individuals that would give us the required data, and then conduct focus group discussions with them on topics already agreed upon by me and my co-researchers.

The choosing of participants for discussion or interview was done with certain basic categories in mind: Clergy/laity status and male/female gender sensitivity in view. Other categories used were villagers/urban dwellers as well as youths/adults. My co-researchers, who knew the respondents well enough, suggested these categories.

We also conducted open-ended questionnaires with about fifty respondents; clergy/laity, male/female, urban/ rural dwellers, and youths/adults, to enable a more informed model of qualitative data collection. Table 5 shows data collected on a personal level i.e. involving human subjects. According to this table, there were 131 respondents in all; 80 lay persons and 51 clergy personnel. Data collected at Ogoja diocese was primarily based on the 8 focus group interview, 5 individual in-depth interviews, 5 observations of local churches and villages, including an analysis of 3 textual documents. All participants were members of the five (5) deaneries of Ogoja, Obudu, Ikom, Boki, and Ugep.

Table 5: Total number of respondents, showing clergy and laity categories only

#	Data collection at personal level	Total Participants	Clergy	Laity
1	Eight (8) Focus Groups	76	9	67
2	Five (5) Individual interviews	5	2	3
3	Open-ended Questions	50	40	10
	Total	131	51	80

According to Creswell (1998), multiple individuals who have participated in a process about a central phenomenon should form key respondents in data collection. Participants were selected because first, they were members involved in making policy in the diocese and secondly because they experience a “form” of poverty from both rural and organizational perspectives. As researchers, we sought a “homogenous group among participants” (Creswell, 1998, p. 112), who could identify with the phenomenon under study. Interviews were based on the key research questions and their relationship with the central theme. In Table 6, I show the main themes or categories that were focused on during the focus group discussions: poverty, health, values, participation, social learning, social justice etc. We, the researchers explored these themes in relation the diocese, parishes and local churches, choosing appropriate

questions that suited each focus group or individual interview (see Appendix A). Table 6 shows that the eight (8) focus group discussions conducted had a total of 76 discussants, with homogeneity of being members of the diocese (9 clergy and 67 lay persons).

Table 6: Focus group categories based on clergy and laity status only

#	Deanery Location	Categories(themes)	Clergy	Laity
1	Obudu	Education/Participation	X	10
2	Boki	Priest/Participation	1	7
3	Ogoja	Health/Social learning	4	5
4	Ikom	Parish/Social learning	X	9
5	Ogoja	Local church/Social Learning.	X	10
6	Ugep	Parish/Participation	X	10
7	Boki	Women/Participation	X	12
8	Ogoja	Diocese/Participation	4	4
		Total	9	67
		Total	76	

According to Table 7, there were five (5) Individual interviews (2 clergy and 3 lay persons). Open-ended questionnaires were administered to 50 respondents (40 clergy [25 priests and 15 nuns] and 10 lay persons [8 males and 2 females]. See Appendix A).

Table 7: Individual interviews in 5 deaneries based on status (C/L)

#	Deanery Location	Categories	Clergy	Laity
1	Obudu	Participation/Soc. Learning	X	
2	Boki	Parish/Part./Soc. Learning		X
3	Ogoja	Participation/soc. Learning.		X
4	Ikom	Communication/Soc. Learning.	X	
5	Ugep	Parish/ Soc. Learning		X
			2	3

Both focus group discussions and individual interviews lasted for about one hour each and were audio-taped. Co-researchers also took notes for comparison. All data collected was stored in tape recorders and later self-transcribed verbatim and computerized in electronic files.

iii. Data Analysis

Data analysis and formal dissertation writing began simultaneously upon my return from fieldwork, after a brief meeting with my committee members. I began analyzing data using *Folio Views 4*, a software program for qualitative data analysis that codes, retrieves, and searches text. *Folio Views* is also used to store and organize qualitative data gathered into manageable units (Weitzman, 2000). I began by transferring transcribed data into an *InfoBase*, storing data in a special file for electronic reference. I retrieved data in an instant access form, by using keywords that were indexed in the *InfoBase*. A query was performed whenever a particular concept was employed. Concepts were stored either as single words or as a combination of words. *Folio Views* enabled me not only to store and retrieve data, but also to edit and annotate information. By typing directly or importing file formats into an *InfoBase*, I was also able to find critical information and reflect it in my analysis. With such easy access and availability of electronic data, I was able to organize my data into codes and themes that facilitated open coding and thematic analysis. I followed three levels of data analysis (Creswell, 1998). Figure 3 represents the first level of data analysis consisting of transcription of data from focus groups, individual interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The second level consisted of open coding into basic concepts, sub-categories, and categories, while the third level involved a thematic analysis of data using axial coding of themes. This third stage was mainly employed in the conclusive stage of my study (Chapter 6).

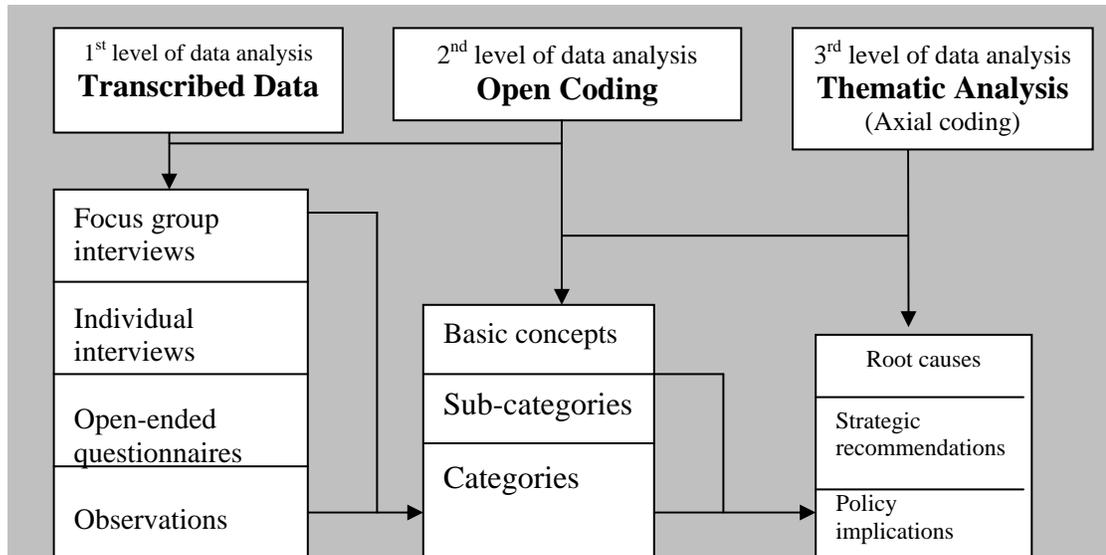


Figure 3: The three (3) levels of data analysis

Open coding

Open coding began after the transcription of all data was completed and stored in the electronic *InfoBase*. This involved the use of basic concepts that evolved earlier in my literature reviews. These concepts, for the most part, consisted theories on poverty, participation, and social learning. I evolved *sub-categories* from these concepts, looking for appropriate data to show possibilities of a continuum between the basic concepts and the sub-categories. Based on these sub-categories, I further formed *categories* of information about the issue being studied “by segmenting information within each category” (Creswell, 1998, p. 57). Each response from participants was analyzed and coded into categories and sub-categories. Coded categories were imputed based on theoretical ideas from reviewed literature (Figure 4).

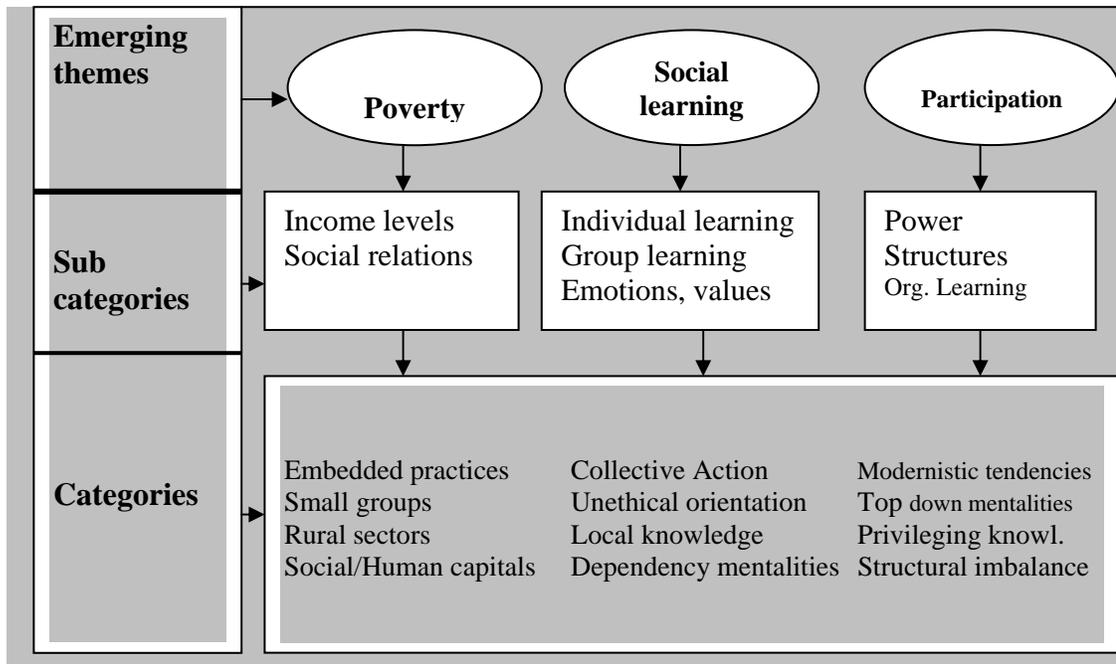


Figure 4: 2nd level of data analysis: Open coding

As the coding process continued, new categories were identified, and additional codes were included in the coding scheme. As new categories were added, previously coded categories were re-coded through the process of constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Examination of identically coded categories resulted in the formation of more emergent themes. A matrix was prepared in which data sorted by themes, and overlapping themes were all grouped together.

Thematic analysis

I began the conclusive axial coding process by linking the central issue to policy recommendations in Chapter 6. These interrelationships “reduce the database to a small set of themes or categories” and enabled the generation of findings (Creswell, 1998):

Once an initial set of categories is developed the researcher identifies a single category as the central phenomenon of interest and begins exploring the interrelationships of categories called axial coding-causal conditions that

influence the central phenomenon, the strategies for addressing the phenomenon, the context and the intervening conditions that shape the strategies, and the consequences of understating the strategies. In this phase of analysis the researcher creates a coding paradigm or a theoretical model that visually portrays the interrelationships of these axial coding categories of information. (p. 151)

The result of axial coding exposes the causal conditions of the emerging themes (of poverty, social learning, and participation) to other sub-categories and categories. Results of the categories that finally emerge apply policy recommendations to the organizational context.

(c). Trustworthiness of Data

According to Jules Pretty (1994), trustworthiness is an alternative framework for judging qualitative information sharing and applicability to other contexts. Here, a set of criteria or “components of inquiry process” (Pretty, p. 43) are adopted to argue for trustworthiness.

First and foremost, this research engaged “multiple investigators” including “teams with a diversity of personal, professional and disciplinary backgrounds, thus increasing the range of perspectives on the inquiry” (Pretty, 1994, p. 43). There was a “prolonged and intense engagement between various sectors” during this research, as well as “timely, relevant and agreed generation of information and knowledge” that supported the quest for meeting my objectives (Pretty, p. 43).

Findings of this research were “built on a wide range of different actors whose perspectives and realities were accurately represented” (Pretty, 1994, p. 43). During the first phase, data, interpretations, and conclusions were checked with the people “with whom the original information was constructed” (Pretty, p. 43), so that reconstructions were recognized by these groups of participants as “adequate representations of their own realities” (Pretty, p. 43). Participants were given the

opportunities “to investigate discrepancies and challenge findings” as well as “volunteer additional information” to the construction of meaning (Pretty, p. 43).

The broad-based nature of values advocated in this research would enable findings of this research to be transferable to another culture that shares the same values. Concepts of participation and social learning applied to poverty enabled participants have a “heightened sense of their own constructed realities” (Pretty, 1994, p. 43). Because such concepts are broad-based (not pertaining to any given organization or culture), findings would similarly have a broad-based application. Roman Catholics in other parts of the world may be able to organize around the same principles and adapt them according to their respective contexts.

Finally, in line with the criteria set out by Strauss and Corbin (1998), this research meets the standards of quality and verification in relation to the general research process; the original sample was inclusive of gender and status, and was selected in conjunction with co-researchers. Major concepts, categories, and sub-categories (participation, social learning, individual/group learning, organizational learning) emerged, with major actions pointing to the categories. The core category was selected based on PRA situation analysis of the area (Creswell, 1998, p. 210).

In judging trustworthiness, Creswell (1998, p. 210) also advanced the following six criteria, related to the empirical grounding of a study. These I entirely leave to the readers’ final judgment:

Criterion #1: Were *concepts* generated?

Criterion #2: Were the concepts *systematically related*?

Criterion #3: Were conceptual *linkages* and categories *well developed*?

Criterion #4: Was much *variation* built into the theory?

Criterion #5: Were *broad-based conditions* built into its explanations?

Criterion #6: Was *process* (Change) taken into account?

CHAPTER THREE:
POVERTY ERADICATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS OF
CHURCHES (CBOs)

1. Introduction

This chapter investigates the role of churches as institutions that seek to improve social relations among people through religious values and structures, to bring about the eradication of poverty. As a prelude, I review the dominant understanding of poverty from a country profile, and argue that Nigeria still suffers from the adverse effects of modernization, colonialism, and globalization.⁶ Its historical underpinnings show a fall-out of approaches that fail to address the needs of those who are actually poor. In the context of this study, I refer to the 1st and 2nd approaches based on the understanding of poverty in terms of econometric and social relations respectively. Some scholars have referred to the 2nd approach as “social inclusion” that entails a reframing of poverty to include the denial of entitlements (Sen, 1981). The 2nd approach includes a consideration of how institutions of social change could retract the long-term outcomes of social relations that lie embedded within certain cultures (Green & Hulme, 2005; Good, 1999).

At the start of the new millennium, officers of the National Council of Churches (NCC-USA) in 2000 were determined to make a commitment on the role of churches in poverty eradication in the world (Bouteneff & Heller, 2001). A special taskforce was set to investigate the theological issues of poverty and thus articulate the common theological perspectives that might serve to unite the churches in their

⁶ Nigeria is Africa’s leading oil exporter and the fifth-biggest source of US oil imports, but despite its oil wealth, many Nigerians live in abject poverty (Abue, 2005). Early in 2006, the oil-rich southern Niger Delta declaring “total war” on all foreign oil interests in the area. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) gave the oil companies and their employees an ultimatum to leave the region. MEND blows up oil pipelines, holds foreign oil workers hostage and sabotages major oilfields, in a bid to gain greater control of the oil wealth produced on their land.

common action and advocacy for the poor (Casey et al., 2005). Among the many challenges identified by the editorial taskforce was a renewed effort toward social analysis, and structural change which embodied two forms of concrete action. First, that each church consider reorienting their antipoverty efforts to coincide with the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) adopted by 189 countries at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000 (See Appendix C). Second, Churches give greater resources to the theological task of recovering its *voice* regarding responsibilities to the poor (Casey et al., 2005).

The key aspects of the MDGs revolve around the theme of extreme poverty and hunger eradication, through the promotion of equality and empowerment for the most vulnerable members of society especially women and children. Researchers are beginning to ask relevant questions with regard to how churches can also contribute to meet these goals. The international development community recognizes that one of the hopes of achieving the MDGs is supporting “a global partnership for development” between secular organizations, governments, NGOs, and civil societies (Aliyu, 2002). In the past, such collaborations have adopted a one-sided understanding that fails to appreciate the historic role of churches in creating initiatives for poverty eradication (Dasgupta, 1993; Rist, 1997). Development practitioners have instead adopted abstract discourses that make negotiations of alternative strategies for poverty eradication more complex (Henriot, 2001).

In this study, I delve into a yet-unexplored dimension evolving from a faith-based perspective, proffering a “third approach” to the understanding of poverty which underpins the role of biblical values and church-based structures in building capacity for individuals and groups at the local level. In my empirical analysis, I question the organizational dynamics of the diocese in relation to social change. What are the patterns of social inclusion in poverty eradication and the elements that underpin the

Social Justice Agenda as a poverty eradication mechanism? My approach is not mutually exclusive of other approaches, but builds on them. I interpret the views expressed by both clergy and laity members especially those who have experienced the deprivations of poverty within a diocese. I re-echo the church's "option for the poor" (Sobrino, 1984), drawing analogies from biblical narratives (Rohr, 1991) and early church traditions (Charlton, Mallinson, & Oakeshott, 1986). I also explore other organizing traditions that provide grounds for negotiating a more informed alternative for poverty eradication based on church-based initiatives (Rogers, 1990; Payne, 1995). These investigations are in line with the shifting paradigm in development thinking which began in the 1980s with the human factor approach. People (laity) are becoming more involved in the broader processes of governance of their institutions (Cornwall, 2002), while participating in the formulation of policies (World-Bank, 2003).

2. Definitions of Poverty

Poverty has often been defined from a purely econometric perspective by the dominant paradigm of development, and certain factors have influenced this mentality. Within this perspective, there is an assumption that linearly increasing incomes will lead poor households to escape poverty, an approach that has been argued by some scholars to narrow down or distort the vision of poverty (Chambers, 1997a; Townsend, 1993). Some others have argued that this mentality only leads to impoverishment of vulnerable members of society (Freire, 1989), and continues to foster chronic poverty (Green & Hulme, 2005). I begin to explore a nuanced definition of poverty, looking at it from a developing country perspective.

(a). Nigeria: Poverty from a Country Perspective

The trends of modernization, colonialism, and globalization are three related strands that have fueled a capitalist mode of thinking, undermining the rural poor in

Nigeria. First, because it conceives of progress as a movement from traditional to modern, with the market and economy as main engines of operation, modernization has aggravated poverty at the local level (Rostow, 1960). According to modernization, local communities eventually benefit as development trickles down to them (Tucker, 1999). It undermines peripheral regions as non-contributive (Wallerstein, 1979), supports export oriented manufacturing within an open market economy, and “leaves no alternative for local economies” (Peet & Hartwick, 1999). Modernization has also fueled the trend of globalization; the cross-border of economic activities that often leads to unequal restructuring processes in the political and social world contexts (Friedman, 1999; Sine, 1999). Nigeria has had its share of the adverse effects of these trends of modernization and globalization, with their effects felt within in a free trade that sets forth a new hegemony of global market capitalism. Here, capital is seen only as creating a homogenous world culture of commercialization, commodification, administration, surveillance and domination (Robins & Webster, 1999). Both modernization and globalization can destabilize local economies through intermediary agents who invest privately, thus destabilizing solid local economies (Giddens, 2002, p. 27).⁷

Because of the adverse effects of globalization, for example, Nigeria’s rural sector has sought economic stability through growth strategies modeled after the former British colonial system (Migdal, 1988) with its technical view of development. This tendency has created the effects of poverty within local contexts, and according to the United Nations Development Index (UNDI), Nigeria is ranked 136th out of 162

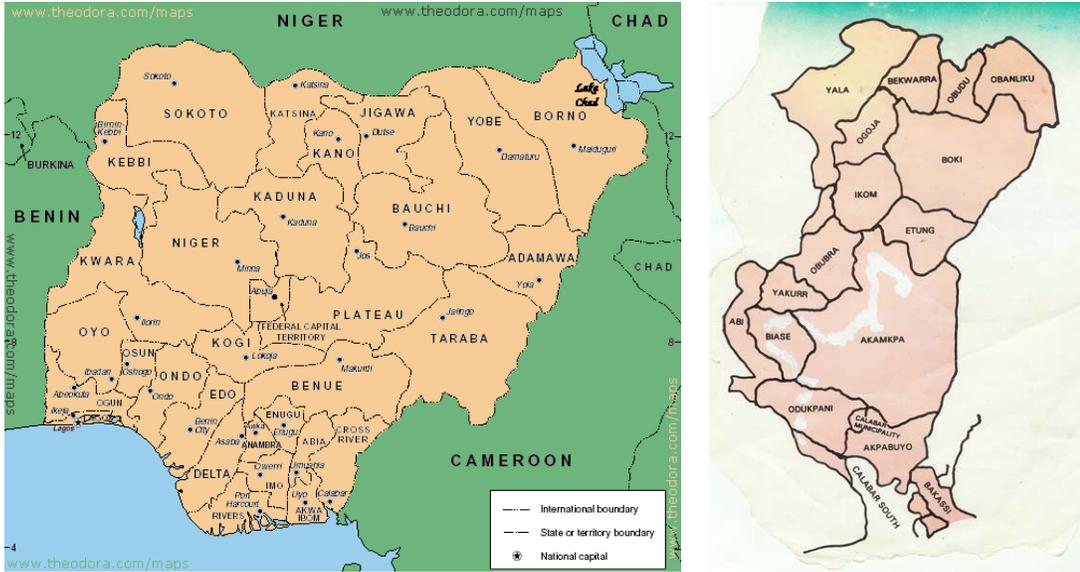
⁷ Some scholars, however, argue in favor of globalization, saying that it reduces inequality (Bhalla, 2002) and leads individual freedom (Friedman, 1999; Fukuyama, 1992), with opportunities for small businesses to grow (Kellner, 2002). Others also have said that globalization reduces child labor (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2003) and lifts farm households out of poverty (Hertel et al., 2003).

poorest countries (UNDP, 2002).⁸ A World Bank report in 1996 revealed that poverty exists in rural communities twice as frequently as in urban communities, with a concentration of the poor in communities in which most of the other households are poor. The report also observes the strong influence of education, age and nature of unemployment on poverty, noting that 95% of rural poor have only primary schooling or less (World-Bank, 1996). After its independence in 1960, Nigeria's rural villages have become more impoverished, as various forms of aid to the country have created an ultimately destructive sense of dependence, undermining genuine attempts to achieve self reliance (Arnold, 1985).

A 2001 estimate puts the population of Nigeria at 120 million, with a growth rate of about 2.61%. 54% of its inhabitants are below the age of 19 years, while 32% are between ages 20–44 years. Urban population is 43%, showing rapid urbanization and a transition to a cash economy. In the past 30 years, Nigeria has reaped more than \$280bn from oil alone and is the 5th largest exporter of oil to the USA. Despite its oil wealth and natural and human potentials, Nigeria still records a high propensity of poverty indicators. National statistics put the conservative poverty line at N3, 290 (approx. \$30) per person per month, which reveal that 50% of the population languish in poverty (Nigerian Household Survey, Federal Office of Statistics). This means that 59 million people in Nigeria are unable to meet their basic needs. Poor macro-economic policies and fiscal indiscipline has resulted to low economic growth rate and continuous slide of the value of the local currency (naira) in the last two decades (Fafowora, 2002; Tandler, 1997). With a dualistic economy which boasts of about 70% active labor force engaged in rain-fed subsistence agriculture, there is a smaller capital-intensive urban sector within a nation that depends on petroleum for over 90%

⁸ The UNDP report presents a framework for action that includes, among other things, intensifying regional integration efforts and strengthening partnership between civil society and the state to ensure participation in the development process.

of its foreign exchange earnings (World-Bank 1996). Figure 5 represents Nigeria, Africa’s most populous nation with 36 states. Cross River State is one of the states.



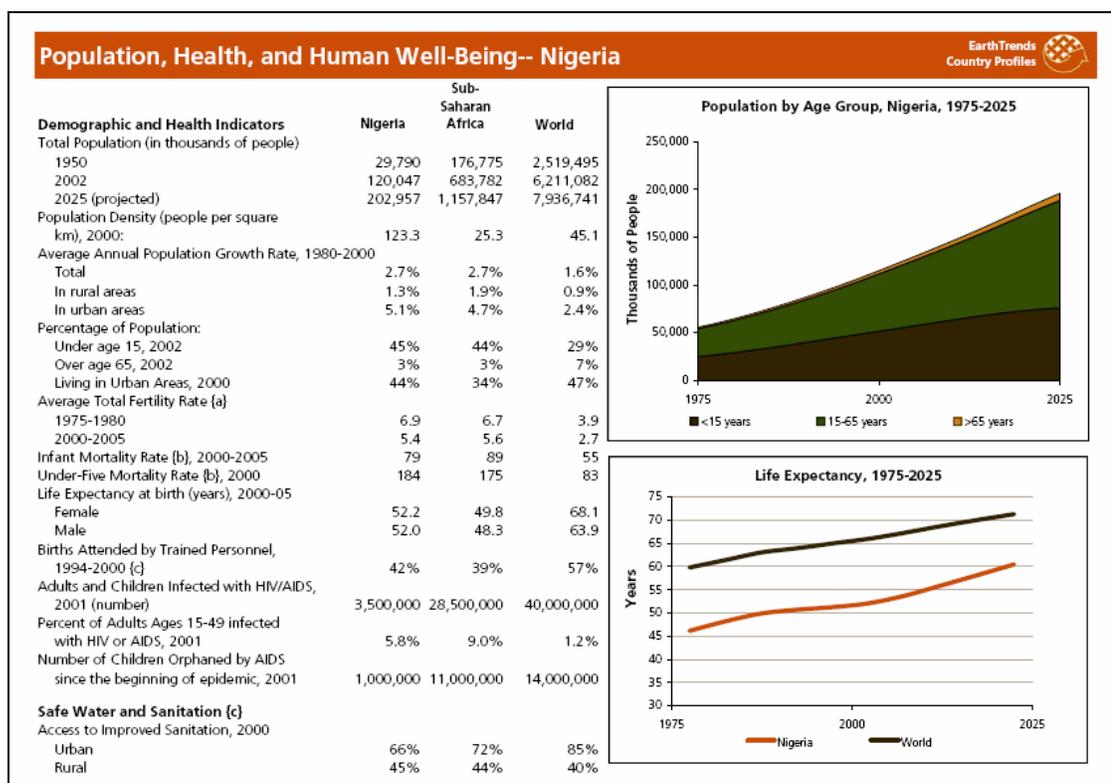
A Source: www.theodora.com/maps **B** Source: Abue & Baldeh, 2000

Figure 5: Map of Nigeria (A) showing Cross River State (B)

Cross River State has been considered relatively neglected by successive regimes in terms of development as the state is characterized by poor infrastructural facilities with 55.3% incidence of poverty (UNDP, 2005). With a population of about 3m inhabitants, much of the development infrastructures in the state have been initiated by civil societies. However, civil societies particularly in rural areas are weak to subsume the overall development process. According to *Earth Trends*⁹ an analysis of the population, health, and human well-being in Nigeria reveals that the condition of the average poor over the last 40 years has been dwindling amidst the deteriorating health and economic systems in rural areas (UNDP, 2005). The demographic and

⁹ *Earth Trends* (<http://www.earthtrends.wri.org/>) is a comprehensive online database that focuses on the environmental, social, and economic trends that shape the world. This site presents information from world-renowned sources in multiple formats to meet the diverse needs of users.

health indicators depict a rising population estimated to be more than 202 million people in 2025. There are signs of increasing prevalence of HIV/AIDS (22%) in rural areas, with a greater percentage of adults (ages 15–49) likely to be infected with the virus in the years to come. Infant mortality rate at birth is high and the life expectancy is projected to be lower than the average life expectancy of the rest of the world’s population (Figure 6).

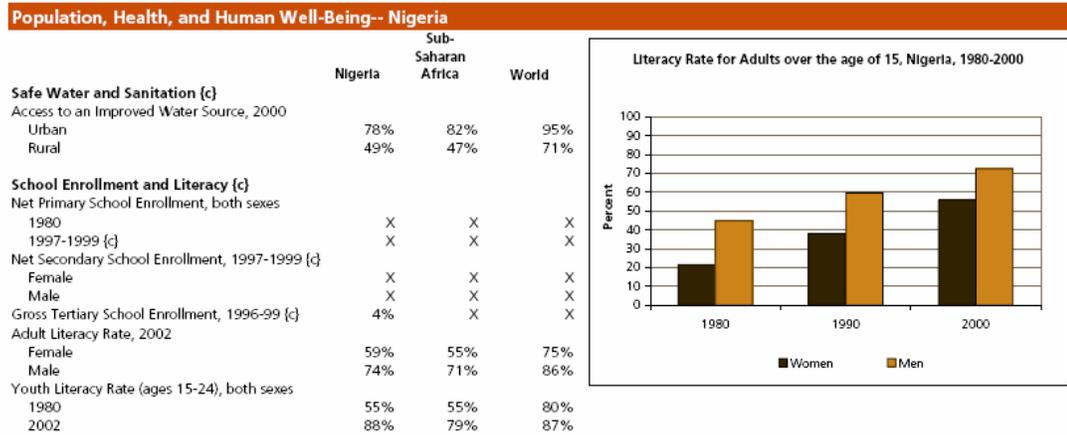


Source: Earth Trends

Figure 6: Poverty indicators in Nigeria: Population and life expectancy

Distribution of development benefits in Nigeria is uneven and this has been created by the regional and economic imbalances that renders only very few infrastructures to the rural poor. Transition rate to secondary schools is poor in the rural areas and there is a declining quality of teaching at the primary school level.

There are inadequate teaching and learning materials in almost all schools, while there is a high rate of school drop-outs (Figure 7).



Source: Earth Trends

Figure 7: Poverty indicators in Nigeria: Literacy rates based on gender

There is uneven balance felt in the literacy rate between women and men over the age of 15 among urban and rural dwellers. At the threshold of the twenty-first century, Nigeria has retrogressed from being classified among the richest 50 in the early 1970s to becoming one of the 25 poorest nations. Poverty indicators can be seen from factors such as the unstable political institutions, lack of financial resources, low level technology, large populations, lack of skilled human resources, the military factor, and economic mismanagement (Evans, 1997). These poverty indicators underscore the rationale for selecting Nigeria as a base for poverty eradication in this study. I now examine the effects of understanding poverty from a purely econometric perspective within a country context.

(b). Econometric Definitions of Poverty

A closer look at the local sectors within Nigeria's rural areas reveals the adverse social practices embedded and tolerated within local contexts. The situation is often

worsened by the lack of local institutions to mitigate their effects. Only the state is perceived as responsible for addressing issues of socio-economic development (Obadan, 2002). The greater problem, however, is that the state is propelled by purely econometric forces, which basically involves the use of concepts drawn from economics as sole units for analyzing the levels of poverty. Concepts like money and the rise in personal income, increase salaries, inflation in market price, are used to define poverty and its eradication strategies.

At the macro level, analytical terms such as Gross National Product (GNP), rise in state incomes, industrialization; concerned with increasing the production of commodities are equally used as units of analysis to define poverty (Rist, 2002). State centered discourses use household incomes or consumption shortfalls, driven by advances in what can be measured within the economics-centered paradigm as the prime means of effecting development (Kanbur & Squire, 2001). Within this understanding, state-centered approaches design poverty eradication initiatives based on the state and markets, with the intention of meeting the needs of development of individuals. In doing so, states link poverty with development, with the false belief that development creates an opportunity for growth (Stern, 2001; Fafarowa, 2002).

Henriot (2001) classifies the various aspects of deprivations to include: material deprivation (lack of financial resources), services deprivation (lack of adequate services such as health, education etc), access deprivation (lack of basic needs like good water supply, food etc) and voice deprivation (exclusion of from effective participation in decision-making resulting to inequalities in both gender and geographic considerations). Of all the categories, however, Henriot also admits that the conventional definitions of poverty give precedence to only the physical or material deprivation, which denotes a lack of financial resources that result to the poor

living below a particular (poverty) line.¹⁰ According to Townsend (1993), such poverty lines (understood as low income or low consumption) give poverty a rather technical or econometric understanding in order to ensure a “scientifically acceptable universal meaning and measurement” (p. 3). Understanding poverty within this single perspective neither examines in depth the conceptual issues underlining the problem, nor explores the causal links between the various factors underlying it. This is a one-sided definition that makes the negotiation of alternative strategies for its eradication more complex (Thakur, 1985).

Chambers (1983) argues that giving a general definition to poverty as “deprivation” should vary, depending on the social context in question and what is held to be an “acceptable” standard of living in that specific context (pp. 109–39). Deprivation, understood by poor people affects their dignity and respects (Beck, 1994) and could relate to other dimensions such as “social inferiority, physical weakness, disability, sickness, vulnerability, physical and social isolation, powerlessness and humiliation.” According to Chambers (1997b), the reason professionals, nations, researchers, planners or academicians sometimes narrow down, distort or simplify perceptions of poverty to a one-sided understanding is because of their need for a single scale of numbers that enables them make comparisons.¹¹ With such approaches, argues Chambers (1997b),

Deprivation and poverty come to be defined not by the changing and varied wants and needs of the poor, but by the static and standardized wants and needs of professionals. Conceptually, professionals are then caught in their own reductionist poverty trap. Poverty becomes what has been measured. (p. 46)

¹⁰ The World Bank suggests the poverty line to be one US dollar a day.

¹¹ Chambers (1997b), however, agrees that for all their limitations conventional figures can at least “suggest some order of magnitude, trends and contrasts” and enable central planners to make comparisons between regions and districts and between different times (p. 5). Green and Hulme (2005) also agree that income and consumption measures have apparent advantages because they create what seems to be a clear line between the poor and non-poor, while also providing a rationale for development assistance for the poor.

The danger in representing poverty and its eradication strategies as linearly increasing household income or consumption through economic growth is that international development discourses often assume that poor households can escape poverty through increasing incomes (Green & Hulme, 2005). Household income and expenditure surveys, government statistics, and participatory poverty assessments (PPAs) are often used, albeit wrongly to measure the extent and depth of poverty. Statistics are flawed and often liable to mislead in the definition of poverty, while the multiple and diverse realities of poverty and well-being are not adequately captured by standard measures (Chambers, 1997b, p. 42).

The biological needs approach propounded by development economists (Dasgupta, 1993; Rist, 1997) seek to understand poverty from households assumed to be units of production and consumption. This approach tends to (*mis*) represent poverty as an entity to be attacked, external to the social relations that generate it (Green, 2005). This idea perpetuates and aggravates poverty for the most part, precipitating its causes at individual and household levels, while underplaying the social relations and categorizations that contribute to its long-term. Because of the often fragmentary nature of “households” as loci of accommodation, consumption, and cooperation, such approaches are less able to grasp the extent to which rural dwellers are embedded in global economies (Harris, 1988). The “thinness” of understandings generated through these approaches renders them complicit in the failure to move beyond the characteristics of poverty to its root causes (Green & Hulme, 2005). Reduction of poverty to biological effects which can be calculated and improved distracts attention from the social and personal experiences of extreme poverty, which are simply “overlooked in the quest for quantification” (Hastrup, 1993, p. 730).

Against this background, it is not surprising that accounts of poverty which have largely focused on households as units of economic analysis have failed to afford a broad-based definition of poverty and consequently its eradication in the society.

Historically, as earlier observed, these dominant econometric considerations can be explained from modernism (Rostow, 1960). It is important to look beyond such measurement led factors that fail to take the analysis of poverty further to explain why *they* become precipitating in certain situations more than others in the first place (Green & Hulme, 2005). Most African scholars have made the point that certain neo-colonial paths tie third World countries to centers of world capitalism, with all the consequent contradictions that such a linkage entails (Berberoglu, 1992).¹² Against this background, a paradigm shift emerged in the *Populist model*; which centered on people as situated agents (Youngman, 2000), giving primacy to ethno-culturalism, context-specificity and social action (Foley, 1999).

Populist models have begun to re-conceptualize the understanding of poverty to include social relations rather than mere incomes. Chambers's (1983) analysis of the dangers of econometric definitions of poverty argues that the problem is not often easily perceived by outsiders. Chambers recommends a "new professionalism" as a reversal of spatial values that closes the gaps that have been created by specialization (pp. 168–189). For Chambers,

new professionalism enables new opportunities for the poor, test policy and action by asking who gains and who loses, while also helping those who are deprived to help themselves. (p. 189)

Herein lies an entry point that challenges researchers to re-situate the poverty discourse beyond the measurement-led conceptualizations, toward a social inclusion

¹² For a more detail analysis of the empirical weaknesses of this development theories on the empowerment of the local level and aggravation of poverty, see Gilpin, 1987; Haggard, 1990; McMichael, 1996, pp. 42–47.

that creates capacity for poorer people to influence and hold accountable those who make policies in the society. I therefore explore the perspective of social inclusion in the next section.

(c). Definition of Poverty as Social Inclusion

By looking at poverty indicators beyond low incomes, development agencies are now redefining it in terms of social inclusion in order to improve the social relations among the poor (World-Bank, 2000/2001). “Social relations” here refers to the often normative and “deeply embedded *unfair* (italics mine) practices which become institutionalized within legal and political systems,” with devastating effects on poor people (Green & Hulme, 2005, p. 5). Social inclusion, therefore, connotes explicit ways by which human beings within a particular society or institution design their structures and values to counteract such social relations. For Bauman (2004), the social exclusion approach represents the poor as those excluded from access to the means of participating in the construction of the self. It emphasizes the need for access to the means of participating. Sen (1981) asserts that social relations and denial of entitlements exclude the “poor” from the “rights” to access, entitlements and hence participation in the economy. Outcomes of social relations in some contexts are often perceived as “necessary, inevitable or the fault of those so affected” (Green & Hulme, p. 7).

Sen (1981) in his capabilities approach explains that the Bengal famine of 1943 which occurred when grain was available in rural markets, resulted not from the absence of food, but from the lack of “exchange entitlements” that should have allowed access to food in the first place (Sen, 1981, p. 75) . By means of some insidious institutional practices existing within some particular contexts, scholars have

identified how some people can be excluded from participation.¹³ Turnbull (1984) recounts that the starving ex-hunting group who were forced into agriculture in the mountains of Uganda, were in effect too poor for “society”¹⁴ (p. 239), while the exclusion of members of hunting communities from hunting grounds in Botswana was attributed to customary class differentiations (Good, 1999). The seizure of land from the widows and children of men who died of AIDS by the male kin of the deceased in East Africa (CRPC, 2004; Ewelukwa, 2002), and the expulsion of widows through witchcraft allegations, since the 1980s in some communities in Western Tanzania (Mesaki, 1994) are all examples of social relations embedded in given cultures within the context of developing nations.¹⁵ More important, these cultural normative perpetuate processes of impoverishment (Hirschon, 1984; Lamb, 2000).

Some societies tolerate these embedded practices within institutional norms and systems in a world that emphasis equality and accountability (World Bank, 2003).¹⁶ Dominant participatory processes have sometimes supported this mentality by presenting the poor as enmeshed in a particular kind of relationship compared to the wider or non-poor society. By representing the poor as excluded from both formal and informal institutions in their work, *Voices of the Poor*, Narayan and his colleagues negotiate a negative turn in their discourse (Narayan et al., 1999).¹⁷ They remove the

¹³ These policies are themselves the root causes of poverty and Freire (1989) argues that they encourage impoverishment. Dorr (1991, p. 239) affirms the idea of impoverishment as “a deliberate action caused by others,” an explicit outcome of conscious decisions made by humans because of the way they have designed the economic, political, social, cultural, gender, ecological, and religious structures of society, rather than an inevitable human state of being.

¹⁴ “...society itself is not indispensable for man’s survival” but becomes a “luxury” where need reduces people to personal survival (Turnbull, 1984, p. 239).

¹⁵ The social casting of widows as second-class citizens in some Indian cultures and the associated processes of asset stripping as statutory and common law systems lead to immediate effects in income shortfalls and definitive lacks in household indices.

¹⁶ The most recent *World Development Report* supports the inclusion of the so called poor people in state and national institutions and accountability of the non-poor to poor constituents, if the poor are to become less poor (World-Bank, 2003).

¹⁷ The authors design a box containing “poor households” comprising interlinked circles of “women and men” situating some distance apart from other boxes representing “state institutions” and “civil society organizations,” through which access to “opportunity” is mediated. The poor then appear as those marginal to mainstream institutions, occupying a kind of parallel society in which impoverished social

poor from society and place them on a category of their own; on the margins of local and national economy, restricting their access to opportunities and resources, thereby consolidating their poverty. Such exclusion separates them from the rest of society and perpetuates a perspective on poverty that fails to recognize the significance and complexity of institutions as agents of poverty eradication.¹⁸ Poverty from this perspective is partly structural as certain categories or individuals are unable to derive the same benefits as those occupying favored categories (Bracking, 2003). The task of poverty eradication has a long history within the church and I trace its biblical and historical origins as a way of negotiating its eradication as a third approach

(d). The Third Approach: Building a Communitarian Understanding from Biblical and Early Church Traditions

Need for a third approach

According to Green and Hulme (2005), ethically engaged institutions can mitigate the structural imbalance that characterize the unfair norms often embedded within contexts. Following this assumption, and taking the concept of social inclusion further, I propose a “third approach” to understanding poverty and its eradication. This approach is centered on the capabilities of locally anchored church-based organizations to address the concrete problems of poor people within particular contexts based on biblical and church teachings. This approach views poverty as an authentic theological source for understanding Christian practice, by seeing the poor as those “who confront the church and society with the direction in which the solution to the problem is to be found” (Sobrino, 1984, pp. 94–5).

institutions limit potential means of engagement with the wider institutional context and hence the “pathway” out of poverty (Narayan et al., 1999).

¹⁸ Institutions are where “people are embedded and these include neighborhood networks, and ethnic alliances, churches etc, all of which operate at varying levels of informality” (Green & Hulme, p. 27). Understanding institutions in such complex ways eschews the narrow definition of regarding them as formal organizations of state or what development simply defines as “civil society.”

In this third approach, I present poverty as a communitarian experience beginning from the Old Testament (OT) with the people of Israel under bondage. Here, the Israelites saw poverty eradication as solidarity with the larger community of God's people. In the early church, communitarian life was practiced by Christians especially in time of need and this strategic position, defined a response to poverty. During the Industrial Revolution, there was also a communitarian response by the church as a strategy aimed at defining poverty and responding to it. CBOs in the present dispensation need such a communitarian strategy to help define poverty and inform its eradication strategy.

Biblical and early church perspectives

The Bible presents instructive aspects of development on social contexts, beginning from the Old Testament, where the Israelites are depicted as well endowed with a "social conscience." The ancient Jewish law forbade the charging of interest on loans (Exodus 22: 24–5) and Leviticus 25 provides for a remission of debts every seven years, while there was restitution of the land to its original owners every jubilee year. While the highest concentration of biblical language about the poor and poverty in the Old Testament is found in the Wisdom literature, Israel's prophets often speak of economic injustices, consistently championing the causes of the poor against the rich, condemning the undue pursuit of wealth (Casey et al., 2005). Isaiah denounced those who grind the faces of the poor (Isaiah 3:15), while Amos castigates the dishonest business practices of the rich (Amos 8:4–6). It was God's demand that poverty be eradicated when he commanded Moses to seek freedom for the enslaved men and women of Israel. This tradition "required the people themselves to be involved by experiencing a crisis of purification in the wilderness for forty years as a learning process before reaching the Promised Land" (Rohr, 1991, p. 73). The Bible itself was written from the perspective of a people who were poor and lacked security and

entitlements in a foreign land. Moses was called to develop leadership and strengthen the people by working with them instead of working for them.¹⁹

In the New Testament (NT), Christ presents himself as “one of the poor” (Dorr, 1991, p. 5). In his statement “the poor you will always have with you!” (Mk: 14:7), Christ points to social inclusion and affirmation of the poor and consequently brings the theme of poverty into the mainstream of the Church and society.

In some respects, Jesus himself should be seen as one of the poor. Having “emptied himself” to share in our humanity (Phil 2: 7), he became a native of a despised village (Jn.1: 46) and was known as a carpenter’s son (Mt 13:55). He resisted temptation to carry out his mission through the use of glory and power (Mt 4: 5–10). He was the innocent victim of persecution and was executed as a criminal after an unjust trial. (Dorr, 1991, p. 5)

The Gospels insist that as Israel’s Messiah, Jesus was identified with the poor and outcasts from the beginning of his life to its end. The birth of Jesus took place where they fed the cows. He slept in the manger of a stable, the place that was left over because all the rooms were filled with people who could pay. When it was time for Joseph and Mary to redeem their firstborn son according to the law and to present him in the Temple at Jerusalem, they offered a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, the sacrifice permitted to poorer families who could afford nothing better. Matthew in his Sermon on the Mount (6:19–34) represents Jesus as saying very explicitly that treasures should not be stored on earth, while demanding a radical change (*metonia*) of the whole person, intellectual and emotional. Jesus calls for an inversion of existing values, through a change from resentment, vengefulness, and ambition to humility and unlimited forgiveness. In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus inaugurates

¹⁹ When Moses brought the chosen people out of Egypt, he was to gather seventy men who were the elders of the people so that God would empower them with the spirit which was upon Moses, to bear the burden of the people with Moses. As Moses took of the spirit and gave to the seventy they went off and organized a hunting party for quail (Numbers 11: 16–17). When people have a charismatic leader who does all their thinking, they become dependent, passive and lacking in initiatives to organize to combat their problems and this increases all forms of poverty and according to Rohr (1991), the way of Moses is a prophetic approach to social inclusion that enables a solution to poverty.

his ministry by reading from Isaiah the portion about his special anointing “to bring good news to the poor” and stated that this scripture was now being fulfilled (Luke 4: 16ff). In his teaching about discipleship, Jesus identified himself with the homeless: “Foxes have holes,” he said, “and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” (Matthew 8: 20). Jesus’ disciples were organized in terms of preventing poverty (John 6: 5–7, 12: 4–8), and at the end of his life, he showed solidarity with the very poor in the manner of his death. Jesus died on a Roman cross as a common criminal.

The Eucharistic liturgies of the early churches almost certainly involved diaconal distribution of food to the poor (Acts: 6:1–6), where the early Christian community in Jerusalem was organized in the distribution of supplies to widows as seven deacons were officially given the responsibility to carry out the assignment. In Acts 2: 44–6 and 4: 32–5, the faithful are said to have everything in common. The first letter of Peter enjoins submission to human authority or establishments (*ktisis*) showing that Christians had no design of disobedience (1 Peter 2:12–15) . The second letter to the Thessalonians contain a further precept which implies that funds available for charity should not be wasted on the maintenance of able-bodied idle people (2 Thess. 1:10). The apostle Paul describes the one obligation laid upon him by the pillars of the Church: “Remember the poor!” Having spent most of his career raising money for the perennially poor churches of Jerusalem, Paul held his congregations accountable for their treatment of the poor among them. Acts, the epistle of James, the epistle to the Hebrews, the Apocalypse to John, and other New Testament writings all stress the community’s obligations to the poor. The early Church seems to have understood itself as bound to care for the poor and those in need of help from the very beginning (Casey et al., 2005).

The history of church reformers and defenders in every period of history showed people who identified with the poor. Tertulian (160–225) implies that the early Christians did have some property in common (Migne, 1855). Clement of Alexandra (150–212) points out that wealth in itself is neither good nor bad, and there is positive good in using it to benefit others. Ambrose of Milan (337–97) agrees that “nature generated the common rights and usurpation the private one,” insisting that God “wished this earth to be the common possession of all men and its produce to supply the needs of all” (Migne, 1855, PL. 39, p. 224). Augustine of Hippo (354–79) takes the same view in his *Sermons*, by instituting communal life for his clergy and forbidding them to own private property (Migne, 1855, PL. 39, p.228). The teaching of the Fathers, both Greek and Latin, is powerfully summarized by Gregory the Great (540–604) (Migne, 1855):

The land is common to all men, and therefore brings forth nourishment for all men. Those people, then, are wrong to think of themselves guiltless when they claim what God has given to men in common as their private property. (p. 21)

John Chrysostom (1999) admonishes,

When you see on earth the man who has encountered the shipwreck of poverty, do not judge him, do not seek an account of his life, but free him from his misfortune. (p. 52)

Gregory of Nyssa’s (2001) admonition is even stronger than that of John Chrysostom and more pointedly Christo-centric:

Do not despise those who are stretched out on the ground as if they merit no respect. Consider who they are and you will discover their worth. They bear the countenance of our Savior. (p. 194)

Thomas Aquinas (1226–1274) indicated in his *Summa Theologiae* that it is not in general legitimate to sell something for more than it is worth, though the price may be

raised if both the vendor and the buyer have special need of the thing (Charlton et al., 1986, pp. 227–230).

A utopian thinking on the Christian tradition began to be paradigmatically expressed and Thomas More's *Utopia* itself, published in 1516, emphasized that there should be no private property.²⁰ There was a fair crop of political fantasies in the 16th and 17th centuries, and Thomas Campanella (1568–1639) in his *The City of the Sun*, argues that people will always want private property so long as they have private families. In the 2nd half of the 18th century the Industrial Revolution began in England and spread to other countries (Charlton et al., 1986).²¹ In Western Europe where it began, industrialization established itself in the form of Industrial Capitalism, in which a proprietor who owns the assets decides how they are used and exerts inordinate control on workers who contract to labor under the proprietors' direction (Dorr, 1991). The major problem with Industrial Capitalism was its tendency to unfairly distribute income and wealth, especially in the private sector, by depriving the worker of his just wage in the value generated by his labor. It tended to “deprive the worker of any real control over the conduct of the enterprise” (Charlton et al., 1986, p. 40). From all indications, the Industrial Revolution, although a major development, began to create marginalized patterns for the poor, and the Church was expected to speak out against its excesses. According to Charlton et al. (1986), the 18th century Church was a Church of the laissez-faire system, weak politically and practically at

²⁰ In the same year of the publication of More's *Utopia*, Bartoleme de la Casa handed to Cardinal Ximenez, at the time Regent of Spain, a plan for the American Indians. Casa's motive was hostility to the *encomienda* system by which settlers were allocated natives who were forced to work for them, blaming the system for wiping out native populations. The Jesuit order founded in 1540 followed Casa in trying to concentrate Indians in villages and exclude Europeans, and these goals were achieved. The main criticism of the Jesuits was that they were excessively paternalistic as they treated the Indians as children and never permitted them, much less taught them to assume responsibility for themselves (Charlton et al., 1986).

²¹ The Industrial Revolution comprised of the introduction of machines and techniques to replace the work done by several person by one person (mechanization), and it began in England and spread to other countries (Charlton et al., 1986).

the start of the Industrial Revolution, and Christianity was silenced by States, while the vacuum was filled by philosophers.²²

It was not until 1891 and later in 1931 that the first formal response to Industrial capitalism was made by Popes Leo XIII²³ and Pius IX,²⁴ respectively, through the Church's social doctrine which became eminently practical, and was used as a guideline for guarding against the inordinate attempt by state to foster dependency for ordinary citizens. Such responses not only helped capitalist mindsets change their overbearing attitudes, but also faithful Christians assume their own responsibilities vis-à-vis the common good. Thus began the dynamic application of Catholic social teachings to the changing realities and circumstances of human societies, especially those who struggled with adverse social and local contexts (Charlton et al., 1986; Dorr, 1991). Although some underlying tactical errors had occurred, papal encyclicals now began to address social problems in official capacities. The church had not paid adequate attention to the growing influence of capitalism, but instead towed the opposite direction of advocating for an “escapist spirituality” for its adherents on the one hand (Dorr, 1991, p. 39).²⁵

²² Ranging from Hume's *Dialogues* (1779) to Kant's *Critique* and economists like Quesnay (1694–1774), Turgot (1727–81), Adam Smith (1723–90), Bentham (1748–1832), J.B. Say (1767–1832), J.C. L. Simonde de Sismondi (1773–1842), Malthus (1766–1834), John Stuart Mill (1807–1873), and Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), who drew strength from Darwin's theory of evolution (Charlton et al., 1986, pp. 11–27). The central idea of *laissez-faire* thinkers was that economic processes alone could automatically promote the general good. To believe this required optimism and the optimism which prevailed among *laissez-faire* thinkers can be gauged from Hume, who maintained that progress in commerce and the arts has already conferred amazing benefits on the nations of Europe (Hume, 1963).

²³ Pope Leo XIII, on May 15, 1891 was the first to take an official stand, proclaiming the Catholic teaching through the first social encyclical of the Church, *Rerum Novarum*, insisting that the rich and poor, capital or labor have equal rights and duties. Against the socialists, Leo XIII defended the right of individuals to private property.

²⁴ During the great depressions and the times of the dictators and totalitarian systems of the right and left, Pope Pius XI, in celebrating the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, himself wrote to affirm the principles set forth by Leo XIII. Pius XI's *Quadregessimo Anno*, published in 1931, specifically mentioned the principle of *Subsidiarity*, which teaches that society's decisions must be left at the lowest possible level, therefore at the level closest to those affected by the decision.

²⁵ Dorr (1991) argues that because Church teachings for several centuries laid great stress on the God-given authority of kings and queens and of the state, there was a class mentality being created which did not favor marginal individuals; a gap which also widened the new proclaimed teaching and the actual

In conclusion, I have presented here an explanation of poverty in the religious sense. Although God's people accepted conditions beyond their control in the wilderness, their experience of injustice in Egypt enabled them to define a communitarian view of poverty. Within such understanding, dealing with poverty (eradication) entails solidarity with the larger community of God's people. Moses and Jesus served the best examples of this kind of response to poverty (Rogers, 1990). In the early church, the communitarian life shared by Christians in time of need defined a response. Identification with the poor and common ownership of property was the strategy among the early reformers as seen during the Industrial Revolution, when the church spoke against unfair distribution of wealth and deprivations to workers, though sometimes in compromising language. These strategies aimed at defining poverty reveal that the church in Biblical times, up until the Industrial Revolution, maintained a strategic response to poverty, involving a communitarian spirit.

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the communitarian spirit of the early church was on the wane, while the Age of Enlightenment, with its emphasis on individual salvation, ushered in the loss of direction in addressing poverty. The advent of capitalism and reorganization of the means of production changed the communitarian mentality of the Biblical and early church. More orientation was given to greed, while some groups in Latin America rose to address such issues. In the next section, I investigate how CBOs in general organize their response in the light of these historical settings, using the Social Justice Agenda as a mechanism for social action. What potentials exist within the organizational dynamics of CBOs to negotiate a nuanced response to the problem of poverty?

structures and policies of the church. However, for Dorr (1991) this gap "enabled churches to listen to the prophetic voices and through them allowed the spirit to challenge the church" (p. 40).

3. Organizational Dynamics of CBOs: A Social Agenda for Poverty Eradication

(a). Organizational Dynamics of CBOs for Poverty Eradication

Several constellations such as “poverty alleviation,” “poverty reduction,” “poverty eradication,” etc. have been used in the development discourse to describe the solution to the problem of poverty. In my view, poverty understood as “alleviation” merely characterizes the lessening of the suffering of poor people by meeting their immediate pressing needs through welfare, handouts, social security, and safety nets. This makes it difficult to equate it with lasting solutions. Similarly, poverty understood as “reduction,” involves providing jobs, health, education services, and other opportunities that would enable poor people to barely rise above the poverty line. Poverty “reduction,” lofty as it may seem, merely commits itself to looking at people as cases to be attended to; lowering or reducing the numbers of those living below the poverty line (Henriot, 2001).²⁶ This study prefers the term “Poverty Eradication” (PE) because this usage challenges agencies to restructure themselves and society in general, in order that impoverishment disappears and absolute numbers decrease to minimal exceptional cases (Henriot). Poverty eradication is a task that calls for a new perspective within churches that seek to transform justice, through planning, priorities and shifts in power for restructuring of society. According to Casey et al. (2005),

We are called upon to recognize that poverty and lack are often imposed upon others because of the greed, selfishness, and indifference which lead to inequity in the distribution of God’s resources. In light of our awareness, we are also obligated to engage in advocacy with those who have the power to institute changes on behalf of those who are denied the opportunity and resources to meet their basic human needs. (p. 7)

²⁶ By embarking on special programs that deal with assistance based on charity, certain categories of the needy are attended to but not empowered to permanently deal with the problem. Henriot (2001) cautions that such a focus on reduction in numbers does miss the most important dynamics of poverty because such policies might not “trickle down” to those living far below the poverty line, the really destitute. This is because such policies merely provide those close to the line of poverty with improved conditions and barely pull them above the line.

Drawing from the scriptures and the writings of the early Christian centuries, CBOs can help in poverty eradication through a solidarity strategy with the poor. According to this study, this solidarity can be achieved in two major ways, in line with the Roman Catholic tradition:

1. Re-organizing structures of the diocese (and parish) as a development agent that caters for the needs of the poor (participation).
2. Re-cognition of interdependent stakeholders, building on individual and group capacities at the local level as a response to poverty (social learning).

Casey et al. (2005, pp. 6–7) enumerate the following theological bases for such solidarity: First, from the Biblical understanding, humankind is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26) and as such all are members of the human race, primordially connected to one another, sharing an interdependence that must be recognized and respected regardless of social locations. Second, in his earthly ministry, Jesus clearly identified himself with the poor and marginalized (Matthew 25:31–46), and commitment is measured by the extent to which Christians govern themselves according to his own self-identification with the poor. Third, Jesus’ command to love one another is an expression to do unto others as we would have them do unto us (Matthew 22:37–39; Matthew 7:12). Fourth, the Christian belief that all we have belongs to God (Psalm 24:1) makes Christians only stewards of the resources and possessions they have, for the God who creates abundantly and sustains all, also makes ample provision for all. What potentials do CBOs bring to propel an alternative and meaningful development strategy, given its historical and Biblical orientation?

In the past, CBOs have often centered their organizing on charity, relief for poor individuals (Perkins, 1995) and “transfer of material resources to those in need” (Korten, 1990, p. 223). This is a noble mentality. However, it is informed by the

modernist paradigm, which envisaged capitalist development through significant intervention by external actors (Youngman, 2000). It excludes the people themselves from participating in their development (Flora et al., 1992; Granovetter, 1973). A new kind of organizing applies values such as love, truth, silence, prayer, openness, hospitality, relationship, and friendship to reconnect community members to their roots (Palmer 1993, pp. x, 23). Such values are capable of moving people from being mere spectators to participants, so long as CBOs avoid what Freire (2000) calls “the emotional climate” (p. 36). Development embedded in such values and ideologies common to target audiences do prove productive to inquiry outcomes (Ammerman, 1997) and recreates communities to become active, changing, and transformative, as well as help people to find integrity in their lives (Sider, Olson, & Unruh, 2002).

As community-based organizations, CBOs are often perceived to be overly evangelical, authoritarian, and top-down, with organizational structures often resistant to change and local initiatives (Mugambi, 1996; Schon, 1983). Korten (1990) believes that CBOs can deal with such crisis in an enormous way:

The challenge of religiously oriented voluntary development organizations helps to strengthen the human spirit to the point that greed and egotism play a less dominant role, rather than merely distributing charity to the victims of the failure of spiritual teaching. (p. 168)

Putnam (2000) agrees that CBOS need to go beyond formal or nominal membership to actual participation and learning if they are to make an impression in poverty eradication (pp. 65–79). This study advocates this new learning for CBOs to address the crisis at both individual (Chambers, 1997a; Freire, 2000; Korten, 1990) and group levels (Foley, 1999; Korten, 1990; Leeuwis, 2004; Pretty, 1995b; Röling, 2001; Uphoff, 1996; Youngman, 2000). Already, the Roman Catholic Church operates a well-defined Social Justice Agenda. In the next section, I shall discuss how this agenda can be used as a foundation for a poverty eradication strategy.

(b). The Catholic Social Agenda: A Solid Foundation for Poverty Eradication

The official Catholic social teaching also known as the Social Justice Agenda (SJA), heretofore referred to as the “Agenda” (SOCIAL-AGENDA, 2002), has evolved over the years as an attempt to redefine the Church’s position on social issues while also providing social guidance for Christians. The Social Agenda explores the deep connections between Judeo-Christian religious values and the quest to integrate the poor into the mainstream of community development (de-Vries, 1998).²⁷ Today, the Agenda is firmly founded on four key principles; the dignity of the human person, the common good, solidarity, and subsidiarity (Dorr, 1991; Kammer, 1991; Mich, 2003). As a body of social wisdom, about human individuals in society, the Agenda is a “value added” dimension that stems from the authority, relevance, and credibility of documents whose foundation is in scripture, theological reflection, and the lived experience of the believing community (Henriot, 2001).

The purpose of the Agenda is three-fold:

1. On a personal level; to guide individual consciences in making just decisions—e.g., about wages to pay, the treatment of woman, respect for the environment, etc.

²⁷ Dorr (1991) delineates the major issues which taken together make up what may be called the “The Social Justice Agenda” (SJA). Some of these issues are as old as human society and others relatively emerging anew. The major social issues are:

1. The gap between the rich and the poor.
2. International debt.
3. Oppression by groups, class, races and nations and the liberation issue.
4. Violence or non-violence, as a military or political means of liberation
5. War and Disarmament.
6. Justice for Women: Discrimination and injustice based on gender
7. Racism and unfair advantage of one group over others.
8. Human rights as an intrinsic value.
9. The population explosion versus the right to basic human life.
10. The ecological question and wasteful use of resources.
11. Refugees, famines and food shortage issues.
12. Unemployment and the mechanization of society.
13. Health hazards and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. (pp. 7–41)

2. On an ecclesial level, to help to shape the response of the church to social issues—e.g., about racial attitudes, political involvement, care for the poor, etc.

3. On the societal level, to influence the activities of the public sector—e.g., about economic policies, international relations, peace and war decisions, etc.

The Agenda offers another vision, perception, and recognition to the rigid prescriptions of orthodox economics (World Bank, IMF, etc.) that often control the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP). Because SAP has had devastating effects on local contexts, the Agenda provides a framework of principles and values that enable members to address specific issues in a holistic manner. Henriot (2001) classifies four major stages by which the Agenda could influence poverty eradication.

(i) “Dignity of the human person” as an entry point of engagement

The fundamental dignity of every human person, made in the image and likeness of God emphasized by the Agenda serves as an entry point, orienting everything else.

#42 says:

The dignity of the person is manifested in all its radiance when the person’s origin and destiny are considered. For this very reason every violation of the personal dignity of the human being cries out in vengeance to God and is an offense against the Creator of the individual. (SOCIAL-AGENDA, 2002)

Against this background can be understood the populist model which centers people as situated agents, giving primacy role to ethno-culturalism, context-specificity, gender equality and social action (Foley, 1999). Populist models understood in economic terms, emphasize that human beings are neither objects, nor units of production, but the *subjects* of economic activity. Put simply, *the economy exists for the person and the person does not exist for the economy*. This requires that people be treated in ways that reflect and respect their inherent dignity, and that every policy, program and

priority be measured and evaluated by whether it enhances or diminishes human life and dignity (Chambers, 1983, 1997b).

(ii) “*Subsidiarity*” as a process

The principle of subsidiarity requires that decisions be made at the closest possible level to the people affected. This principle serves as a process for implementing poverty eradication (SOCIAL-AGENDA, 2002). According to #134,

A community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to co ordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good. (SOCIAL-AGENDA, 2002)

Subsidiarity disperses authority to the maximum feasible local focus by involving people not in perfunctory *consultation*, but in genuine *participation* and involvement of civil society.²⁸ According to the conditions required by the World Bank and the IMF, the preparation of the Poverty Reduction Strategies must involve “meaningful participation of civil society,” not simply a *political* device to gain support of the program but as an *ethical* demand to guarantee legitimacy. Using this principle as process in the poverty eradication scheme requires that local people ultimately hold authority to decide their own development plans as immense knowledge and opportunities lie within individuals at the local setting (Flora et al., 1992; Granovetter, 1973; Shiva, 2002).

²⁸ Henriot (2001) distinguishes between perfunctory *consultation* that asks “What do you think of this document we expert outsiders have prepared?” and genuine *participation* which asks “What shall we do together to come up with a consensual document?” and argues that involvement of civil society requires both (1) a *democratic mechanism* that assures adequate representation of all interests and (2) a *technical capacity* that assures competent input into the process. Commitment to the democratic mechanism is influenced by Catholic Social Teaching that respect the rights of individuals to participate in choices that affect their lives.

(iii) “*Common good*” as content; (*the preferential option for the poor*)

The principle of “common good” serves as the content for planning poverty eradication schemes. This principle is marked by two fundamental questions: who receives the *benefits* from economic reform programs and who bears the *burden* that such programs create? Specifically, (SOCIAL-AGENDA, 2002) #167 says,

By the common good is to be understood the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily....(SOCIAL-AGENDA, 2002)

The principle of the common good requires that elements of the reform programs benefit everyone in society, not simply the rich and the powerful. It is corroborated by another principle, “the option for the poor,” which means that the content of economic reform programs should be evaluated in terms of their impact on the most vulnerable part of society: the poor, especially women and children.

(iv) “*Solidarity*” as outcome

Finally, the principle of solidarity asks “What are the consequences in society at large of the poverty eradication program?” According to #126,

Solidarity is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all. (SOCIAL-AGENDA, 2002)

This overall vision of the Agenda is expressed in the principle of *solidarity*, the recognition of the interconnectedness, *ethical* as well as *empirical*, of personal and institutional activities that make up the social fabric of human existence. The agenda promotes solidarity in conscious acts that build community. When economic activity undercuts community, for example creating great gaps between the rich and poor,

solidarity is destroyed. Poverty eradication programs therefore should promote pro-poor economic growth that build up solidarity.²⁹

(c). Conclusion

The changing pattern of church-based organizations point to a diocese as a structure that is capable of championing community development and poverty eradication. A diocese that submerges itself into the shifting paradigm of development provides services beyond simplistic notions to fulfill this objective (Dorr, 1991; Rogers, 1990). The next section analysis data collected from Ogoja diocese, as a further investigation of how a diocese organizes to eradicate poverty.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

(a). The Data

The data in this section looks at how Ogoja diocese organizes for poverty eradication. The following empirical research questions were explored. What elements underpin the Catholic Social Justice Agenda (SJA) as a solid mechanism for poverty eradication? How do these elements promote organizational dynamics and social inclusion in the poverty eradication strategy of the diocese? My investigation aimed at specifically addressing the following:

1. The organizational dynamics of the diocese in relation to social change
2. The patterns of social inclusion in poverty eradication in the diocese
3. The elements that underpin the SJA as a poverty eradication mechanism.

Data were collected from each of the five (5) deaneries at the following levels;

1) Focus group discussions, 2) Individual interviews, 3) Open-ended questionnaires, 4) Numerical data of personnel and projects, 5) Observations, and 6) Textual analysis.

²⁹ The outcome of solidarity offers a powerful reason for support of the *Jubilee principle* of canceling debts, redistributing land, and freeing slaves as concrete actions aimed at restoring the bonds of broken community and assuring the reality of solidarity.

These levels helped to solicit information on various definitions and understandings of poverty. Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) were conducted earlier as a baseline survey of poverty. Data collection had the clergy and laity categories foremost in mind as units of analysis. However, focus group discussions not only focused on the clergy and laity, but also on men and women, youths and adults, as well urban and rural dwellers as favored categories. Questionnaires were solicited from the clergy and laity, and institutional responses were drawn to help assess the impact of gender and hierarchical structures on poverty. Observations were made to compare views and perceptions of poverty from clergy and laity, poor and non-poor alike, from both village and urban settings. Numerical data enabled diagrammatic representations of levels of analysis. Personal in-depth interviews and individual respondents from questionnaires validated individual perceptions of poverty with organizational levels. Textual analysis of the Bible, diocesan archives, and ecclesial documents were used as secondary sources to measure both the practical and dogmatic responses to poverty over the years.

(b). Data Analysis and Discussion

i. The Organizational Dynamics of the Diocese in Relation to Social Change

Recent strides to foster new development

My interest here was to find out whether there were perspectives within the diocese that seek to socially include people through planning, priorities, and shifts in power. I used PRA findings, focus groups discussions, in-depth interviews, observations, and textual analysis to measure the diocesan response to poverty. During discussions, interviews, and observations, I was inquired in particular into the various ways the diocese was submerging itself in the emerging approaches of development.

In August, 2000, the diocesan leadership invited Concern Universal (CU), a London-based organization, to partner in helping to step up human development.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was conducted as a learning experience with local communities in a collaborative process. Trained participants were instructed to facilitate knowledge and to make villagers understand as well as appreciate participatory developments. According to the PRA report (Abue & Baldeh, 2000), community members perceived poverty as pervasive:

In the diocese of Ogoja, communities considered poverty as a combination of denial of basic needs and rights, to the extent that they are unable to discharge both their social and economic obligations. (p. 16)

From this assessment, it is obvious that as an organization, the diocese is concerned about the level of poverty and appeared interested in building capacity among members to address the issue. However, community members had their own perceptions of poverty.

Community perceptions of poverty through PRA poverty rankings

Villagers were perceived as hard-working and caring people who provide each other with material and moral support. Although there was a general belief by many that the poor are those with hard luck, they were also perceived to be quite concerned with how to make ends meet. The “poor” in the diocese were generally found to be marginalized within rural communities (mostly women, children, and the teeming youth population). They were “illiterate people with poor educational levels; members of large and landless families and mostly rural dwellers who are often young and unemployed” (Abue & Baldeh, 2000, p. 17). Poverty was found in all the deaneries of Ogoja diocese to be above the national average of 50% of the population. Table 8 describes rural sources of income of the poor, showing crop agriculture generally practiced by most of them. Without alternative sources of income such as livestock, trading, and forest occupations, the poor are often malnourished.

Table 8: Source of income—Rural

S/N	Source of Income	Crop Agric	Live Stock	Trading	Forest
1.	Boki	74%	0%	7%	19%
2.	Ogoja	65.5%	16.5%	16.5%	3%
3.	Obudu	54%	7.9%	25.4%	12.7%
4.	Ugep	85%	0%	5%	10%
5.	Ikom	40%	2.2%	3%	54%

Source: Abue & Baldeh, 2000

Estimated populations of people living in poverty in the five deaneries according to Table 9 are 79% in Boki, 90% in Obudu, 80% in Ogoja, 90% in Ugep, and 74% in Ikom deaneries. There was another category found in the study area: the “very poor.”

Table 9: Poverty ranking in Ogoja Diocese

	Deanery	Non-Poor	Poor	Very Poor
1.	Boki	21%	31%	48%(79%)
2.	Ogoja	20%	40%	40%(80%)
3.	Obudu	10%	22%	68%(90%)
4.	Ugep	10%	44%	46%(90%)
5.	Ikom	26%	48%	26%(74%)

Source: Abue & Baldeh, 2000

The “very poor” were defined as those having little land and who could hardly keep the family. They have inadequate food and live in poor shelter. They live more than four (4) months without food security. They may go for days with reduced rations or single meals. They live on their labor and ask the children to work for others. They may abandon their children and above all cannot afford their needs. They have no power to change anything positively. Their relatives often support them. The “non-poor” were those who can feed their family throughout the year, but do not have surplus to sell. They own farm lands of about 10 hectares and have semi-permanent brick-walled and zinc-roofed homes. They have access to labor farm equipment and other production inputs. They can send their children to school, meet hospitals bills, and buy clothing from shops. They normally live in villages.

Ogoja diocese was characterized as having “very poor” individuals and communities. According to Figure 8, the main occupation is subsistence farming, which has the most dominant economic activity, with 70% of the total income for local people. However, agriculture, which contributes highly to the local income, has 65.7% of its sector-employees living at the extremely poor level. Low returns from agriculture were attributed to the following factors: inadequate investments in the sector, weak agricultural policies, lack of investment credit to rural farmers, and poor macro economic policies that undermine the economy.

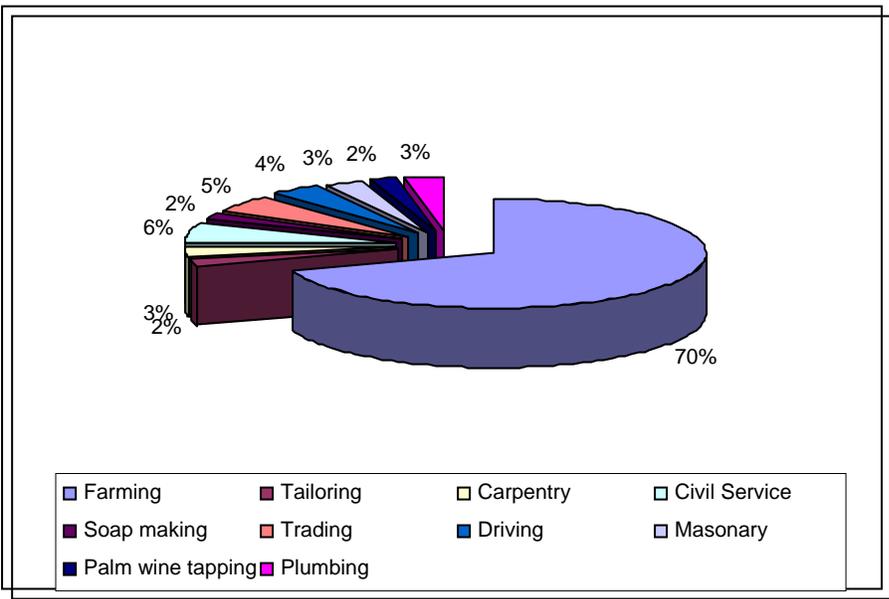


Figure 8: Pie chart on income sources in Ogoja diocese

After engaging the communities to discuss the main problems of the “poor,” participatory assessments revealed that the poor were being impoverished by circumstances beyond their control and so suffered significant negative effects such as unreliable sources of water (70%), water-borne-related diseases (70%), low agricultural produce (80%), poor producer prices (90%), absence of storage facilities (70%), poor health conditions (75%), weak local institutions (80%), unsanitary

environments (70%), youth unemployment (80%), declining quality of teaching (70%), school drop outs (65%), teenage pregnancy/prostitution (60%), and low family incomes (80%). Villagers described the process of impoverishment in three broad dimensions:

- **Economic dependence:** The dominant paradigm of development has created undiversified income sources and over-dependence on rain-fed crop agriculture. Because of a lack of awareness that has been created by this trend, there is a process eroding the production base of the family, causing an increase in the prices of goods.
- **Traditional norms:** In some communities, there were deeply embedded practices that are often taken for granted such as expensive funeral/burial rites, high bride price/dowry, and so forth. These were seen as routes through which families and individual plunged themselves into debts and poverty.
- **Marginalization:** Because of the long-range effects of successive military regimes, bad governance, high corruption, and abuse of offices and power, villagers have been marginalized and deprived of rights to productive inputs in education (due to increasing educational costs) and health (due to high medical bills).

A development worker during an individual interview observed that state-centered mentalities have had devastating effects on local people, especially the youth: Such a mentality has led youths to refuse community-based employment opportunities, in preference for the so-called “white collar jobs.” Said a development worker during an individual interview:

Well I feel that, for example, there is a situation all over Cross River State, where people just wait for government to give them handouts. I feel it is a problem of orientation of those people that makes them stay impoverished may be because of bad leadership. But at the end of the day, the bottom line is that a community has to be responsible for its own development. I am thinking about

Yakurr, the young people are saying over there that there are no job opportunities and we have all completed our schools. And I say to them what are you people going to do about it, you are all graduates. And they will say we are waiting for government to come and give us jobs.

From this analysis, it can be assessed that poverty is aggravated by the presence of factors such as embedded practices among local people as well as state-centered mentalities. The state provides no adequate institutions to cater to the needs of the people.

Lack of institutions

Responses from focus groups discussions validated community perceptions of poverty. During a focus group discussion with 10 laity members in Ogoja deanery, all participants saw the lack of employment opportunities as one of the main causes of poverty. A lay man during the focus group discussion agreed that by establishing health and educational institutions in the urban areas, the diocese has helped in providing employment and skills, too. They hoped this can happen more in villages:

The *Moniaya* Health center has given employment opportunities and helped many families by offering employment. If the local churches can do the same, not only establishing health centers, they can establish more schools, like nursery schools, there are so many of our unemployed graduates.

Another lay woman praised the church for having done much since its inception in terms of grass-root evangelization and suggested that it could do more in terms of self-help projects and programs that improve performance practice for members to eradicate poverty.

The church has always done much in terms of grass-root evangelization and can be taught how to engage in self-help activities and programs. People do not have knowledge and the skills that can be applied to do productive work. I think the church can help in providing such skills.

Institutions established for the purpose of addressing the social needs of members such as hospitals, schools, and welfare homes were found to be very few in comparison to the population. According to Table 10, only 26 primary schools, 14 secondary schools, 6 hospitals, and 9 clinics exist to cater to the nearly 1.4m people living in the diocese.

Table 10: Institutions established by the diocese

Deaneries	Population	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Hospitals	Clinics
Ogoja	385,301	8	6	2	3
Obudu	146,988	5	3	2	2
Ikom	215, 151	6	2	1	1
Boki	167, 378	3	1	-	1
Ugep	402,045	4	2	1	2
TOTALS	1,315,862	26	14	6	9

Source: Abue & Baldeh, 2000

From this analysis, it is inferred that the lack of local groups at the local level to address employment opportunities and other basic social needs indicated a wider problem relating to the pervasiveness of poverty. There was little attention paid to the needs of local people. People did not find places to gather in small groups to address their common problems and needs. Members, in their responses, pointed to a general lack of cooperation.

Lack of cooperation

Participants in a focus group discussion in Obudu deanery agreed that at present people are poor because cooperation between church members is less, compared to the time of the early missionaries. Church-based projects that entail assistance to the needy are generally poorly coordinated by the clergy. The Community Based Rehabilitation program (CBR), which focuses on self-help projects and micro-credit facilities for the poor, is fast becoming non-functional. This is because members have

failed to support it collectively. Partnership with its German counterpart *Christoffel-Blinden Mission* (CBM) has also been terminated. People do not cooperate, respondents insisted.

Only a few forums for people to come together and address social issues were seen in the diocese. There were no small group settings to “address pressing social issues like poverty, HIV/AIDS, premarital sex, etc.,” said a lay teacher in Ugep deanery in response to an open-ended question. I found, especially among the clergy (and laity), a tendency to over-engage the mostly “poor” laity members in religious activities. This gave the laity less time to be involved in organizing self-help projects at home. A lay respondent in Ugep deanery confirmed this tendency and argued that it perpetrated poverty among members:

Most of the church activities occupy them from Sunday till Saturday, giving them less time to go in for higher labor, where they can at least look for what to eat.

There was a lack of collective action within group members at the village level, too. During a focus group discussion in Boki, a lay woman affirmed that lack of income was occasioned by lack of collective action, rather than vice versa:

In our local churches, we still lack the motivation to collectively fight poverty. People don't form that cooperative zeal in them to work toward enhancing the life of others. I believe that when people work collectively they can always have a vision.

It can be surmised that the lack of collective action has given rise to a high prevalence of poverty in the study area, as indicated by community perceptions of poverty and PRA poverty rankings. The diocese is still ill-equipped to address this problem, as there was found to be a lack of institutions to cater to the poor. A diocesan organizational structure to address poverty needs was also lacking. The inherent

problem of a lack of collective action among church members in its organizational dynamics as a strategy for poverty eradication needed to be addressed.

ii. Patterns of Social Exclusion

Did structures tend to include or exclude members in decision-making and social development programs? Was there a tendency to foster a socially inclusive agenda in the organizational dynamics of the diocese? Did social exclusion of some individuals or groups of individuals exist within the institutionalized setting of the diocese? These are the research questions I set out to find answers to in this section.

The diocesan organizational structure

There was an obvious lack of a defined organizational structure, with consequences at the local level. A clergyman said:

When you talk of development our minds will go straight to the government, the impact of the church as an organ of development has not really entered the understanding of our people. We lack incentives and trained manpower.

Some members observed that the reason for the high incidence of poverty is that the Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), the official organ of development, is still very clergy-controlled, and this makes it difficult for partnerships with external networks to emerge. As a lay development agent observed in an individual interview,

I find that the church has a very hierarchical structures and what this means in terms of development is that if you partnership with the church you sometimes get blockages in the system that will undermine progress. Even the partnership of JDPC with Concern Universal is not working properly.

The institutional mentality of professional control of programs within organizations has been argued by some scholars to exclude people and so aggravates poverty in local

settings (Turnbull, 1984; Mesaki, 1994; Good, 1999; Lamb, 2000; Eweluka, 2002).

Clergy flexibility in social dealings was seen as important in the organizational setting of the diocese. One lay man, a knight in the diocese, strongly observed in his response to a questionnaire:

It is very hard for lay persons to initiate programs without the permission of the clergy. You see at times you have a parish council meeting, if you are a lay person and if you are not too admitting to the fathers, any of your contributions is thrashed.

Obviously, members expressed that diocesan programs excluded some members from participation, and this portends social exclusion based on gender and status.

A tendency toward social exclusion

According to the social exclusion approach (Bauman, 2004), tendencies that exclude some categories of people from decision making can be detrimental to the well-being of an organization or community. The existence of hierarchies tended to exclude some individual members and groups from participating in social programs. The most affected members of the society were women in the general study area. The PRA report indicated that the women were overlabored and socially excluded from decision-making.

These categories (the poor) are being marginalized hence are becoming victims of circumstances. Women are generally over-burdened by crop agriculture, deprived of active participation in community decision making processes, and even denied major educational opportunities. They have no voice and those from poor families will either work for others or become homeless. With the triple role of reproduction, production and management, the vulnerability of women in the rural villages is constantly increasing. (p. 18)

A seasonal calendar of agricultural activities in Ibil-Nkum village represented in Table 11 shows how women are generally overburdened with the role of production during farming seasons. Unlike their male counterparts, women play a year-round seasonal

role. Their duties included clearing the farm, burning the bush, planting the crops, weeding the grass, harvesting, and storing. Men, on the other hand, were minimally involved in only mounding, staking, and marketing.

Table 11: Seasonal calendar of agricultural activities of men and women in Ibil-Nkum village

Farm Activity	Dry Season (<i>Ulom</i>) (January-April)		Rainy Season (<i>Nnalla</i>) (May- August)		Dry Season (<i>Ulom</i>) (September- December)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Clearing		***				***
Burning		***				***
Mounding	**	*			**	*
Cropping	*		*	****		
Staking			***	**	*	
1 st Weeding				*****		
2 nd Weeding						*****
Harvest			*	***	*	*
Storage	*	*****				
Marketing	***				***	

Maximum score = 6

In addition to their production roles, women also play the roles of reproduction and management of the family, which makes them socially excluded from the rest of the community activities. Other traditional factors that exacerbated women's impoverishment were the deeply embedded practices within certain cultures in the villages, such as lack of education, neglect of widows, early marriages, competition for child bearing, and institutional prostitution (a custom whereby a woman officially travels to another town to engage in commercial sex).

There is a place I worked and a girl about 16 years, if not 17 will often come to the church with (3) kids. One day I approached her and said why does your mother belabor you like this? Why must you be the person to carry all the

three, one on your back one on each hand? Then she laughed and somebody standing by her said those were not the mother's children but her own. They compete who has more children before marriage. This is the general orientation for them.

There were some practices among the people that cause poverty, especially for the women, and the diocese does not create avenues to address these issues.

Hierarchies within the diocese point to social exclusion

There were instances of subtle dominance of certain categories of individuals and groups by others. Most participants observed that a lot more could be achieved in terms of human development if the clergy were more open to lay initiatives. When asked to comment on this mentality, a lay development worker said,

I think that that one thing that churches have to understand is that it is very easy in the hierarchical structure that churches do what they want. Because no one challenges the clergy to say, okay, what is the rationale for this project? Why have you chosen that? Have you consulted the people? They are no such checks and balances to make sure that projects submitted are being designed to include the people that will benefit.

A Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) member in Obudu deanery complained of the lack of support by the clergy in response to CBR programs:

Most parish priests do not support us. They do not see the need to equip fieldworkers with mobility and if we do not have the money, how do we buy motorcycles for the field workers...Sometimes they convert the machine and ask their boys to use it for errands.

Numerical figures show that the clergy have an overwhelming influence in decision-making on social development issues, to the exclusion of the laity, although laity employees far more outnumbered the clergy. Figure 9 reflects the representation among the clergy and lay people in decision making about social development issues. Although there are 557 lay Catechists employed (including lay outstation leaders) with

a 63% population, and 215 civil employees with a 22% population, decision making processes on social development issues is made by a token 13% of the priests and nuns. Eighty-seven priests represented only 8%, and 31 nuns represented only 5% of the workforce, according to Figure 9 below.

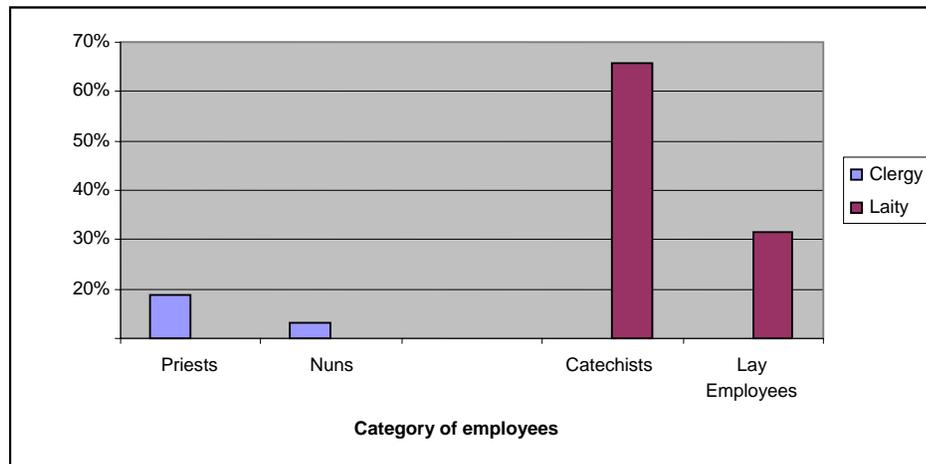


Figure 9: Percentage of clergy and lay employees in Ogoja diocese

Based on findings, social inclusion did not exist either within the diocese or among the laity in the study area. There were tendencies toward the social exclusion of women in traditional activities and development programs. Though laity personnel were greater in numbers, they were perceived as lacking in the impact they created on poverty programs. Lack of training for the laity was also seen as a barrier to social inclusion of the laity in development programs.

iii. Perceptions of Poverty Underpinning Elements of the SJA

How do local people perceive poverty? Is poverty perceived in purely economic terms or in terms of social relations? What implications do such definitions have on the basic elements of the SJA? How do these perceptions influence the presence of male and female church groups in poverty issues in Ogoja diocese? These were the research questions I articulated in this section.

Male definitions depicted economic challenges

Participatory research assessment with communities illuminated their perceptions of what constitutes poverty. Figure 10 shows that 70% of the poverty indicators were found to include challenges in social deprivations (acute shortage of water, 30%, health, 20%, unemployment, 10%), while only 30% of the poverty indicators were seen as economic challenges (income, 10%, food, 10%, and storage, 10%).

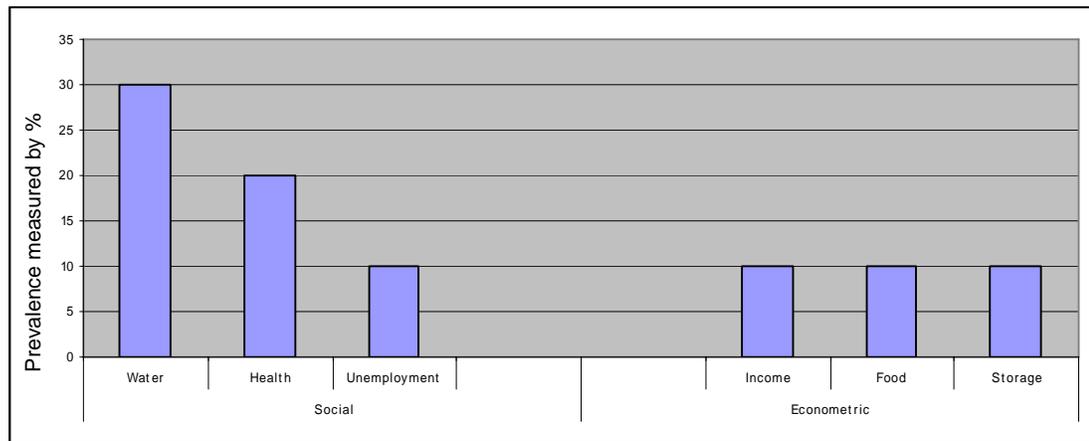


Figure 10: Econometric and social challenges as ranked by community members

A dominant understanding of poverty in econometric terms was observed among male respondents. In an all-male focus group discussion in Ugep deanery, the following concepts were mentioned many times as units of analysis to describe the level of poverty; “money,” (15) “income,” (12) “salaries,” (7) “inflation,” (14) and “market price” (5). The above words were used 557 times by males, as opposed to 106 times by females in all the focus group discussions centering on poverty. Three focus group discussions, one with the Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program in Obudu deanery, another at Ugep deanery, and a third at Ogoja deanery, all captured poverty perceptions of male respondents. Several responses came from men who described poverty in purely economic terms. One male fieldworker in the CBR program described how they provide money to help the handicapped cope with poverty:

For those who have no money to put into their local production like making brooms and baskets, fieldworkers carry out what they have to do by providing moneys so that they can produce materials that can earn them a living.

Male respondents at focus group discussions exposed the impact of gender in understanding poverty in relation to HIV/AIDS. A male AIDS worker blamed the spread of AIDS on female victims, arguing that lack of income exacerbates the disease for the men. Once they have the disease they “become incapacitated...and use all the money to buy drugs and become poor because they no longer work to generate income.” Another male respondent blamed it on the real victims: girls.

The girls want so many things and once they cannot get them because the parents are poor, they begin to jump from one person to another at the end of the day, at least N200 to N150 will come out,... the more the partners the more the income.

It is ironic that females were seen as the causes, while males were seen as the victims who are fast losing incomes as a result of the spread of HIV/AIDS. There were no small groups or open forums in the diocese or within villages for parishes to discuss issues such as HIV/AIDS, premarital sex, or other related concerns.

Female definitions depicted social challenges

Female respondents on the pother hand tended to describe poverty in terms of the social problems they encountered and, therefore, from the social inclusion perspective. They severally agreed that they have societal constraints that render them voiceless (Henriot, 2001). A female health worker explained how household income puts the life of girls in danger through hawking.

Some of the young girls are made to hawk small items like oranges, kola nuts *Akara, Moi- moi* and may be out of the home until about 7—8pm, to supplement the parents’ income. They easily fall prey to most men who often rape them...

And you see, the mothers push their daughters irrespective of the men, she is pushed to so long as it is the money they are getting.

Another female health worker had this to say on the same problem of the danger of the hawking of small items by girls:

A girl goes out with oranges for N100 and brings home N200. Sometimes the man buys everything and still gives the girl the oranges to sell and the mother who is aware, does nothing because of the low income level in the home.

Some cited instances of denial of entitlements as a factor that rendered women poor and incapable of contributing to the church and society. A female NGO worker in Ogoja shared her understanding of poverty in one of the questionnaires:

Poverty is the inefficiency of people's capability to achieve what they could or desire to in the society. It deals with social services such as good education and all other aspects...when a group of people or individuals do not have the means for survival and the basic needs of life for survival are not readily available.

All 12 members of *Lishi Gie ushu* women agreed that the education of the girl child was one way out of poverty and so they founded a school for girls. They decried the custom whereby the girl child is neglected in education and called on the church to remedy the situation. One of the women in the group attributed the problem to some embedded customs that are detrimental to girls such as early marriage for girls:

It is just recently after preaching against early marriage that our people are accepting to train the girl child. Nobody will want to take a liability as a wife. You want some body that will help you to make ends meet ...

From the responses, it was evident that men and women defined poverty from different perspectives based on their orientations in the society. Men appeared to be engrossed in the dominant paradigm of explaining poverty. They expressed this in terms of lack of household incomes. Women perceived poverty as something they

experience in terms of hardships and unequal relationships, thus moving toward social inclusion. Ironically, the overwhelming presence of male groups in comparison with females gave the latter fewer opportunities to make their contribution to development.

Implications of gender disparity of poverty

In a numerical data of church groups compiled through the open-ended questionnaires, more male church-groups were found in all the deaneries. In most parishes of the deaneries, there were existing men's groups such as CMO, Knights of various orders, Alter Servers Associations, and so forth. The one strong and viable women's group that existed across all parishes was the Christian Women Organization (CWO). Most significant, there were no all-girls social groups identified in any deanery, in comparison with all-boys social groups such as MOD (Man of Order and Disciple), Boy Scouts Movements, and so on, found in almost all the deaneries. A summary of the number of church groups in the parishes according to deaneries was as follows: **Ogoja** (Male:70, Female:30), **Obudu** (Male:50, Female:15), **Ikom** (Male:60, Female:25), **Ugep** (Male:30, Female:25), and **Boki** (Male:20, Female:10). This is represented in Figure 11. which depicts the patterns of Church-group presence measured by gender.

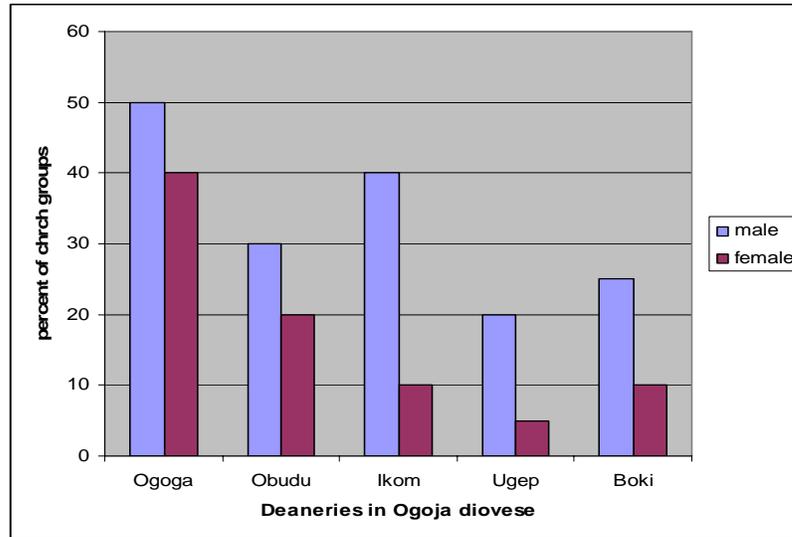


Figure 11: Patterns of Church-group presence measured by gender

Based on this analysis, it can be seen that men who exhibited a “limited” understanding of poverty had more voice in development affairs, while women who exhibited a more informed and nuanced understanding of the reality of poverty in line with the shifting paradigm had less voice. The SJA offers another vision of the rigid prescriptions of orthodox economics that have had devastating effects on local contexts. The first principle of the SJA espouses the dignity of the human person irrespective of gender and emphasizes that human beings are not objects or units of production but subjects of economic activity. This requires that women be treated in ways that reflect this value, with respect to their inherent dignity. Every policy, program, and priority ought to be measured and evaluated by whether it enhances or diminishes this dignity.

(c). Summary and Conclusions/Recommendations on Poverty

Poverty was defined differently by both male and female respondents in Ogoja diocese. Whereas male respondents understood poverty in econometric terms, females exhibited a more-nuanced approach to poverty in line with the emerging patterns of

social inclusion. There were signs of social exclusion found in the study area, with a tendency to exclude certain individuals or groups, especially women, from decision making processes. Within the diocese, these tendencies were exemplified in the overwhelming attitude of the clergy to exclude the laity from social development programs, although laity personnel in the diocese were greater in numbers. More recent strides to foster social change in the diocese through PRA revealed varied community views on “the poor.” Findings in general showed that the diocese is ill-prepared to effect social change, as there was a lack of a diocesan organizational structure to address poverty needs, as well as a lack of institutional structures to cater to the teeming poor populations. Based on this analysis, the diocese needs to be submerged in the SJA, which offers another vision of the rigid prescriptions of orthodox economics.

The following policy implications arise from this analysis:

Deeply embedded practices: There were deeply embedded practices such as a low level of education for girls, neglect of widows, early marriages, reluctance to train children (especially girls), competition for child bearing, expensive funeral/burial rites, high bride price/dowry, and so forth. To stamp out the deeply embedded practices, the diocese needs to make pronouncements against such practices.

According to Green and Hulme (2005, p. 5) if such practices become institutionalized and taken as normative, they can have devastating effects on poor people. Only ethically engaged institutions can counteract such unfair norms within their contexts.

State-centered mentalities: State-centered mentalities exemplified the effects of modernization, colonialism, and globalization. The long succession of military

regimes, and bad governance has deprived villagers of their rights to productive inputs in education and health. Youths exhibited a Eurocentric mentality that made them dependent on so-called “white collar jobs” from government, with the false assumption that linearly increasing incomes will lead to an escape from poverty. This mentality influences a secularist view that enthrones an econometric mentality back to the mainstream of diocesan programming. The diocese needs to examine this influence on its organizational dynamics. The diocese need to encourage a change of mindset by adopting key principles of the Social Justice Agenda that emphasize how the economy exists for the person, rather than vice versa (SOCIAL-AGENDA, #42).

Social exclusion tendencies: My findings show that hierarchies and separated mentalities excluded some individual members and groups from participating in social programs, with women being most affected. With a top-down mentality and wide gaps existing between the clergy and laity, the roles of clergy and lay members were not clearly defined and differentiated as pertaining to spiritual or pastoral issues. There were instances where the clergy were perceived as a favored group with all the “knowledge”, while the laity were perceived as those without initiatives. The implication of these is that those occupying favored categories need to balance their positions of power to embrace those in lesser categories. This shift in development programming will enable the poor to be accorded the same benefits as the non-poor within the organizational structure of a diocese.

Gender implications: There were overwhelming definitions of poverty in econometric terms by male respondents, showing that men are still the favored category in decision making compared with women. Certain privileging based on gender was observed, despite the Church’s ideological stance on social inclusion of all categories as

espoused by the SJA. The rich pronouncements of the SJA did not match up with efforts in real life to bridge gender gaps. Whereas major tenets of the Catholic Social Justice Agenda emphasize the “fundamental dignity of every human person, made in the image and likeness of God” (SOCIAL AGENDA, #42), I failed to find any empirical evidence that a primacy role was accorded to gender equality in social action (Foley, 1999).

Organizing based on values: There were indications that individual members had a high esteem for spiritual values and tended to refer to such values as a moral justification for the pursuit of social justice and the championing of pro-poor causes. However, the diocese needs to apply spiritual values to the implementation of social programs and represent itself as a base for believability in comparison with the government. By officially teaching such values and encouraging members to implement them in social programs, the diocese could help move people from being mere spectators to participants (Freire, 1973, p. 36).

Using small groups: Small groups that address pressing social issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, premarital sex, and so on, were found to be lacking. Only a few forums existed within the diocese, especially in villages, to address social issues bordering on values. Poor people are often discouraged by things that bother them and need to be pulled together in small groups to address issues that border on values: family, dignity, justice, hope, and so forth. Only within such a framework can a “caring human community grow, develop and rise to their potentials” (Rogers, 1990, p. 9). The diocese needs to form more of such groups and encourage already existing ones to address the issues that affect their social life based on the spiritual values they share.

A communitarian strategy to address the lack of collective action: There was a lack of collective action found within group members at the village level, causing other corresponding lacks in income. Respondents agreed that at present people are poor because collective action among church members is less, compared with the early missionaries. Poverty can be understood as a communal experience of injustice as seen from the people of Israel in the Old Testament. Only a corresponding communitarian life shared by Christians in time of need can counteract such poverty, as was found in the early church. Among the early reformers and during the Industrial Revolution, the church's response was tied to a strategic response to poverty based on a communitarian perspective. The diocese should, therefore, organize a communitarian response that involves entire communities, preferably based on a plan to be implemented over the next several years.

In conclusion, the root causes of poverty in Ogoja diocese were mostly defined in terms of deeply embedded practices that often become institutionalized within the culture, and taken as normative. Following the paradigm shift in development toward social inclusion, the diocese should align itself with emerging patterns to socially include all people in development irrespective of gender and status. Social inclusion addresses the impacts of hierarchies, redefines, and differentiates the roles of the clergy and laity, and bridges gender gaps. A third approach to poverty eradication centers on the role of CBOs in applying spiritual values toward the implementation of social programs, propelling a communitarian response to poverty that is anchored in the potentials of small groups.

CHAPTER FOUR:
SOCIAL LEARNING AND THE CHANGING ROLE OF CBOs IN POVERTY
ERADICATION

1. Introduction

This chapter examines how a diocese learns to build on individual and group capacities to influence its organizing for poverty eradication at the local level. The rationale behind this inquiry is that churches as institutions that create alternative strategies for development can open up opportunities for constructive dialogue among ordinary citizens.³⁰ Religious values and emotions have supported peasant farmers in the struggle for agrarian reform within several local contexts (Adriance, 1994).³¹ Such common values have also provided a new direction for churches to reach out to the community with both the good news and good works (Sider et al., 2002).³² Examples from the civil rights movements in America, show that local individuals and groups encouraged by their churches, do learn to build their knowledge bases in the fight against poverty (Payne, 1995).³³ Thus the main objective of this study is to examine how CBOs foster interactive learning as a strategy in community-based programs for poverty eradication. My key research questions here are, How does a diocese organize for poverty eradication at the local level through individual and group experience of social learning? How do churches build on emotions and values to improve their

³⁰ By alternative strategy, I mean, a development plan that stands in contradistinction to the dominant or existing plans of action from government and other private sectors in Nigeria.

³¹ Though this study does not use the Latin American experience as a model, I argue that because of its organizational and ideological support for peasant demands in that area, the progressive sector of the Roman Catholic Church can address the poverty of rural people in developing countries of sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria.

³² This is also based on the assumption that religious values “open an independent route to serenity and meaning to bring about social change in favor of the disfranchised and poor, leading to economic empowerment” (Alkire, 2004, p.2).

³³ Long before the development of scientific knowledge, local people consciously or unconsciously “employed techniques, knowledge and skills through personal experience in the process of managing their resources” (Kroma, 1999, p. 37).

professional practice and catalyze social change? What role does the means of communication play in the evolution of social learning for poverty eradication?

I use social learning as a useful theoretical framework for analyzing church-based learning strategies for poverty eradication. I first examine the old social learning tradition, which focuses on individual cognitions and the newer understanding of social learning as it involves social group dynamics. I explore the implications of social learning on individual actors, by looking at key relational approaches grounded on platforms of social change for individuals. Because of the role religious emotions play in facilitating change, I also examine the role of such emotions for actors as a valuable dynamic that reinforces small church groups. I conclude that churches in the new dispensation will have to build on spiritual values and emotions for social group cohesion. I suggest a third approach that builds on such emotions and values to integrate the creative capacities of stakeholders, giving development a broader dimension.

The implications of social learning for Church-based organizations (CBOs) is that a diocese as an organization can purposely design a learning experience for its individuals and groups based on the shifting paradigm in development. Organizations that aim at improving their professional practice and catalyzing change renew themselves as intervention organizations by applying interventions as an “innovation” (Leeuwis, 2002). Three principles as outlined by Woodhill (2002) for defining features of a paradigm will be useful for this analysis; institutional design, philosophical reflection and methodological pluralism (Woodhill). These principles are adapted to guide the facilitation of social change within a diocese as a social institution, and I specifically examine how the means of communication play a role in this alternative strategy for social development as a methodological approach.

Guided by the theoretical elements reviewed, I analyze data collected from five deaneries in Ogoja diocese, investigating individual perceptions through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Observations were conducted across villages and urban settings, and I compare views and perceptions of villagers and non-villagers alike. Responses drawn from questionnaires enable assessment of individual perceptions of learning. I use these data to investigate potentials of a diocese as a social change agent within a developing country context asking specific questions such as: What is the role of religious values and emotions in social change? How can churches evolve alternative approaches to poverty eradication through individual and group dynamics? I begin by defining social learning in its evolving stages.

2. Definitions of Social Learning

(a). The Old Social Learning Builds on Individual Cognitions: A Shift in Paradigms

Historically, social learning began as an orientation concerned purely with behaviorist tendencies of observation, imitation, and reinforcement in the 1940s. In the 1980s Albert Bandura became the major proponent of social learning, understood as a tradition of the purely cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 1989, 1991) with emphasis on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1992). Bandura (1977, 1992) posited that one can influence things that happen in everyday life through perceived self-efficacy, when an individual becomes convinced that he or she can successfully perform behaviors necessary to produce desired outcomes. Bandura (1998) assumes that the messy-ness of our human condition warrants that individuals learn or fail to learn through the use of mechanisms and observations, interpreting the outcomes to improve themselves (Bandura, 1998). Those who have a low sense of self-efficacy are more apt to avoid challenging tasks because they focus on their personal shortcomings rather than how

to overcome daunting situations and easily surrender in the face of hardship (Bandura, 1995).

A critical look at social cognitive theory reveals that self-efficacy has a certain ambiguity. Social cognitive theory offers specific insights into why people do or do not always engage in precautionary behaviors against threatening circumstances of their lives. However, it fails to ascertain that cognition is shaped by social interests and influences; those with perceived low efficacy seem to change their beliefs when motivated to do so based on compelling information from the social environments. Creditable sources do also influence a change in already held beliefs if actors are motivated by compelling environmental information. Kirch (1995) examines the use of social psychological surveys and questionnaire to measure the concept of self-efficacy and raises questions about a positivist bias proving to address adverse consequences on the social reality of local peasants.

A paradigm shift from individual cognitions to socio-cultural contexts now makes social learning applicable not only to individuals, but also to organizations and communities. Core concepts of the new social learning link individual and collective learning together, suggesting a meaningful involvement of people in programs based on the *recognition* of interdependent stakeholders and local knowledge systems. As individual actors interact with each other (Korten & Klauss, 1984), they create dialogue through participatory processes and this leads to collective action (Kroma, 1999).³⁴ The implication of this paradigm shift is that those who are closely knit as groups or share common values and practices can bind themselves together for the solution of common problems. Röling (2002) defines social learning as the bringing

³⁴ Kroma (1999) argues that individual farmer cognitions and knowledge systems do overlap for collective action at the local level. These overlaps prompt further inquiry into what innovative contributions other stakeholders within a given context can make toward collective action and sustainability. Based on the findings of most scholars (Eyermann & Jamison, 1991; Raedeke & Rikoon, 1997; Wainright, 1994), local farmer cognitive praxis have correlations with collective action.

together of different perceptions, experiences and actions (multiple cognition) into a common space (Röling, 2002). This diversity creates dialogue, negotiation, common visions and priorities (collective cognition) and finally concerted action, based on recognition of interdependence. According to Röling and Jiggins (1998, p. 285), “interaction with people inter-subjectively constructs reasons and objectives for their action,” and this is what drives the interest in “learning” in group settings.

This shift in paradigm enables local people achieve greater resilience through perceived interdependence according to Röling (2001).

Multiple cognitive agents tend to maintain their mutual isolation. But when they become interdependent ...multiple perspectives are equally likely to grow into a joint rich picture and meet on platforms for negotiation, and decide on collective action. (Röling, 2001, p. 35)

Röling and de Jong (1998) emphasize that the shift from individual cognitions to socio-cultural (collective cognitions), parallels a corresponding shift in extension from the dominant transfer of technology (TOT) model, otherwise called the “linear model” (Röling & de-Jong, 1998) to a new professional discourse (Chambers & Jiggins, 1987; Kline & Rosenberg, 1986; Röling, 1988). These shifts are due chiefly to the failure of the dominant paradigm to address poverty especially in developing countries (Röling & de-Jong, 1998). Röling and de Jong (1998) refer to “a new professional discourse” that brings with it key democratic and bottom-up practices worth considering, and argue for the need for institutions to redress their intervention approaches accordingly (p. 151).

(b). The New Social Learning: A Construct with Different Attributes

Social learning as a construct has been used in many circumstances with different attributes and meanings depending on the people, disciplines, and dilemmas involved. According to Parson and Clark (1995), social learning is grounded in several traditions

or disciplines, with diverse conceptions and theoretical orientations, but at its heart is the suggestion that learning is an idea that applies not only to individuals but also to social collectives, such as organizations and communities, suggesting that meaningful involvement in governance is central to learning by social collectives (Parson & Clark, 1995).

As a philosophical concept, social learning informs practice and has thus been referred to as a “praxiology, ” i.e., a theory informing various traditions (Röling & Jiggins, 1998). In more recent times, it has evolved as a discourse on environmental issues focusing on participatory processes for social change among actors (Korten & Klauss, 1984). Thus social learning has been rooted in leading constructs on ecological perspectives (Pimbert, 2002) sustainable futures (Fischer, 2000; Woodhill & Röling, 1998), adaptive management (Gunderson, Holling, & Light, 1995; Holling, 1995), economic and social development (Dunn, 1971), and environmental development (Dryzek, 1997; Parson & Clark, 1995; Woodhill & Rolling, 1998). Social learning has also taken the form of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), integrating adaptive management and political changes toward a sustainable economy (Lee, 1993). It has also been applied in “conscientization” processes (Freire, 2000), and within a process involving continuous sense making based on knowledge, beliefs and values (Dangbegnon, 1998). Pimbert (2002) applies social learning to ecological literacy and development, using the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) as a form of socializing, negotiating effective collective action that focuses on society’s relationship with nature.³⁵

³⁵ Farmer Field Schools helped to strengthen farmers’ capacity to observe, measure, and analyze plant-pest-predator dynamics as a base for management decisions. This also enabled farmers to conduct their own experiments. By attending these schools farmers became experts in their own fields and were enabled to gain new skills, capabilities and confidence. The need for new learning was accompanied by appropriate methodological and conceptual support by professionals acting as facilitators. Farmers learnt to analyze policy and deal with high-level decision-making and even produce newspapers as a leeway to enabling them become organizers, planners, advocates and activists seeking to influence policy.

Although many orientations exist, there seems to be a mutual premise in the idea that learning with negotiated stakeholders and interdependent cognitions constitute the basis of a new foundation. This new thinking defines stakeholders as “those who affect and /or are affected by the policies, decisions and critical events of a system” (Maarleveld & Dangbegnon, 2002, p. 168). The old-style dominant paradigm of central planning for development within institutions with top-down non-participatory development approaches is becoming obsolete, as it does not account for all inputs, especially those with poor resources who should be actual beneficiaries in the learning exchange (Woodhill & Röling, 1998). The new learning challenges top-down models to positively affect the physical well-being of individuals and groups under their care by seeking to involve them in social decision making processes and actions. Woodhill and Röling focus on social actors at all levels as “circumstance appreciators, who learn to adapt on the basis of discourse and legitimating of political action” (Woodhill & Röling, p. 65). Premised upon societies’ capabilities to evolve new ideas, meaningful interaction, and communication between individuals, social learning involves critiquing and deconstructing the reality of already accepted conceptions. It feeds societal discourse with alternatives, providing theory and tools for collective social action, while creating action-oriented frameworks for the practitioner and activist.

Röling (2002) sees social learning as bringing together different perceptions, experiences and actions (cognitions) into a common space to create dialogue, negotiation, common visions, priorities and finally concerted action, based on recognition of interdependence. For Woodhill (2002, p. 321), social learning is the process by which society democratically adapts its core institutions to cope with social changes in ways that optimizes the collective well-being of current and future generations. His articulation of social learning provides a useful conceptual platform

for examining learning processes in church-based organizations (CBOs) in developing countries. I draw upon these evolving conceptual discourses to articulate another understanding of social learning by examining how social learning is operationalized in CBOs, and the way by which it mediates poverty alleviation strategies within the same context. I build on the role of religious emotions to analyze how different individuals or groups within CBOs engage with each other to understand, contest and influence the direction of social change for members. A critical question is; how do CBO actors communicate, understand, and learn from their interactions? In other words how do they learn socially? This third approach does not pertain to the belief systems of CBOs, but to assumed social options and approaches to problem-solving and systems of social organization.

This study is premised on collective problem solving; the belief that effectiveness of social learning is based on various stakeholders defining a situation together, finding and implementing solutions to problems faced by members. The new social learning goes beyond cognitions, in order to understand the reasons underlying practices. It analyzes practices beyond the cognitive level to the social collective level (Leeuwis, 2004; Leeuwis & Pyburn, 2002). Communication among local people themselves is often difficult and actors use mutual peer support groups that constitute an area of negotiated agreement to accomplish facilitation and thus shift social learning from a cognitive to a discursive perspective (Limerichs & Molder, 2002). The shift beyond the level of cognition is an interactive process that takes place only within a situation whereby many stakeholders, though from different platforms, allow themselves to be facilitated toward a coherence that resonates with their new world view (Röling, 2002). This new orientation involves learning from social perspectives.

(c). The Third Approach: Building on Emotions for Social Learning in CBOs

Need for a third approach

The challenges of sustainable development emanating from developing countries in response to poverty require an alternative approach based on social learning (Dryzek, 1997; Giddens, 1998). Woodhill (2002) believes that in general, a new approach of social learning is being recommended for two reasons; first, because of the free market capitalism with its internal contradictions, local people cannot negotiate permanent means of stable livelihood and sustenance, especially when set against the backdrop of sustainability. Second, the old-style dominant paradigm of central planning for development within institutions places too much faith in expert personnel who are clearly ineffective and incapable of responding to the problems of the local poor, within the dynamics of late modernity. In my third approach, I suggest that social learning is more likely to inform CBOs on how to empower local people to come together as multiple actors because it “defines a purpose related to the agreed necessity of concerted action at a variety of scales” (King & Jiggins, 2002, p. 86). Two implications arise from this analysis of social learning in the third approach:

1. CBOs will have to build on correlations found between emotion-laden environments and group cohesion and commitment. Do certain kinds of emotionally charged social interactions contain basic ingredients that address collective action?
2. CBOs will have to integrate the creative capacities of stakeholders (the laity, clergy, land users, policy makers, politicians, etc.) to give development a broader dimension. Can churches build on such interdependence to adapt themselves as social institutions fitted to deal with poverty and other issues of well-being of members?

Bringing in emotions

Because of the role emotions play in facilitating change for individuals and group settings, I review a range of emotional approaches to address the relationship between religious emotions and social cohesion. Certain approaches address the inherent reasons members of religiously charged settings tend toward cohesion and convergence during social exchanges. Repeated exchanges in emotion-laden environments result in social learning, which begins on a cognitive level, but ends up in interdependence, generating social order in the form of group cohesion and commitment. This suggests that certain kinds of social interactions contain basic ingredients that address high complexity, uncertainty, and conflict situations.

Psychologists define learning in terms of what individuals learn for themselves and social learning in terms of what individuals learn from others (King & Jiggins, p. 86). According to Lawler & Thye (1999), learning from others entails an exchange process, and a close examination of many common exchange relations suggests that emotions both enter and pervade such social exchange processes (Lawler & Thye). Schachter and Singer (1962) define an emotion as a relatively short-lived positive or negative evaluative state that has neurological and cognitive elements. The emotional dynamics have a more central role in social exchange than typically assumed, and according to Lawler and Yoon (1996) emotions are internal states that are not under the control of actors, but may occur during the process of exchange, making individual actors during the exchange to feel good, satisfied, relieved, excited; states that do affect the learning process or social exchange (Lawler & Yoon). Because emotions point toward a richer exchange-theory explanation for social cohesion and solidarity, Lawler and Thye survey a range of sociological and psychological work on emotions, illustrating their potential processes and building such processes into exchange.

In CBOs emotions evoked by religious sentiments are dominant and do affect the social exchange process as seen from a review of the *social cognitive approach*. According to Lawler and Thye (1999), emotional moods do in fact shape social judgments. Compared with subjects in a neutral mode, those in a good emotional mood tended to overestimate the probability of positive events and underestimate the probability of negative events (Wright & Bower, 1992). In a series of experiments, Johnson and Tversky (1983) found that subjects in a bad mood tended to overestimate the frequency of other bad events. This shows that in exchange theory, pleasant and unpleasant social exchanges trigger cognitions of the same tone that build on one another over time. This explains why members of religious groups are sometimes more willing to undertake a collective action after a worship ceremony, because they are in a good emotional mood and tend to overestimate the probability of positive actions. In like manner, members underestimate the probability of negative events.

The *structural relational approach* suggests that positional differences equally create differences in felt emotion and these have important effects on exchange relations and networks (Lawler & Thye, 1999). Structural relational theories predict emotion from specific relational attributes, such as one's position in a power or status hierarchy. Given its focus on two relational attributes, power and status, Kemper's (1978, 1990) theory of emotion falls under this approach, with the basic assumption that an increase in power or status will result in positive emotions, while a decrease in power or status leads to negative emotions (Kemper, 1978, 1990). Lovaglia and Houser (1996) propose the notion of "status compatible emotions" to further explain how emotions combine with status to produce influence in groups. They conducted a series of experiments and the results indicated that for both high and low status subjects, positive emotional reactions tended to decrease resistance to social influence,

while negative emotion tended to increase resistance to influence attempts. The findings showed low status members who experience negative emotions becoming more steadfast in their convictions. This suggests why church members are often more loyal within the group than average group members as they tend to surrender their lives unquestionably to God (Lovaglia & Houser, 1996). Conversely, Adriaance (1994) sees the passivity of low status members as “usually reinforced by a religiously-based fatalism within a structure that is seen as the will of God who will give the poor their reward in the next life ...through supernatural means” (p. 167).

Cultural normative theories focus on symbolic or emergent social definitions and norms in groups with common identities and imply that the generalizability of social exchange principles is conditioned by the emotional environment (Lawler & Thye, 1999). From this perspective, emotions are socially constructed within the context of the various social roles that individuals occupy (Clark, 1990; Gordon, 1990). Hochschild (1990) maintains that cognition is not solely an internalized psychological process, but is inherently context-dependent and interactive. Using the concept of culture as situated cognition to explore the link between culture and learning, Hochschild states that knowledge can be abstracted from contexts in which it is used, contrary to conventional assumptions. The cultural normative approach, therefore, starts from the premise that any social context involves expectations about what sort of emotions are appropriate to experience and, in particular, to express in a visible or public manner within a cultural context (Hochschild; Thoits, 1990). This means that the norms for displaying emotions in a church worship ceremony are socially defined and circumscribed and that such norms tend to influence individual members to behave in accordance with the cultural norms displayed. Consequently, members of a culturally normative Church-based group tend to espouse the values of

that group and would allow themselves to be guided by such values and norms toward a common purpose.³⁶

The *Social formations approach* treats emotions as integral to the process through which relationships and groups form and remain salient (Collins, 1975; Lawler & Yoon, 1996). This idea can be traced back to Durkheim's classic notion, which posits that when people engage in joint activity with others, they tend to experience an uplifting which heightens their sense of collective or group membership (Durkheim, 1995). From this perspective, it is important to understand how and when social exchange produces shared positive feelings and how those feelings result in stronger affective attachments to an exchange relation or network. The core ideas of the social formations approach to emotion in exchange is that mutual dependencies or interdependencies produce joint action, which, in turn, generates positive emotions to the extent that these emotions are attributed to the relevant social unit, producing stronger individual–collective ties and commanding more cooperation. When emotions produce stronger individual–collective ties, relational or group membership appears more distinctive than before and stands out more against alternative memberships. The emotional aspects of social formation processes can be elaborated by the common worship and interaction ritual practices within CBOs where several people come together for action. The conditions for enhanced social solidarity include the experience of a common mood or emotion and, by implication, the sharing of that emotion as well as the strengthening of feelings over time. Such joint activity reaffirms and strengthens social solidarity because of the shared emotions and feelings it produces.

³⁶ Koelen and Das (2002) further expatiate how *normative social influence* fosters learning within groups through the ability of members to outwardly adopt the prevailing standards or norms of the norm-defining group or *significant* others within the group (Koelen & Das, 2002).

The above approaches point to a convergence of both social exchanges and emotional processes for collective action. Repeated exchanges in the context of group interdependence have been argued to be the basis for the formation of viable relations and groups (Lawler, Thye, & Yoon, 2000). In a larger sense, the formation of a group from repeated exchange involves the transformation of what starts as a purely cognitive self-oriented relationship into a collectively oriented social unit. Lawler and Yoon (1993, 1996, 1998) call this the “relational cohesion theory,” which stipulates that people will become more strongly committed to groups in which they experience positive feelings in interaction or exchange with other (Lawler & Yoon, 1993, 1996, 1998). I argue that emotions are the linchpin between such frequent exchange and group formation, and group members within CBO settings experience this cohesion more because of the emotion-laden nature of church groups. Such emotion is not produced by the “groupness” per se, but by the interaction of its members in the light of the positive environment, making the group salient as a positive social object and promoting collective action within the exchange task (Lawler et al., 2000).

Beyond emotions to integrating the capacities of stakeholders

The analysis of emotions takes up the question of how interdependence generates social order in the form of group cohesion and commitment (Hechter, 1987). This suggests that certain kinds of social interactions contain basic ingredients that overcome the commitment problems. Social learning informs CBOs of the notion that the shared learning of interdependent stakeholders is a key mechanism for arriving at desirable futures. It challenges top-down models of social organizing and assumes that rational planning approaches from above may not be effective for addressing the poverty needs of stakeholders in CBOs. By building on local-level processes of community participation, it assumes that churches can seek to involve a wider citizenry of their members in dialogue about decision making over issues of their

socio-economic lives. Social learning requires attention to the processes and structures necessary to involve a heterogeneous set of actors. These processes can be used in analyzing and making decisions about complex, multi-faceted, and value-laden problem situations, such as the financial, educational, and health improvement of church members.

The conceptual discourse on emotions suggests that CBOs can integrate the creative capacities of stakeholders to enable them to evolve new platforms and processes needed to facilitate social change and institutional development. I build on these two conceptual strands, emotions and multiple cognitions, to define social learning in the context of this study as a *practice* whereby *individuals and groups* actively evolve emotive ways to make themselves and their groups more *adaptable* and better fit to deal with poverty and other issues of physical *well-being*. A core dimension of this approach is that it involves opening dialogue and policy processes in making basic social assumptions. I will address these factors in the next section, as I explore the implications of social learning on individual actors, groups and the larger organizational setting of CBOs.

3. Implications of Social Learning in Organizing for Poverty Eradication in CBOs.

Social learning applied to CBOs affects the individual, groups, and organizations. First, social learning applied to individuals enables them make decisions, improve upon them, change their minds, and allow themselves to be influenced by values as they join with other stakeholders within social collectives. As a foundational learning requirement, individual actors are guided by key theoretical approaches in making decisions that affect their well-being. Certain approaches play a key role in helping individual actors learn to facilitate change within social collective contexts to address poverty conditions. I touch on the reflexive capacity of actors to reinforce small

groups that base their organization on spiritual values, arguing that such groups can propel themselves to solve problems relating to poverty. How can an organization such as a diocese purposefully plan to involve individuals and groups in development through communication interventions?

(a). From Individuals Actors to Groups: Using Social Learning for Social Cohesion

The actor-oriented perspective of social learning conceptualizes social learning as a potentially powerful force for change within individual actors. As actors change their minds through interaction and dialogue (Woodhill & Röling, 1998), they allow themselves to be influenced by values while also questioning the assumptions that underlie their actions and claims to knowledge (Brookfield, 1987). By socially engaging in interaction, actors improve the quality and wisdom of the decisions they make in the face of complexity. Woodhill and Röling maintain that common values, bottom-up-responsiveness in group contexts work for collective learning and organizational change. Actors create knowledge bases that support particular interests through the means of social structures and integrated approaches. Here the role of context assumes great importance as actors reconstruct their worldviews and work for self-reliance and action (Woodhill & Röling).

Röling (2002) in his metaphor of “Wheelbarrows full of frogs,” imagines the development of mutual understanding among actors in situations where several actors come together from several backgrounds to experience a different kind of relating and negotiating than experienced in their respective settings. Just as frogs struggle together, each seeking to find an ideal position within the wheelbarrow, so do actors observe their problems in a different perspective (Röling). The actor-oriented perspective of social learning, therefore, represents how individuals in real life allow themselves be influenced by platforms and values and thus create a knowledge base

for their interests within a given context. Individual actors need this foundational learning experience to enable them deal with the complex situations they face in their particular contexts. Several scholars have proposed theories that help individual actors to foster such reflexive learning and thus transform their perspectives. Because individual actors within CBOs in developing contexts do face the challenge of becoming more interactive, I shall investigate the interactive approaches that could help inform such actors on better ways of negotiating collective perspectives.

Marsick's (1990) Action Learning and Reflection (ALR) approach describes a model, whereby actors recognize the importance of social relationships within the organizations for dialogue and support. Such close social relationships make members committed to each other's success, providing conditions that allow them challenge each other about dysfunctional actions. The ALR approach also sees learning as linked to institutional contexts, because individuals within the context use a common culture (socio-cultural), set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices to adopt collective meanings and agreements. Such collective meaning underlie the organization's culture and thus could influence individually held beliefs or personally constructed meanings. The ALR approach emphasizes that learning is a social process among members and consists of dialogue and group investigation of problems, values, beliefs, and assumptions for collective action (Marsick). The manner members develop and maintain their beliefs tends to shape the way they view reality. Because CBOs emphasize relationships, support for one another in times of difficulty, collective meaning-making can have overwhelming influence on individual schemes or frames of reference and this can lead to collective action and problem solving.

Since individual actors within CBOs do not operate from nowhere, but are tied to networks of belief-systems and values, they necessarily need to use such belief systems and values as platforms for making ethical decisions. This assumption is

backed by Walker's (1971) approach which posits that actors facilitate the learning process in organizations through the three elemental processes. First, the *Platform*, as a system of values and beliefs that informs the actor on the notion of what is possible and desirable, what is and what ought to be? This is followed by a process of *deliberation* that enable actors make defensible judgments of the circumstances set by the context in the face of constraints (Walker, 1971). Walker (1990) also ascribes major significance to *context*, as the social and institutional setting which affects the conditions under which individuals deliberate. The nature of the deliberations may vary depending on the context and Walker (1990) suggests that actors consider how the context influences deliberation, maintaining that the social and institutional setting affects the conditions under which deliberation takes place. By placing emphasis on the platform or the role of a system of beliefs and values as the foundation on which to build further work, actors are afforded raw materials to design their learning in groups (Walker, 1990).

Human capital among individuals and groups can be enhanced by developing objectives and values that reflect what they learn based on their contexts (Walker, 1990), social relationships (Marsick, 1990) and platforms (Walker, 1971). According to Lyson (2002b) human capital is "typically manifested in an investment in education, skill building and work experience," while social capital "enhances the effectiveness of human capital by building bridges between actors who can mutually enhance each others' attainments and achievements" (pp. 8-9). The ability of social capital to enhance the effectiveness of human capital ties social capital to social learning and is informed by an emerging meaning shift from the neo-classical economics with emphasis on individual, self-satisfying orientations to the realm of organizations, voluntary associations and rural communities where individuals come together to address social problems (Lyson, 2000a).

Social capital points to the fact that civic communities and support groups can increase social cohesion among high risk poverty related small rural contexts (Lyson & Falk, 1993). Such communities or groups that have “rich associational and organizational structures nurture civic engagement” are best able to meet social and economic needs of members through “membership in churches, voluntary associations and organizations along with measures of participation” (Lyson, 2002b, pp. 9–10). For Lyson, civic engagements tend to assume a rational framework culminating in measures such as “voting behavior, newspaper reading and other seemingly individual actions” (pp. 9–10). This is presumably because the context in which he refers to is overly western. However, there is enough evidence to assume that in general, his definition offers an alternative to the dominant understanding of neoclassical approaches to development (Lyson; Tolbert, Lyson, & Irwin, 1998).

Lyson (2002b) argues that far back in the history of development sociology, advocates of sustainability have tended to shed off the straightjacket of economic determinism to look for explanations beyond the instrumental and economic realms. Beginning with Tocqueville’s (1936) emphasis on norms and values as problem solving cornerstones (Tocqueville, 1936), to Polanyi’s (1944) emphasis on the process of interaction between humans. Putnam (1993) notes the contribution to effective social collaborations of network of associations that make the public domain “more than a battleground for pursuing personal interests” (p. 88). This study highlights an orientation that has not been evident in other studies; the link between spiritual values and civic engagements in low income settings of developing countries.

Empirical innuendos found in the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in South American history suggest that SCCs (Spanish *comunidades eclesiales de base*) challenged military regimes by serving as practical organizing vehicles during democratic transition in most Latin American countries (Cavendish, 1994). Adriance

(1994, p. 175) similarly looks at ways in which religious emotions provided organizational structures in support of agrarian mobilization in Brazil, through articulation of new belief systems within Small Christian Communities, leading peasants to question the notion of poverty simply as the will of God (Adriance). Korten (1990) also believes that the age has come for voluntary organizations or CBOs to use spiritual values and norms to enable small groups fight forms of injustice manifested in “greed and egotism”:

The human spirit must be strengthened to the point that greed and egotism play a less dominant role. This is perhaps the most central of religious missions, and far worthier challenge for religiously oriented voluntary development organizations than the distribution of charity to victims of the failure of spiritual teaching. (p. 168)

Sider (1999b) offers a modest proposal for economic balance by advocating a new pattern of Christian community bonding (Sider, 1999b). According to Sider (1977), there is a new bonding that requires that small communities of believers like the early Christian house churches bond together, arguing that “the movement that conquered the Roman Empire was a network of small house churches” (p. 213).

A religious orientation of small groups based on common worship and spiritual values can act as a viable force to address collective problems among poverty stricken members. Carter (1987, pp. 32–33, 1981) examines local Appalachian churches in the USA, far too socially passive to sustain any action for community development and finds that the pursuit of livelihood can be structured “by religion and by other cultural practices that have very little to do with economizing of scarce resources.” He makes the following conclusions:

- New and possibly more relevant programs can evolve to meet community’s needs for quality of life style.

- Local church groups can serve as organizational bases in the amelioration of poverty, if self-help projects are initiated at grassroots level.
- Religious language as observed in public worship can have positive influence on collective action as seen in the case of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia³⁷ (Carter, 1981).
- Local church groups contain seeds for quality of life improvements through the processes of voluntarism (Carter, 1987).

Religion has always exerted a lot of influence, in ways other than dealing exclusively with matters of the spirit within groups (Cleland, 1987). Members of the Mountains Women's Exchange which began as a coalition of church-based community low-income women in Whitley County, KY, USA, later conceived themselves as "co-creators of their own development and the development of their communities," by conveying a spiritual message along with their investments. This was done through "sharing ideas, resources and development programs for the purpose of creating jobs," as well as educational, health and economic opportunities for themselves (Cleland, p. 8).

(b). Applying Social Learning to a Diocese as an Organization

Social learning does not occur in any organization or institution by accident. It entails a conscious design and facilitation. Let me first define the terms "institution" and "organization" and their overlaps in the context of this study. The terms "institutions" and "organizations" are used interchangeably in this study, with the understanding that "institutions" represent the old order, while "organizations" represent the emerging

³⁷ Since its inception, the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA), with its holistic sense of mission, has informed its practical work with theological and sociological research and information, combining the resources of church groups with those of the people of the Appalachian region to build community and combat poverty. CORA seeks to achieve its goal by sponsoring consultation between knowledgeable persons where information and concerns are shared, advocating funds and other means of support for grassroots organizations, designing educational programs and publications to give guidance to programs of churches.

pattern of intervention in social development. Social scientists continue to debate about what constitutes an “institution” or an “organization.” Uphoff (1986) maintains that the terms can be used interchangeably given the fact that three categories can be recognized: (a) organizations that are not institutions, e.g., a new firm of lawyers, (b) institutions that are not organizations, e.g., “The Law,” and (c) organizations that are institutions (or, vice versa, institutions that are organizations), e.g., courts which are both organizations and institutions (p. 8). Churches can be classified in the last category as “institutions” that are evolving into “organizations” in the new developmental paradigm; hence the term church-based organizations (CBOs). To further explain how these two concepts overlap, Uphoff defines “organizations” as “structures of recognized and accepted roles, operating on a formal bases,” while “institutions” are “complexes of norms and behaviors that persist over time” (pp. 8–9). To the extent that an “institution” acquires special status and legitimacy for having satisfied peoples’ needs and met their normative expectations over time, such an “institution” has become “organized.” This is the case with churches. A diocese as an organization that purposefully designs a learning strategy, involving other individuals and groups applies social learning as development strategy.

According to Woodhill (2002), three approaches and principles underpin such a conscious effort at designing a learning strategy within any organization (pp. 324–327). These principles reflect “the defining features of a paradigm” and have been successfully applied toward improving the practice of social learning in Natural Resource Management (NRM). First, the principle of institutional design underpins a conscious effort by institutions or organizations to purposely design a strategy as opposed to one accidentally evolving. Second, the principle of philosophical reflective agenda or platform implies that for meaningful development work to be done within any organization, an agenda has to be a forum where all stakeholders are guided on

best practices for social development work. Last, the principle of methodological pluralism entails having “the capacity to develop and utilize creative artistic expressions” or mechanisms for dealing with the issue of poverty (Woodhill, p. 326).

1. In explaining the principle of *Institutional design*, Brown and Korte (1997) discuss how institutions could evolve a strategy, laying emphasis on the school of thought that builds on the power of organizations to use the capacity at the local level to design their institutions. Institutional development in essence is seen here as an educational process involving the inculcation of awareness and solidarity at the local level.³⁸ This approach emphasizes “social action,” with a concern for the relationship between the development of institutions and the strengthening of the organization in an organization-building framework (Brown & Korte, 1997). Often called the minimalist approach, advocates of this school see successful organizational process as involving the creation of single-function, task-specific organizations (Tendler, 1976), with simple-to-manage roles and rules. It is sometimes more prone to internal conflicts (Peterson, 1982). Operations normally involve a movement from simple, concrete, short-term and personal issues to more complex, abstract, long-term and systematic issues, with a focus on decision making by the people through the community organizing process (Racelis-Hollnsteiner, 1979, pp. 408–409). I recommend this approach for the diocese in dealing with poverty within the emerging pattern of development.

2. The principle of *philosophical reflective agenda* or platform implies that for meaningful development work to be done within any organization, an agenda needs to be adopted, a forum where all stakeholders are guided on best practices for social

³⁸ Another school of thought (not relevant to this discourse) focuses on creation of an institutionally complex and competitive environment and leadership development with top-down implementation, rather than the consolidation of the individual organization. Here, institutions are designed to fulfill a given set of rules (North, 1990) “Technically driven,” this approach sees the development of technology (technically) as key and a necessary precursor to effective institution building (Bunch, 1996).

development work. Without offering specific answers and concrete programs, the Catholic Social Justice Agenda provides such a framework of principles and values that enable a diocese to address social issues. The purpose of the agenda is threefold: to guide for individual consciences in making just decisions, to guide ecclesial groups in shaping the response of the church to social issues, and finally to influence societal activities in the public sector (Henriot, 2001; SOCIAL-AGENDA, 2002). Individuals within CBOs who seek out these values equip themselves as actors with a philosophical reflective agenda that enables them to think critically and deeply about what they are doing. A diocese that adopts the key principles of the Social Justice Agenda as a concrete platform to guide individuals and groups is responding to poverty eradication issues.

I will discuss Woodhill's (2002) third principle of *methodological pluralism* in the next section as a way of further suggesting the use of communication interventions within CBO contexts.

(c). The Use of Communication Interventions

In this section, I expatiate on how communication relates to social learning as a theory. I also elaborate on the old and new understanding of communication as both extension and innovation, with its concomitant understanding in the instrumental and interactive approaches. I will analyze the emerging role of Information Technologies (ITs) in poverty eradication, recalling case studies of how the successful use of both traditional and modern means of communication has evolved in other contexts related to CBOs.

In expatiating on how communication relates to social learning as a theory, I use Woodhill's (2002) third principle of methodological pluralism, which entails having "the capacity to develop and utilize creative artistic expressions" in dealing with the issue of poverty (p. 326). Social learning here involves using consistent and

definite methodologies, not simply an ad hoc application of diverse methods and approaches. There must be a conscious reason for an organization to recommend a particular methodological approach, for particular situations, with epistemological assumptions underlying them (Bawden, 1989). Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRAs) have been the icon for change, especially beginning in the late 1970s and the 1980s. However, methodologies need to go beyond PRA approaches, challenging already existing mindsets, and creating dialogue within groups and organizations to evolve meaningful dialogues. Both traditional and modern information technologies, if adapted to local situations over time, can guide improved practice and facilitate social change in a diocese.

Communication interventions make social learning more practical, propelling a diocese toward a better learning model as a third approach. Furthermore, churches that aim at improving their professional practice and catalyzing social change renew themselves as intervention organizations by applying communication interventions (Leeuwis, 2002). According to Van Woerkum, Kupier, & Bos (1999), two episodes in the evolution of thought have emerged concerning the role of communication intervention in social change, with an old understanding of intervention as “extension” and its newer understanding as “innovation.” The old understanding began between the 1950s and existed up until the 1990s. Then it was common in development circles to think of social change in terms of planned programs. It was useful to define in advance the clear goals and outcomes for the future, a process which presupposed top-down planning with specific blueprints and persuasive instrumental methods to create efficiency (Van-Woerkum et al.).

There is a clear-cut distinction between the top-down planning model by outsiders and social learning as a more bottom-up approach owned by local contexts, as advocated in this study. The former assumes a mechanical view of social change,

placing communication intervention after the goals or innovations have been defined by outside agencies or elite groups. Its prime idea is to persuade as many people as possible to accept or adopt the given goals or policy. It has been argued to be more or less an “end of pipe” phenomenon (i.e., it takes place only at the end of the policy pipeline), and becomes important after a technology design process has been completed (Aarts & Van-Woerkum, 1999). Some scholars have maintained that this approach, sometimes referred to as the “instrumental model” or “persuasive communication,” is used “deliberately as a policy instrument to steer and direct human behaviors, often thought of as predictable” (Van Woerkum et al., 1999, p. 51).³⁹ Such step-by-step planning has been argued to be heavily inspired by rational decision making theories, with the idea that if one follows them rationally and thoroughly one can achieve the objectives.

Beginning in the 1980s, however, the idea of planning change through the means of communication has altered dramatically, ushering in a more-interactive model with its emphasis on communication intervention as a much more flexible and innovative venture.⁴⁰ Here the idea of planning for the future is being replaced with social learning by all stakeholders, suggesting that social processes cannot be controlled (Aarts & Van Woerkum, 1999, p. 54). Stakeholders bring relevant knowledge, insights, experience, and creativity into an intervention; therefore, their views must be interactively sought (Leeuwis, 2004). This enables an awareness of the history, problems, solutions, and changing circumstances as well as local dynamics that enable stakeholders gain access to the wealth of knowledge, information, and

³⁹ Habermas (1987), in his “theory of communicative rationality,” argues that a greater degree of common sense and wisdom might be expected to prevail in both organizational and community settings where Social Learning is implemented (pp. 328–337).

⁴⁰ Leeuwis (2004) argues that the interactive approach is not a panacea and can run into many problems, especially in non-technologically developed contexts. Because it is time consuming and costly, it may likely generate less enthusiasm in participants and may result in compromises that nobody is really happy with.

feedback. For others, citizens have a moral right to be actively involved in the decision making process, and interactive processes can help to emancipate and empower particular groups in society (Friere, 1989; Friedmann, 1999). The new paradigm can become a model to support CBOs as development organizations to develop and build their capacity, strengthening their positions as an intervention goal. The role of the communication worker becomes that of a facilitator, which is not limited to a selected few but is extended to a whole range of clients who assume the role of active participants.⁴¹

CBOs as intervention organizations are evolving from communicating in advisory roles on welfare-based services to “communication for innovation,” with the ethical implication that, like governments, confronted with problems bordering on improving the welfare of the poor, CBOs must resolve them by means of spiritual values, as well as social interventions.⁴² Social intervention warrants the use of methodological approaches to create dialogue among stakeholders in order to evolve meaningful exchange. By exploring appropriate and modern means of information technologies, this study suggests a complementation of the values-based emphasis. Korten (2003) maintains that one of the key insights of rural development experience is the importance of concurrently devising and acquiring appropriate kinds of technology. As a way of scaling up, information communication technologies do boost networking for local people and intervening organizations (Korten, 1980). Different forms of media have played different roles in the developing world context (Colle, 1998).

⁴¹ The term “facilitation” has been used in this study to refer to a more or less deliberate use of communication strategies and methods in order to enhance social learning in a multi-stakeholder setting. Without such conscious technological approaches to facilitate change, CBOs in developing country contexts will find it difficult to effect poverty eradication.

⁴² Leeuwis (2004, pp. 45–46) elaborates on the need to uphold professional standards in communicative intervention by contributing to change from within organizations in situations where a government is not legitimate. This may involve considerable sacrifices, which churches should aggressively pursue as a value.

According to Campilan (2002), to implement social change in intervention, organizations need technological innovation and adaptation for social organizational change. Technological innovation and adaptation equally require numerous changes in the social organizational sphere, which poses an additional challenge to the facilitation of social learning. Facilitating social learning involves a process through which stakeholders share understanding to better manage the links between social and technical components of innovations (Campilan). One of the criteria of appropriateness of technology is whether it is compatible with the organization. To be effective and diffusible, technology must be applicable within available organizational capabilities. A good organization for rural development judges itself by its ability to raise levels of production through the application of better techniques. In dioceses within Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa, the use of information communication technologies (ICTs) can prove viable as interventional media tools that enhance poverty eradication; especially the radio, Internet, business centers (cybercafés), print, and traditional media.

Although the so-called instrumental approach seems quite unpopular in the development literature in the West, its approach can prove to be useful for developing countries, “frequently affected negatively by conflicts, unequal power relations and unequal capacity to participate” (Leeuwis, 2004, p. 57). Planning is still needed in innovative ways in developing country contexts to involve those at the local level. With its step-by-step procedures, it can achieve immeasurable results that can be of benefit to the group.⁴³ CBOs in developing countries that employ planning models to evolve communication plans could possibly involve more people within their

⁴³ In developing countries, there is need to facilitate minimal technology, based on the modern means of communication such as radio, the print media, videos, Internet, cell-phone systems, etc. (Colle, 1998).

developmental framework.⁴⁴ Not surprisingly, intervention activities undertaken during the past half-century underscore the relevance of planning the use of information technology to boost training and resource development (Cohen & Uphoff, 1980). Because of the hierarchical nature of CBOs and most intervention organizations in sub-Saharan Africa, the instrumental approach could still stand the test of time. There is need to purposely plan strategies that involve ITs and other means of communication both modern and traditional within a social learning perspective in CBOs.

With the decisive role Information Technologies (ITs) are playing in development today, CBOs can capitalize on ITs to eradicate poverty. By Information Technologies, I refer to those emerging communication tools such as radio, the print media, videos, the Internet, cell-phone systems, and so forth, as well as the more traditional media that are used to foster participation of members and the organizational capacity of CBOs. In other country contexts, such ITs have proven to be relevant to the education of members on social concerns, especially in the areas of agriculture, education, health, and credit building. The Roman Catholic Church has always looked at the use of ITs as the responsibility of each person at the service of the common good.⁴⁵ Several other CBO traditions have harped on the viability of ITs for connecting individuals and groups together as partners or neighbors.⁴⁶

Within a diocese, however, the use of such means involve a two-way process: an interactive role that enables a diocese to employ ITs for strengthening its organizational structure, while also allowing members share meaning, and establish

⁴⁴ A *Communication strategy*: A plan of action based on using the modern means of communication to improve livelihood, interpersonal and inter-village dynamics of rural dwellers, notably by the means of channels such as community radio, print media, audio-visuals and tele-centers.

⁴⁵ Cf. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, num. 2494.

⁴⁶ The National Council of the Churches of Christ (NCCC, 1993) refers to ITs as “the various forms through which messages are communicated to bring peoples closer to each other” (p. 6). Pope Paul VI once remarked that the Church “would feel guilty before the Lord if she did not utilize the powerful means of communication...” (p. 13).

social relationships within their groups outside its own ambience. According to John Paul II, newer and older technologies do create such opportunities for such partnerships, if communication is understood as a service. The Pontifical Council for Social Communications, (PCSC, 2002) in one of its pronouncements says:

One clear example today is the Internet, which not only provides resources for more information, but habituates persons to interactive communication. Many Christians are already creatively using this instrument, exploring its potential to assist in the tasks of evangelization and education, as well as of internal communication, administration and governance. However, alongside the Internet, other new means of communication, as well as traditional ones, should be used. Daily and weekly newspapers, publications of all types, and Catholic television and radio still remain highly useful means within a complete panorama of Church communications. (pp. 13–15)

The effectiveness of development is beginning to be dependent on the free agency of people and their opportunities of open dialogue and debate (Sen, 1999, pp. 180–181). As a way of scaling up, this study believes that Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) do boost networking for local people within CBOs. According to Colle (1998), different forms of media have played different roles in the developing world context beginning in the late 1960s (Colle, 1998). In Guatemala in the 1970s, the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided assistance that enabled the government to build two radio stations that were dedicated to supporting agricultural, nutrition, and health activities in rural communities. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have been one of the most consistent agencies supporting institution building for development communication in rural communities in developing nations. One of its objectives is to strengthen communication capacities in the developing countries so that they may participate more actively in the communication process.

One major area that CBOs can scale up innovative communication for “the greater part of the people who live in the land, and are frequently isolated and lack

transport” is the community radio (UNESCO, 1965). The radio has enabled major strides in agricultural awareness through mass communication in large coverage areas in Nigeria (Moemeka, 1975). Participation of beneficiaries who see the radio station as the mouthpiece of the local community, with major involvement in the management of the station by the people themselves, has been observed in most settings (Moemeka). Radio favors partnerships because it requires far fewer technical operations and maintenance culture and could be better-received by both the benefiting community and the external partner. The common spiritual values-based content of radio programs can foster authentic *teaching and learning* through a new model that sees development as a spiritual journey (Palmer, 1993) for partners.

In Tanzania, the Instructional Radio system taught practical skills and cooperative and civic responsibility to rural communities, with an emphasis on complete and equal participation by all groups concerned (Dodds, 1972; Hall, 1973). In Zambia, radio listening groups (called Radio Farm Forums) were employed to discuss development issues, acquire relevant information, and learn new techniques that tie communities together. The so-called Radio Farm Forums were popular for not only education, training, and entertainment, but also for connecting local institutions to each other as local partners. Radio broadcasting, when skillfully used, has proved to be the most effective medium of communication with these far-flung populations.

Initiatives in community radio in CBOs is possible based on real case studies from other contexts: In 1947, a young priest in Sutatenza, Columbia, named Jose Joaquin Salcedo Guarin began by building a small theater in his parish, providing a film projector and the films as a way of improving life in the community. Starting as an amateur operator, Salcedo soon realized that radio was the most effective way to bring educational instruction to the far-flung rural adults of Colombia (Dagron, 2001). According to Dagron,

His dream was realized when *Radio Sutatenza* began educational broadcast using a 90-watt transmitter. He conducted transmission tests for about a month when he got a temporary broadcasting license and the prefix HK7HM from the ministry of Communication of Columbia. On October 16, 1947, the first cultural programme was broadcast: music performed by farmers of Sutatenza. Thus *Radio Sutatenza* was born. The president of Colombia himself formally inaugurated the station early in 1948 and Pope Paul VI visited it in August 1968 and blessed its new premises in Bogota. (p. 38)

The case of *Radio Sutatenza* in Columbia pioneered ideals of integral fundamental education, rural literary schools, and training programs for farmers using church-based initiatives. It promoted alphabets, numbers, work and spirituality, as well as hygiene and basic healthcare. It involved the contributions and active participation of the community, helping people understand their own responsibility for improving their lot and knowing the value of their own resources within their local setting

Dealing with the issue of poverty as lack of income, CBOs create certain interactive environments that enable poor, rural illiterate villagers to be in touch with each other and their outside links by means of the telephone system. Telephone signals can provide information access to illiterates and those with no training in ICT use. An example can be seen from the Grameen-Phone, a commercial operation that provided cellular services in both urban and rural areas of Bangladesh with approximately 40,000.00 customers. A pilot program of Grameen-Phone, in collaboration with the micro-credit facilities of Grameen-Bank, through a wholly-owned subsidiary called Grameen-Telecom, enabled women members to eradicate their poverty by applying a revolving credit system to retail cellular phone services in rural areas. The impact of this program on poverty alleviation is that the phone program yields significant positive social impacts, including a relatively large consumer surplus and quality of life benefit (GrameenPhone, 2002).

Already, Nigeria has adopted the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM), which has boosted the overall availability of telephone lines, and the

governments have licensed GSM operators who have since carried out network rollout. By the end of 2002, Nigeria had installed 4 million lines, which included 2 million mainlines and 1.2 million digital mobile lines. The licensing of operators has led to demand for telecommunication equipments and accessories such as mobile phones, cellular, transmission, and switching equipment (Oyelaran-Oyeyinka & Adeya, 2003). Opportunities such as this enable CBOs to target unserved and underserved regions and to provide support for social learning that will lead to the acquisition of quality market appraisal knowledge.

The Internet system is also becoming very popular in Nigeria in enhancing educational opportunities, especially for the rural people, for health and agricultural awareness. According to Edejer (2000), this technology “enables information to be made available to multiple users the instant it is produced” (p. 797). Because of its highly technical mode of operation, some researchers have compared getting information from the Internet to “drinking from a fire hose, you don’t even know what the source of water is” (McClellan, 1998). Churches as intervening organizations, whose operating paradigm is mostly based on values, could devise systems for grading the quality of information by Web sites for educational purposes. Much of Internet intervention procedures in Nigerian CBOs are still buried deep in the instrumental tradition (Oyelaran-Oyeyinka & Adeya, 2003). For interactivity to take root, Churches in Nigeria can familiarize users with the technology and take up the challenge of acculturating their individual members to the Internet through repeated exposure (Edejer).

Traditional information technologies do foster participatory communication, giving members a chance to address interpersonal communication barriers that distort the needed social interaction. Barriers such as gender bias, class difference, and power struggles are often included in the danger of using the media as a destructive weapon

against the poor.⁴⁷ However, traditional media challenges such barriers and opens avenues for participatory communication, which gives members a new sense of dignity, a new experience of community, and the enjoyment of a fuller life. Such media can revitalize and rekindle community spirit in CBOs, enabling communities of all kinds to become open and inclusive, rather than unidirectional and exclusive. Small Christian Communities seek to strengthen connections between local people by organizing around such *behavior change* that leads to social learning, thus working simultaneously to build capacity in people.

Kindernothilfe, a German-registered organization made up of representatives from various mainline churches in that country, started their ministry for orphaned and semi-orphaned children displaced from their own environs several years ago through traditional means of communication such as peer groups. By working with the Sri Lanka Churches Child Care Association and taking good care of children in hostels, Kindernothilfe is today proving successful in creating power shifts in Sri Lanka. Trained animators from Kindernothilfe help Christian women form peer groups and provide the groups with various capacity-building inputs on an ongoing basis, facilitating and encouraging them to come out with their God-given ability, which has been dormant for years. For 25 years, it was the local church authorities that implemented the Sri Lanka Churches Child Care Association program, handled the money, made decisions, and served as centers of power. Now the approach focuses on the people, the beneficiaries, who own the program and make decisions. This change

⁴⁷ Pope John XXIII prophetically warned humanity of such potential risks of using the media as a destructive “weapon” to foster injustice and conflicts (Cf. John Paul II, Message for the 37th World Communications Day: *L’Osservatore Romano*, January 25th, 2003, p. 6.). The Pope insisted that true communication is facilitated when people join together regardless of barriers or religious conviction, and where there is acceptance of and commitment to one another. This outlook also challenges some of the “professional rules” of the media, whereby the powerful, rich, and glamorous occupy center stage to the exclusion of ordinary men, women, and children.

has not been very easy for the Churches, which have been the conventional implementers to accept, says Thomas Paul (2005), because

it is also a shift in power and fame. The institutions bore the name of the church. Employees were hired and fired. All the important decisions, used to be taken by the leaders...This, in many cases, becomes difficult for the churches to accept. In the Sri Lanka case, there still is a tension over this shift of power, in spite of substantial efforts made to sensitize the policy and decision makers. The conviction that this is a better method seems to be there. To actually give up power is more difficult. (p. 6)

The Anglican Church of Uganda accomplished a reasonable lot in Uganda after a brutal civil war in the North that displaced hundreds of thousands, and deepened the HIV/AIDS crisis because of its Participatory Development and Communication (PDC) wing. By using interpersonal communication, the church offered credible leadership to help mobilize people and implement strategies for poverty eradication (Solheim, 2003). According to Rev. Tom Tuma, coordinator of PDC (Solheim, 2003),

We go into the villages and talk with the people for a week or so, making a list of their most important needs. After that original assessment we look at local resources that can be used to support the work and move them towards sustainability and self-support. If they need help, we formulate a plan to provide that help. When the local resources are not sufficient, the village may seek government help or the church may offer assistance. The leaders are already there because of the clan system but they need to be empowered. We are one of four provincial offices with a staff of 32 people and eight field offices with links to all 29 dioceses. (p. 1)

Morrumbala, a Christian area in Kenya, has forty-five (45) churches existing in the 13 barrios. Church leaders/pastors organize these churches around policies that include helping the chronically ill through artistic communication. Ordinarily, churches have difficulty in assisting the chronically ill in practice because of lack of resources. However, Morrumbala has succeeded in achieving this task through the use of PHAST

(Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation) (Breslin, 2003). According to Breslin (2003),

Family members of a chronically ill person and orphaned children discuss their experiences and Children, in addition, drew pictures and performed dramas to provoke discussions around their experiences, using drawings to illustrate a story and understand where people go for treatment. (p. 9)

Breslin (2003) agrees that although congregations are poor and church members can offer only small amounts of money and maize flour as their donation to the church, individual members of the church now share responsibilities to visit the chronically ill in their homes or in the hospital, while church leaders have a Pastor Nucleus where the pastors gather and discuss problems in their churches.

In the light of these observations, CBOs that espouse the means of communication and public opinion in social development make social learning possible by diligently considering what tools are to be incorporated in their participatory strategies in order to corroborate the claims to offer to their members a right to free expression of opinions in matters relating to their own development. Pope Pius XII stated that something would be missing from the life of the Church were it not for public opinion (Vatican-II, 1965). This same idea has since been repeated in the Code of Canon Law, where it is recognized that under certain conditions, the right to the expression of peoples, especially lay peoples' opinion, is important for social development.⁴⁸ What is needed is for the Church to improve upon existing methods or to evolve newer ways of soliciting opinion from the faithful as a way of bringing about social learning.

⁴⁸ According to Can. 212, §3, the knowledge, competence, and prestige which lay people possess, they have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful, without prejudice to the integrity of faith and morals, with reverence toward their pastors, and attentive to common advantage and the dignity of persons.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

(a). Data

The data in this section look at how Ogoja diocese builds on individual and group capacities to influence its organizing for poverty eradication at the local level. The following empirical research questions were explored: How does a diocese organize for poverty eradication at the local level through individual and group experience of social learning? How do churches build on emotions and values to improve their professional practice and to catalyze social change? What role do the means of communication play in the evolution of social learning for poverty eradication?

Data collected focused on two major categories of respondents, the clergy and laity. For the clergy, I was chiefly concerned with ordained priests and nuns within the diocesan structure. For the laity, I concentrated on lay women, men, youths, and catechists. Within these two categories, I had three levels of analysis of social learning in mind: individual interviews, focus groups, and observations. *Individual interviews* were inputs from selected individual stakeholders, women, men, youths, and catechists, that would enable me to gain a deeper understanding of their thoughts, feelings, and actions with regard to their learning experiences in the diocese. Such interviews, which included households during the PRA, would also enable stakeholders to better deal with key issues of decision making, resource mobilization, and communication. Second, *focus group discussions* would create organizational space where church members can discuss and debate fundamental issues that are hard to tap through ordinary processes. Because of the heterogeneity and varied experiences such groups brought to bear, my hope was that focus groups would make members aware that their theories about organizational development mattered. I conducted such focus groups at local and diocesan levels, and church members were encouraged to explore positive avenues that link ideas with a desire for action as a way

of improving the organizational system. Joint focus groups between the clergy and laity, male and female, young and old, and villagers and urban-based respondents were conducted to improve the network of information flows. This would ensure social learning within the local churches and organizational learning within the diocesan structure. Lastly, *observations* were made within villages and the diocese to review the level of social learning within these settings. Responses drawn from questionnaires were also solicited from the clergy and laity to help corroborate formal data collected. Numerical data and PRA findings also enabled diagrammatic representations of how levels of poverty affected social learning within the diocese (Figure 12).

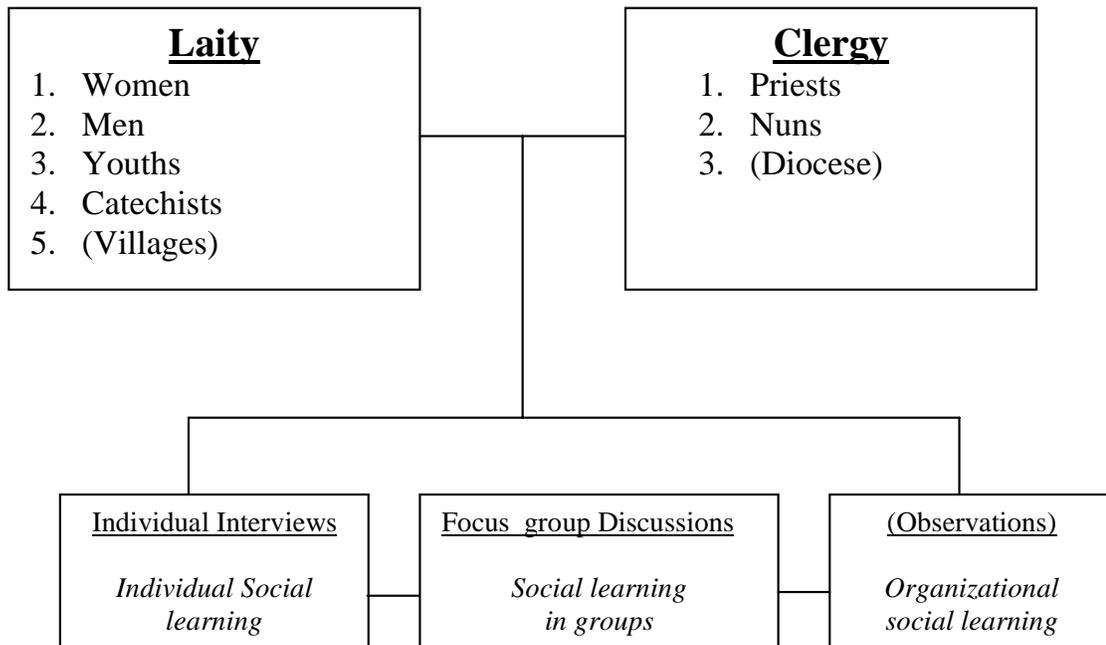


Figure 12: Levels of data collection on social learning

(b). Data Analysis and Discussion

i. Individual Social Learning within the diocese

Individual learning by laity through participatory process

I conducted PRA during the first phase of my fieldwork, which enabled me locate how local capabilities are enhanced to generate sustainable processes and practices (Abue & Baldeh, 2000).

PRA gave individual actors the freedom to act and share knowledge, ideas and costs, as well as help community members to organize and systematize their own information in ways that mobilize action. Individuals learnt to maximize local ownership and initiate a change in development programming. (Abue & Baldeh, 2000, p. 13)

One of the techniques employed to capture individual learning was household interviews. Five households were sampled in each village in a deanery, and a member was interviewed on sensitive issues that could not be dealt with at focus-group level. In Igonigoni village, a household interview revealed issues about how family members mobilized their sources of income to feed themselves in the face of limited access to resources. Figure 13 shows the income resources of a typical family.

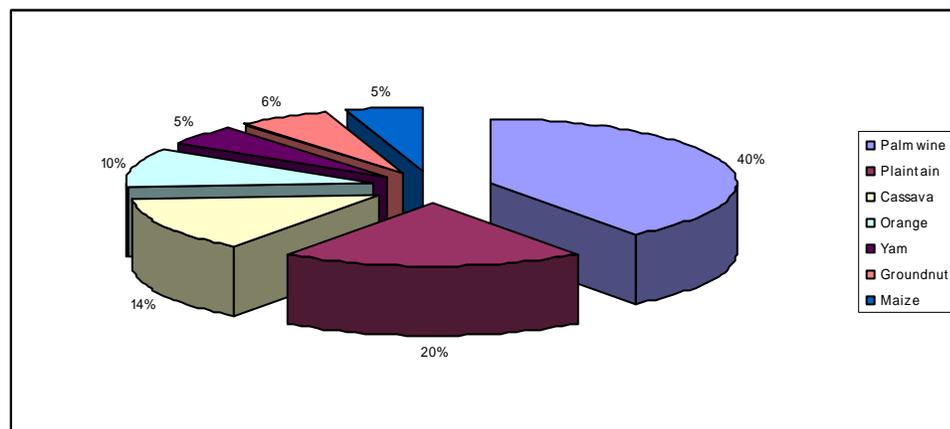


Figure 13: Pie-chart showing income sources of a household in Igonigoni village, Ugep deanery

Focus group discussion with groups of individual at Ugep, Ogoja, and Obudu revealed that individual actors were prevented by circumstances beyond their control to socially engage in activities within larger group(s). Such hindrances were expressed in several ways at various locations. For example, in Ugep deanery members indicated over-engagement in religious activities, looking down on blue collar jobs within the villages, and a lack of financial resources. In Ogoja deanery, members stressed the lack of motivation from elites and internal rifts between members as priorities. Participants in Obudu deanery were more inclined to mention low remuneration for workers.

However, individuals could not open up themselves to socially engaging in activities, because they failed to address their cognitions based on their contexts. They were rather informed by a foreign mentality. A clergyman described the effects of this:

The mentality of the early missionaries, made our people feel they were to receive from the missionaries and not we to give out to the missionaries.... Now that the Church has become indigenous, our people do not see the necessity of giving out. They feel that the Church should continue to give to them.

A young development worker observed that most young people had a wrong impression that their poor conditions can be wished away through religion or indolence. Individual mindsets of most young graduates from colleges and universities were often focused wrongly, and these people were wasting away in villages:

In Yakor, the young people are saying over there that there are no job opportunities and they have all completed their school. And I say to them what are you people going to do about it, you are all graduates. And they will say we are waiting for government to come and give us jobs. I say look, you can wait for government to come until you die. What are you people going to do about it yourselves?

One key challenge for individual lay people in the diocese was the inability to learn to become more interactive, i.e., aware of the realities of their fellow actors within the

structure that binds them. Individual lay people experienced constraints in bringing their cognitions to the common table for interdependent learning. Lay people did not see learning as a social process that consisted of dialogue and group investigation of problems, values, beliefs, and assumptions for collective action (Marsick, 1990). This individual constraint influenced the way groups responded to social learning.

Social learning was not encouraged, as individuals who had some good technical skills were not given further training. A lay development worker resident in Calabar indicated that what the diocese needs to do is to encourage individuals through training for the good of the community.

Communities are successful because there are one or two individuals who are able to organized people, educate them and make them see the sense in doing this, and it works. So I think if you look a round, in every community, you will find that they are people who have skills. Its just a matter of putting together something to encourage these skills.

Though households had the enthusiasm to address their poverty needs, they lacked sources of investments or self-help projects to propel their actions. Youths were prevented from socially engaging in activities at the local level because their talents were not encouraged. Youths were buried in a false mentality and needed to change their mindsets to appreciate their local contexts. Even the clergy were buried in certain mindsets.

Individual learning processes by the clergy

For the clergy, there was still a tendency to be buried in hierarchical cognitions, a tendency which manifested itself in a non-committal attitude to social issues. A young lay man complained about the clergy, who were not open to new social realities and social change:

At a stage the diocese should organize its priests and give them a special orientation. The society is changing. There are a lot of social reforms going on

and its also going to affect the churches and is also going to affect individuals. Priest should be given a social orientation so that we all can work together. People can easily run away from churches just like what is happening in Europe and America.

What drives the interest of “social learning” in group settings is the ability for actors to change their individual cognitions and adopt the collective cognitions of the group. Some scholars emphasize that interaction with people inter-subjectively constructs reasons and objectives for their action, enabling them to adapt their mindset to that of the group (Marsick, 1990; Röling & Jiggins, 1998). The clergy were seen to be much more bonded to each other than to the laity in terms of church-related social relationships. However, such relationships did not seem to encourage group social learning.

ii. Group Potentials and Social Learning in Ogoja Diocese

Collective action by community groups

Findings from PRA revealed a host of groups (i.e., groups founded within communities either by government, private enterprise, or joint community efforts). Figure 14 reveals six principal types of groups interwoven in Ishibori village (VV). The dominant groups found in Ishibori village were Age grades (AG), Farmers’ Council (FC), Women groups (WG), Co-operatives/Susu (CO), and Church Groups (CG). Each group had its members in the Village Community Development Association (VCDA). Community members mobilized themselves as village institutions to promote community unity and stability. These community-based institutional groups were seen as instruments of collective work, mutual help, and advocacy for common interests. They had considerable influence on the socio-economic and political processes in the community. Some of them mobilized financial resources through membership registration, individual contributions, fines and

penalties, appeals, launchings, loan investments, and gifts. Tangible benefits of groups to members included group labor, savings, credit schemes, group marketing, and food storage.

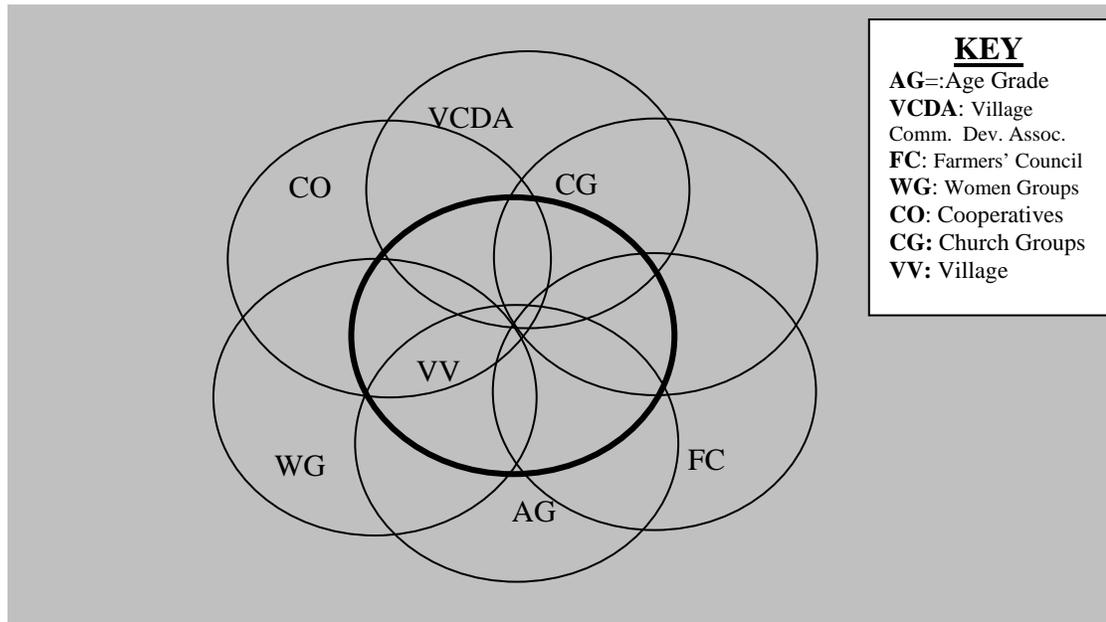


Figure 14: Venn Diagrams of community-based groups found in villages (represented by thicker oval in center)

Findings from PRA teams revealed other kinds of secular groups or multi-purpose credit organizations such as Farmers Co-operatives and Traders Co-operatives that existed in villages. These served the sole purpose of providing yearly social benefits to their members. Members of such groups contribute monies periodically to accumulate savings for end-of-year parties or gifts to bereaved families. Co-operatives appeared to be well-organized and rendered effective lending services both to their members and to outsiders. Loans were advanced to members weekly, depending on the inflow of contributions. *Susu* groups, otherwise known as mobile banks, were operating in many villages also. These were individuals who went from house to house or from shop to shop to collect small deposits for safe keeping.

However, a lack of social relationships within groups meant that members were committed to each other on a superficial level. In Ugep Parish, most social meetings, instead of being held in Church, are now held in the individual family houses, with the aspect of “entertainment” attached to them. One member described how “entertainment” encourages collective action:

You know in my society if you don't have food as an aspect of entertainment in any organization, it is bound to fail, so we have what we call “canda” meat. We process “canda” meat, we use native pepper and salad as an incentive to make people.

Although village associations existed in the study area and members made efforts to improve social relationships in groups through practices such as entertainments, and so forth, groups still inherently lacked potentials to be viable enough to sustain members in their poverty conditions.

Lack of viable groups within the diocese

Members were generally observed to lack ways of organizing their financial security, and clearly needed another type of organizational boost. One lay man said in a focus group:

If there is a strong body in the church that would secure our money, I think many people will be willing to make more contributions. They will make their daily returns. Like in our own place, we have markets of about four or five days, and most people make more than N5 to N10,000 and because there is no way they can drop something and hold the capital, they use up the money and before you know it, other problems will just come out and engulf the whole thing.

This statement pointed to the need for banking institutions, which were clearly lacking in the diocese. A score of other diocesan associational social groups existed among women, men, youth, and children at the parish level. In addition, structures formed along the lines of schools, hospitals, credit ventures, and communication facilities

were found to be very few and not viable. I was particularly interested in how influential these groups were in comparison with secular groups. It was observed that, though in most cases secular groups were far more influential and popular than diocesan groups within the community in terms of numbers, diocesan groups were more salient. The *Lishi gie ushu* women group in Obudu deanery, part of St Charles Parish, was one of such groups. During a focus group discussion, members emphasized that their group activities gave them a greater sense of solidarity and interdependence than the various secular groups they belonged to. Figure 15 represents a numerical data of groups found in Ogoja within the diocesan (Dio) and Secular (Sec) areas as follows: Women groups (105-Dio, 250-Sec), men groups (230-Dio, 320-Sec), Youth groups (70-Dio, 150-Sec), Children groups (10-Dio, 36-Sec), Sec-schools (46-Dio, 123-Sec), Hospital/Clinics (25-Dio, 161-Sec), Credit-ventures (8-Dio, 115-Sec), and communication facilities (20-Dio, 105-Sec). From this numerical data, represented in Figure 15, it can be seen that secular groups were greater in number. This was because of financial boosts.

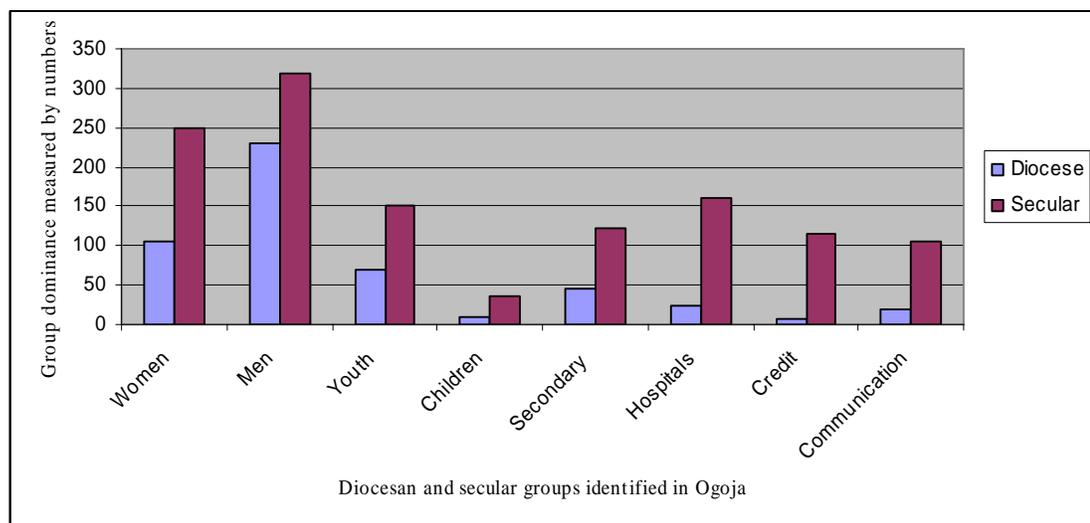


Figure 15: Groups in the diocese, with group dominance measured in numbers against secular ones

In spite of their numbers, secular groups were found to be weak and unable to undertake meaningful services relevant to the well-being of the poor and marginalized. Diocesan groups were more salient, although their progress was hindered by low financial resources bases, unskilled labor, poor storage systems, and a lack of marketing experience. However, PRA analysis showed that they have high potentials and propensity to advance if self-help projects are inaugurated at the local level.

Members responding to the question “do you know of any project(s) ever undertaken by a church-based group in your parish/outstations?” mentioned self-help projects to encourage skill in individuals and build sustainability within groups. Thirty-one responses to this question, from both the clergy and laity, indicated the need for diocese to undertake self-help activities such as weeding yam/rice/cassava/groundnut farm lands and selling the end-product mainly in order to get resources for themselves and the common needs of the parish in the spirit of voluntarism (Carter, 1987). The following responses were also mentioned during focus groups as ways to involve local people in the affairs of the diocese: creating more employment opportunities, inaugurating viable small projects, raising workers’ salaries, creating pension schemes, building old people’s homes, establishing cocoa farms, building housing estates, building more schools and hospitals, establishing a central funding system to run the Church-owned institutions, and establishing banking opportunities for poor people. A recurring factor seen as an organizational dilemma was the lack of motivation to engage in group activities.

The lack of motivation experienced by members in groups was discussed widely in focus groups, and members observed that this lack inhibited learning at the local level. In answering the question “describe the various ways church groups could fight poverty,” more members supported the establishment of banking facilities within the parish. Out of 40 clergy asked, 27 supported banking facilities, while 9 out of 10

laity also supported them. The other 13 Clergy and one lay man supported local initiatives in credit cooperatives. In general, the fact that secular groups that were dominant and more financially buoyant were less influential in the communities reflected the larger need for people to look beyond economic priorities to connect social learning to capital bases (human and social). It seems communities need to reflect their common values in organizing groups

Group organizing based on Biblical values

Church-based groups in the diocese were indicating a change in organizing, based on spiritual and Biblical values. A member of the St Vincent DePaul (SVP) Society group who went from house to house visiting the sick and the aged maintained that

There is that joy, because you share, not only the experiences of the less privileged, but also their problems through financing, moral encouragement and in general sharing the good news with them.

A catechist in Yahe village noted that though this type of learning in action existed traditionally among community members, it is now time to capitalize on it because the church is becoming indigenous and members are learning to fend for themselves:

The church is now conscientizing us so that at least we can do something. From the traditional aspect of it, this thing (social learning) has existed through communal labor; families have been meeting in their family circle and working for their family members. The fact is that their ideas were more in consumption rather than establishing something. They have this money they share it immediately and go into things that they have nothing to invest in. They only consume what they have, buy cloths, get uniforms and drink wine.

In Ugep, parishioners who owned and operated a Palm Estate project insisted that their project succeeded because they all shared common values. One member enumerated the benefits that have accrued so far from the estate:

One, during bazaar, you know how we used to hire canopies, we will cut some of the palm leaves there and use it as a shed. *Two*, most of the men there are not working we can employ them there while they maintain the palms. *Three*, the fruits from the palm we use for sale. *Four*, during offertory, gift collection, we can harvest them and give it to the Rev. Fr and *finally* we transfer the whole of the estate to the parish priest who maintains it now.

Though devoid of intensive capital for the moment, some scholars have maintain that the values-based dimensions provide the tools for rallying people together within a given context to enable them to address their poverty conditions (Leeuwis & Pyburn, 2002). These scholars further argue that the overwhelming reliance on market economics ascribes people with reasons to optimize utility for its own end, not for collective action. In the next section of this analysis I look at ways the diocese favored or failed to favor social learning within the organizational context of the diocese.

iii. Fostering Social Learning within the organization context

Learning by the diocese as an organization

What learning potentials did the diocese exhibit? There was an effort by the diocese to re-enforce social learning ideas among its members, in spite of its limited infrastructures as stated in the PRA report (Abue & Baldeh, 2000):

The Catholic diocese of Ogoja has a long standing relationship with the poor, marginalized and deprived people of the area. In the past, the diocese was engaged in health, education water and development... however, due to lack of effective coordinating structure, and being out of touch with the new paradigm of participatory development, the diocese has reached an impasse in terms of effective management and governance of its development programme. (p. 1)

Both lay and clergy members suggested ways in which the diocese can foster social learning. Walker's (1971) critical approach posits that actors facilitate the learning process in organizations through a system of values and beliefs that inform actors on the notion of what is possible and desirable, called a *platform*. Walker (1990) suggests that actors use such platforms within a particular context to influence *deliberation*,

maintaining that the social and institutional setting affects the conditions under which deliberation takes place.

A common *platform*, or system of values and beliefs, propelled members such as the *Lishi gie ushu* women in Obudu deanery, who built a school in the village to raise the standard of girls' education based on Christian principles (Walker, 1971). Small Christian communities in parishes were also found to form cooperatives, allowing themselves to be influenced by basic Christian principles and values to organize beyond charity. A female lay teacher in the Catholic school system described moral values in this way:

I think that moral values specifically entails the child being taught about God, learning certain prayers, and realizing that he must have a strong relationship with his creator as well as his or her neighbors. Moral lessons are meant to effect actors in the decisions they take for the future

In Ikom deanery the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) were gradually shifting beyond charity to justice for the poor across the diocese, as seen in their new model of organizing. Their methods have clearly shifted from merely prison visitation and assistance: the head of SVP recounts that the focus has shifted since he first joined the group in 1992:

From giving old cloths, food items and others to the poor, we now organize for the release of prisoners who are unjustly convicted, therefore depended on Church assistance from the priest. Now we can organize reasonable funds to sustain a living...

There was this other boy who was a cripple. Since he use to stay at the church gate, asking for money, we decided that by adopting him and giving him money every week, is not the best. So instead we made him learn a trade by helping him into this radio mechanic. So when he finished that, he now bought the necessary tools to become a radio mechanic.

Building on emotions

Church groups in Ogoja diocese were found to share common emotions during and after church worship. From observation of typical worship sessions that culminated in social action, members were seen to be more inclined to collective action after the worship. This corroborated views by some scholars that repeated exchanges in the context of group interdependence does lead to the formation of viable relations and groups (Lawler et al., 2000) and that people will become more strongly committed to groups in which they experience positive feelings in interaction or exchange with others (Lawler & Yoon, 1993, 1996, 1998). Observations at worship ceremonies revealed that the clergy were concerned about the conditions of well-being for members and so were constantly directing sermons on encouraging individuals and groups to first accept their poverty conditions as the will of God, and also to work toward improvement of their situation. Eight out of ten worship sites observed mentioned the following as ways of dealing with poverty: accepting God's will in one's life, hard work, perseverance, collective spirit, and so forth. Such emotions and values were enforced in a special way through worship.

Durkheim's (1995) classic notion of *effervescence* posits that when people engage in joint activity with others, they tend to experience an uplifting, which heightens their sense of collective or group membership; religious emotions were observed to foster social learning. Viewed from the contexts of religious worship and the level of emotions that came with such worship, participants during a focus group supported the idea of building on the emotive component. At a typical bazaar mass,

During the song everyone was given opportunity to express their joy by dancing to the altar to offer their gifts. They brought the gifts of cash and material benefits to the priest. No one was left behind. It seemed that if one didn't come up, one will forfeit the blessing. Everyone took a turn.

My observations at all liturgical ceremonies in the diocese revealed that there was such a collective response. According to the “relational cohesion theory,” people will become more strongly committed to groups in which they experience positive feelings in interaction or exchange with others (Lawler et al., 2000), and actors recognize the importance of social relationships within organizations for dialogue and support (Marsick, 1999).

Purposeful planning and training of lay personnel

Both lay and clergy pointed to the need for purposeful planning within the diocese (Friedman, 1999). A lay youth in Boki deanery remarked that sometimes people are poor not because they have nothing initially, but because they are unable to plan to manage what they have. This lack of planning was observed to be a national dilemma.

It is due to planlessness that we in Nigeria as a country is where we are today; because after acquiring they mismanage what they have so that our people require basic skills in management. We are very extravagant as a people.

Even for small groups such as the SVP, their involvement in charity work makes people take advantage of them if there is no plan. The director of SVP in Holy Family Parish in Ikom remarked,

Some persons will come here, tell us a very beautiful story. We wont have time to investigate we will give the person assistance and the person will disappear to another conference with the same story. So what we try to do now is to plan and investigate properly before giving assistance

A clergyman quite acquainted with the diocesan setup agreed that the basic problem in the diocesan organizational structure is the lack of planning, which brings a low level of awareness of the diocese as a development agent at the grassroots. He recommended that the diocese train more lay personnel rather than putting undue emphasis on the clergy and the religious.

The first thing is that in this generation of ours, we don't have well-trained Catholics who are as fully committed as the priests and sisters are. Because when you talk about people who are committed, you need to think of training them. We should look for lay people and train them effectively. Then the interests of the church will now be protected or defended.

A young lay man in Ugep deanery in an individual interview suggested that members be made to meet within the church premises according to their artistic skills while such skills and professions can be tapped. Some argued that the development of talents and their use in favor of church projects could prevent the orientation of viewing community members as passive recipients who have no say in their own development. Said the lay youth in Ugep deanery:

Those who are masons, artisans, cooks, etc should organize themselves into different groups, assuming that the church has a project like building a house, toilet etc, is the group they will come to them, rather than leaving those members to go outside the church and the money goes outside.

iv. Using the Means of Communication

According to Woodhill and Röling (1998), competent facilitation of information technologies does work for social learning and organizational change. In Ogoja diocese, members suggested that there are potentials in the modern means of communication that could help the diocese plan or design a purposeful strategy for social learning in poverty eradication. In the responses to Question 8 in the open-ended questionnaire served to 67 members of Ogoja diocese (see Appendix A), I was particularly looking for the gradual differences between the various media found in the diocese in relation to functional qualities in the context of Ogoja region. In Table 12, I tabulate the responses of both the clergy and laity on the gradual differences between different media in the diocese in relation to functional qualities. I used the traditional and print media, Internet, radio, and business centers (sometimes called cybercafés,

where the use of phones for calls, computers for emails and minor printing jobs is involved), as media categories.

Table 12: Gradual differences between different media in the diocese in relation to functional qualities

Difference in relation to functional qualities	Radio	Internet	Business Center	Print	Tradition
Likelihood to stimulate change/eradicate poverty	3	3	1	1	1
Ability to lead diocese to more innovation strategies	3	3	1	1	2
Capacity to go in-depth and support social learning	3	2	1	1	3
Likelihood to enable collective action in individuals	3	1	2	1	3
Likelihood to lead to church group cohesion	3	1	2	2	3
Likely cost for intervention organization (diocese)	3	3	2	2	1
Likely cost at local level	3	3	3	3	2
Ease to operate at Local level	3	3	3	3	3
Reception at different locations (Spatial flexibility)	3	1	3	3	3

1= relatively low in comparison with other media (in most contexts)

2= comparable to other media (in contexts)

3=relatively high in comparison with other media (in contexts)

In collecting this data, I had in mind that knowledge of these gradual differences could enhance diocesan planning and the use of the following emerging media for a social learning.

Traditional media

A tremendous power was observed emanating from traditional media in the diocese. Traditional media included the worshipping community that gather routinely with presiding priests, who use liturgical rituals to reach out to the assemblies. When asked about traditional ways of communication in the diocese, a catechist in Yahe mentioned the various ways they disseminate information, recounting the opportunities that abound in them:

Announcements are made in Churches. At times we send seculars from one parish to the other. Recently with the introduction of the GSM, we have given our phone numbers to our fellow members for easy communication. We are looking at areas in which even the email can be utilized because some of our members who are advanced like in the political council can be contact easily then.

During gatherings, members used church bulletins, loud speakers, and announcements from the pulpit by priests and catechists. A development worker remarked,

Definitely I feel the priests have got a lot of power. And I feel that you can spread messages which people will efficiently take home.

There was a general consensus among lay people that traditional methods have high capacity to go in-depth and support social learning, collective action, and small group cohesion, especially when boosted by the emerging information communication technologies.

Business centers

What was found lacking as diocesan establishments were business centers or tele-centers to help boost the use of traditional media. The diocese did not own any such centers as observed. Respondents during focus groups thought that such business centers are less likely to stimulate change in individuals' poverty situations or to lead the diocese toward innovation. As a business venture, it was thought less likely to encourage individuals to collective action, social learning, and group cohesion. Members also thought the cost of such intervention was high compared with other mass media in most contexts. However, some clergy responses on questionnaires indicated that such centers can serve two purposes, to help raise funds for the diocese and to enable easy communication across the parishes and among members. A priest who had worked outside the diocese explained that

There is an interesting initiative in the Gambia and it involves the use of cell phones to help people in the villages get better market prices. Now there is an NGO in Banjul and they send them the prices that they are selling the things so that when your middleman comes to the village to buy and he is trying to buy at low prices you say am sorry because the market price for this today is this so how can you give me that low price.

I found an upsurge of technology awareness in several parts of Nigeria. People have a lot of GSM hand-sets and computers, and there is a potential for them to be utilized at the local level. Says a development agent,

One thing I am beginning to notice in Nigeria is using computers in schools and yes I think a lot of that is important because if you are not computer literate now you won't get a job. And also internet has a great potential but again it has to be utilized properly.

In Ogoja, where isolation and poor infrastructural services abound, business centers that offer telecommunication services were seen to play an extremely important role in enhancing an interactive environment for rural poverty eradication. Telephone signals were seen to provide information access to illiterates and to those with no training in ICT use.

The Internet

Most respondents in focus groups, especially urban dwellers, agreed that the Internet has become a prerequisite to any venture. In a focus group discussion with school teachers, all twelve participants agreed that the Internet can be used by the diocese in enhancing educational opportunities, especially for the rural people for health and agricultural awareness. "Even degree holders need to be computer or internet literate to get a job in the modern world," said a lay teacher. One member, however, cautioned against the use of the Internet:

Internet has a great potential but again it has to be utilized properly.
Technology can play a lot of role in development but technology by itself is

not going to, unless it is actually guided and there is a purpose for it and people explain how to use it.

All respondents during the focus group discussion in Ogoja deanery thought that the Internet was more likely to stimulate social change and lead the diocese toward innovation with capacity to go in-depth and support social learning of individuals and groups. Eight of the respondents agreed that it is less likely to encourage individuals to collective action or to lead to group cohesion, as the Internet tends to make individuals focus on themselves more than other people. Many agreed that it will entail a high cost as an intervention for the diocese and for individuals at the local level to browse regularly, with low reception at different locations perceived.

Radio

In 3 of the focus groups conducted, villagers lamented that the only radio station that used to broadcast programs in their native languages was no longer available. One said,

I remember as far back as 1988 when Radio Ugaga was here, programs in Yala, Bekwerra etc, were available. But for long now, it is only during festivities that we have local dialects spoken in the radio. In Ikom all is in English and many of our people don't understand English, even news in Ejagham and Bekwerra only comes once in a while.

Now the only station available to them is far away in Ikom, and it is only a booster station. Many asked if the diocesan church can open a radio station to boost programs that will enlighten the people and motivate them to development awareness. Of all the media interventions investigated, the radio was the most wished-for by both local and urban, clergy and lay, as well as young and older members. All respondents in the focus group at Ogoja deanery agreed that the radio is more likely to stimulate social change and lead to poverty eradication across the diocese because it can address issues

in the native dialects. From experience with the defunct radio station in Ogoja, reception can be very high indeed. Radio is more likely to lead the diocese toward innovation with capacity to support individuals listen regularly. The radio is more likely to encourage individuals toward collective action and group cohesion. Though there was a high cost envisaged for the diocese to establish a radio station, members thought that such a cost will be minimal if the dioceses can form partnerships with outside networks. Members certainly agreed that owning transistor radios by members would be easier than buying newspapers on a regular basis. A catechist, talking during an annual retreat for Catechists, agreed on the assets of the radio for local audiences:

Like we are having our retreat here now, if we had the radio station we can go in there and slot in our program and that will bring more people and even help in creating awareness. But if we go to the government own station, it is very expensive if they even allow our access.

Print media

Though the print media appealed to fewer literate members in the diocese, they were found to be valuable information tools for church members. Newspapers are, most times, hard to find in rural villages, and the more literate members lamented that those of them in villages are often left in the dark regarding news from the outside world.

One said,

We hardly have anything here. Even *The Message* newspaper, we hardly get it. We miss it. It will take up to two three months before we see any newspaper. Another problem is that if these papers are available they are so expensive for people who can hardly afford a square meal a day.

The diocesan Newspaper *The Message* was observed to be no longer in circulation. Even the government newspaper *The Chronicle* is a thing of the past. No printing press was identified within the entire diocese, and members did all of their printing jobs such as wedding cards, funeral brochures, and ordination almanacs in the nearby

dioceses of Calabar and Makurdi. When asked about the usefulness of newspapers during the focus group at Yahe, most Catechists said it is good for the diocese to revamp *The Message* newspaper as it was a good organ for local parishioners who now have no access to the Internet to know what was happening in the diocese. However, some respondents said that a newspaper is less likely to stimulate change or to lead the diocese toward innovation with capacity to go in-depth and support social learning. Since a greater percentage of members were illiterate, the print media was perceived by members to be less likely to encourage individuals to collective action or group cohesion. There was perceived to be a high cost of establishing a printing press in the diocese, with a risk of fewer people buying the paper at the local level.

According to Figure 16, a general numerical statistics of the communication media in the diocese reveals that most media were minimally employed by the diocese. Government (or other agencies or private individuals) was seen to own more media places, as the diocesan ownership of such media was found to be very minimal across the deaneries. There were 24 Internet centers across the entire diocese owned by government and other private entrepreneurs, while the diocese owned none. The Government radio station was received in some 6 locations across the diocese, but the diocese had no such facility. About 33 business centers were booming across the diocese, while no effort was being made by the diocese to establish any. In the area of print media, most members harped on the useful impact *The Message* newspaper created while it was still in circulation and also agreed that bulletins from parishes across the diocese informed them about some key pastoral issues. The governments, on the other hand, have made no efforts to reach them through newspapers or through any form of print media. Members agreed that because of the regular efforts by the diocese to gather members on regular bases at worship sites and churches in towns and villages, the traditional media were very helpful in the diocese. Respondents from the

more-rural Boki deanery felt more conformable with traditional media than with emerging information technologies. Other urban-based respondents thought that traditional media in the dioceses needed to be scaled up.

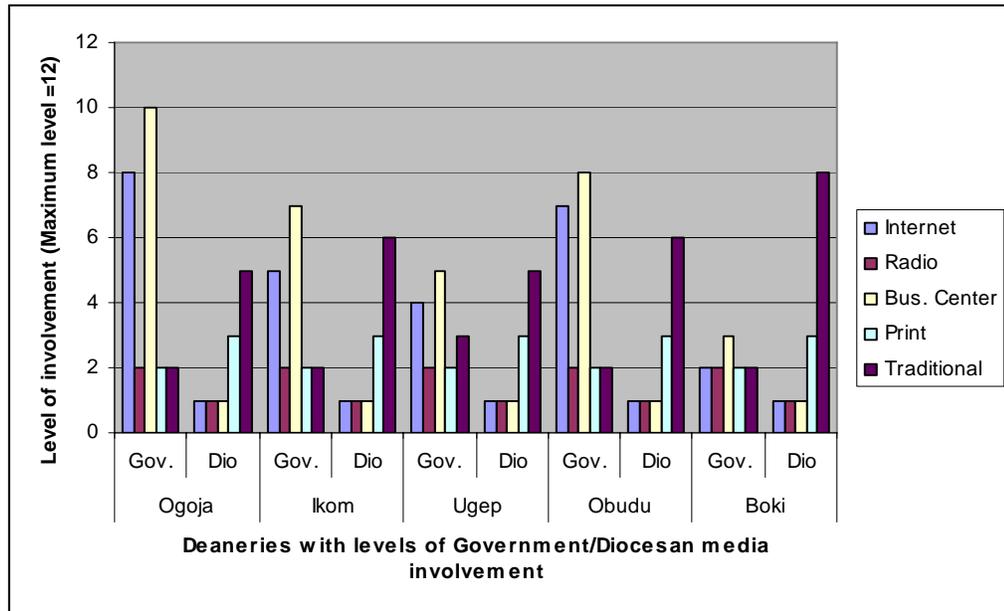


Figure 16: Deaneries with levels of media involvement by government and diocese (1=no involvement, 12=some level of involvement)

(c). Summary and Policy Recommendations

In this section, I reviewed empirical data on individual and group social learning within the diocese, with particular attention to the individual learning by the laity and clergy members through the participatory process. How did individual social learning affect group potentials for social learning in Ogoja diocese? Findings showed that although groups showed signs of willingness to organize based on Biblical values, there was a lack of collective action in community groups. Efforts at social organizing in the diocese were inadequate to ensure viability, as I found an acute lack of viable groups within the diocese. In order to foster social learning within the organization context of the diocese that leads to social group cohesion, findings revealed that social

learning by the diocese will entail building more on the emotions of interdependent stakeholders, purposeful planning, training of lay personnel, and encouragement of self-help projects to ensure social learning in the emerging approach. The means of communications are suggested to scale up social learning within the diocesan and local context. The following conclusions arise from this analysis.

Purposeful institutional design: Based on the lack of an organizational structure perceived in Ogoja diocese, members are eager to purposefully plan to design a structure. This purposeful planning will entail training of lay personnel and encouragement of self-help projects to ensure social learning. Suggestions were made based on existing practices within church groups, and some members suggested that the JDPC liaise with communities for such a design. The implications of this for policy is that the JDPC can purposely foster a design that emphasizes social learning based on emotions and interdependence of stakeholders.

A new paradigm of communication: In Ogoja, there was found to be enormous power available from the various media in the diocese; the traditional media, business centers, the print media, the Internet, and radio. With such enormous power, the new role of communication as innovation is evolving, making members participants rather than clients who assume the role of problem owners. To ensure the strengthening of group positions as an intervention goal, planning for the use of both traditional and emerging media tools among rural people is necessary to boost capacity for in-depth social learning. As a first step, the diocese could seek partnerships to establish a radio station that uses traditional media to create interdependence among stakeholders. As a later development, innovations with the Internet, the print media, and business centers could follow. It is hoped that such communication interventions could lead the diocese

to a new understanding of the role of communication in creating collective stakeholder participation in development.

Change of individual mindsets: In Ogoja diocese, one major reason individuals could not open up themselves to socially engaging in groups was that their cognitions had been informed by a European mentality rather than the peasant context or culture in which they found themselves. Individual mindsets of young people were focused wrongly, and this led some youths to waste away in villages, unwilling to embrace traditional jobs. Among some clergy, there was a corresponding attitude of non-commitment that followed, as individual priests had yet to adjust to the secular ways of organizing. Both clergy and laity in the new dispensation should seek interdependent stakeholder roles in the pursuit of social change within their given contexts. One key challenge for individual actors was the ability to evolve interactive and collective dynamics.

Using values to build group cohesion and collective spirit: In Ogoja diocese, during bazaars, at liturgical ceremonies, and at worship, members emphasized their common identities and communal perspectives through the use of spiritual values. A score of such values were upheld based on Biblical and traditional church settings. The diocese should map out practical guidelines for making judgments on a comprehensive range based on spiritual values, and scale up a way of inculcating such values into stakeholders, e.g., by applying sermons toward elevating spirits based on values. The diocese should also only seek a methodology of constantly reminding members of such values, especially through the use of communication interventions. According to Walker (1991), individual actors do not operate from nowhere but are tied to a platform, i.e., networks of belief-systems and values that they need to use for making

ethical decisions. Woodhill's (2001) principle of a philosophical reflective agenda implies that all stakeholders are guided on best practices in social development through common values. Spiritual values in the Catholic tradition can also help to influence civic engagement and social capital, as was the case with the *comunidades eclesiales de base* (Small Christian Communities) that challenged military regimes in Latin American countries, serving as practical organizing vehicles during democratic transition (Cavendish, 1994).

Improving social relationships: My observations at liturgical ceremonies in the diocese revealed that there were positive opportunities that could translate emotions shared within religious practices into improved social relations. By engaging stakeholders in more frequent social forums to share ideas and social concerns, the diocese could aim at improving interdependent relationships between members, especially leaders of social groups. Among CBOs, close social relationships make members committed to each other's success (Marsick, 1990), while common worship and interaction of ritual practices reaffirms and strengthens social solidarity because of the shared emotions and feelings it produces (Durkheim, 1995).

Self-help projects and poverty alleviation: Respondents in Ogoja diocese had various ideas of how investments propelled by small groups led to social change. Suggestions for improvements were made based on existing practices within church groups as well as other local organizing traditions. Some members suggested that the JDPC liaise with communities and offer guidelines. The implication of this for policy is that the diocesan model encourages individuals and groups to pull resources together to inaugurate self-help projects. A religious orientation of small self-help group projects based on common worship and spiritual values can act as a viable force to address

collective problems among poverty-stricken members. There was an overwhelming interest in the potentials of church groups to organize self-help projects in small groups to enhance collective action.

Linking social capital to social learning:

Though found to be weak for effective development, there were both diocesan and secular groups found in Ogoja diocese that link social learning to social capital, encouraging knowledgeable lay actors to be more involved in civic engagements and politics. A purposeful effort to evolve human capital through skills training, self-help projects, and support for individual initiatives should be made, with membership in churches, voluntary associations, and organizations that nurture civic engagement.

A methodological approach for the diocese:

Participants recommended that the diocese give voice to all stakeholders, especially local people, through training of lay initiatives, rather than putting undue emphasis on the clergy and religious. The Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) can be harnessed to deconstruct frames of reference and mentalities in development, helping local people regain confidence lost under expert culture. For the diocese to learn to develop capacities as organizations for giving voice to rural communities, there is a need to link up with local dynamics to enable them to appreciate the conditions of poverty within an organizational perspective (Hounkonnou, 2002).

Social learning is the practice whereby individuals and groups become actively involved in emotive ways that make churches adaptable as social institutions for poverty eradication and the socio-economic well-being of members. I investigated both individual and group dynamics to achieve social learning within Ogoja diocese. A diocese can adapt itself as an agent of social change within a developing country

context by evolving a purposeful institutional design based on the new paradigm. Ogoja diocese needs to plot a methodological approach that seeks to link interdependent stakeholders to the mainstream, using both traditional and modern means of communication in planning for change. By building on improving social relationships among individuals and groups and by using emotions as a key, this study promotes a collective orientation in social exchange, generating interdependence in the form of group cohesion. Such cohesion can vitalize self-help projects for poverty alleviation while achieving social capital that connects members to civic opportunities.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ROLE OF PARTICIPATION FOR POVERTY ERADICATION IN CBOs

1. Introduction

Over the years, participation has been a contested concept in the development literature (Mohan, 2002). The Informal Working Group on Participatory Approaches and Methods (IWG-PAM)⁴⁹ defines participation as a process of equitable and active involvement of all *stakeholders* in the formulation of development policies and strategies and in the analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of development activities (FAO-IWG-PAM, 2003). Viewed from this perspective, participation has become a right whose main aim is to initiate mobilization of people for collective action (Giddens, 1998). Others have questioned the claim that participation is a good thing, arguing that in the development discourse, such a claim is not supported by evidence (Cleaver, 2001). This study investigates the relationship between “participation” and “development” in Churches, by focusing on how Church-based organizations (CBOs) organize to facilitate the participation of people in their own development (research question). I approach participation and its relationship to development by inquiring how it fosters “well-being,” “livelihood security,” and “capabilities,” in relation to “the poor” (Chambers, 1997b, pp. 9–11). I analyze how CBOs in the Roman Catholic tradition achieve or fail to achieve these goals. I critically review participatory development as a conceptual framework for assessing the organizing capacity of a diocese (Ogoja, Nigeria) as an agent of development.

In developing this conceptual framework, I first trace the historical evolution of participation from the 1950s capitalist formation approach to the human factor approach of the 1970s. Then participatory development was viewed according to the

⁴⁹ IWG-PAM is one of FAO’s efforts to support sustainable livelihoods and food security initiative in the world.

basic-needs approach, and intended beneficiaries were seen as consumers of projects. I review the *populist model* that emerged in the 1980s, which centered on people as situated agents (Usher, Bryant, & Johnson, 1997). I examine the role of change agents in development and poverty eradication by re-examining the meaning of “power” and reviewing the “structures” within CBOs with particular attention paid to context specificity, bottom-up, people-centered, and values-based strategies in development. Some scholars have argued that participation in the populist model should further emphasize how local people are included in the broader processes of governance within their specific contexts (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001). More recently, participation has been associated not only with “putting people first” in rural development (Cernea, 1985), but also “putting the first last” (Chambers, 1977b). This is to ensure that intended beneficiaries participate in all aspects of governance as much as is feasible (Uphoff, 1985). As participatory development comes to the forefront in development, mainstream discourses on participation are extending these debates to embrace the role of civil societies such as churches (Cornwall, 2000; Korten, 1990; Pijnenburg, 2004). I review these historical shifts and their implications for CBOs in poverty eradication.

Development initiatives in developing countries are failing to address social concerns, based on lessons learned from the deficiencies of top-down development approaches (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Researchers are beginning to inquire into other approaches such as the role of civil society in implementing participatory development. I investigate another approach by describing the role of churches as civil organizations using theories in organizational learning that inform CBOs in this new approach. I question how a diocese in a developing country can lead associated stakeholder groups toward possibilities and role oriented-ness (North, 1990). My approach is based on how organizations can learn to review their “structures” by re-

examining the meaning of “power.” An entry point for this approach revolves around three organizational learning models: Korten’s (1980) Learning process, Argyris and Schon’s (1983) notions of single-loop learning and double-loop learning, and Senge’s (1990, 1999) theory of learning organizations with a vision of “The Fifth Discipline.” Because these models pay close attention to the processes of power and structures as well as conflicts and uncertainties, I further argue that they can be applied to dioceses as organizations that foster participation in developing countries. The implications of this for CBOs in Nigeria is that by building on these new understanding of power and structures, they can more meaningfully involve other stakeholders in their strategies of poverty eradication.

Based on the link between adult education and power, my analysis further explores the connection between power and practice (Cevero & Wilson, 2001). I examine these concepts in relation to empowerment and how the organizational structures of CBOs as participatory development agents foster development based on the ubiquitous context of power (Kothari, 2001). Traditionally, the diocese has been the main structure or model for organizing development in the Catholic Church. More recently, the emergence of the more informal small Christian communities (SCCs) in other settings is challenging this structure. How does this change effect participation in a diocese in relation to poverty eradication strategies? I look at the future of participation in CBOs for poverty eradication and recommend options for further research.

2. Definitions of Participation (Historical Evolution of the Term)

(a). The Basic-Needs Approach to Participation

A major shift began in the 1970s with the understanding of development as a human factor as opposed to the capital formation approach of the 1950s. Viewed as a way of involving stakeholders in the process of development, participation became a major

strategic ingredient for increasing efficiency, especially in relation to rural development (Stirrat, 1996). As a new orthodoxy in development practice (Mosse, 1996; Stirrat), participation was a widely accepted philosophy (Chambers, 1994a, 1997b), especially in international arenas. Over the years, participation became a *contested concept* in the development literature (Mohan, 2002). Some scholars began to see participation as a right, and sought to include it in the mobilization of people for collective action (Giddens, 1998). Others were questioning the “desirability” of participation, maintaining that its claims to be a good thing were not supported by evidence (Eyben & Ladbury, 1995; Francis, 2001; Guijt & Shah, 1998; Mohan, 2001; Nelson & Wright, 1995; Stirrat, 1996).⁵⁰ Mohan (2002) argued that participation assumed a *controversial stance* in development studies because it paid little attention to complex community differences such as poverty, religion, caste, ethnic group and gender (Mohan, 2002). Other authors have similarly argued for a closer look at participation as it relates to communities, institutions, or organizations (Cornwall, 2003; Guijt & Shah, 1998; McGee, 2002). This was in response to rational theories proliferated by modernization theory.

Modernization theory (Rostow, 1960) argued that if provided with the right conditions, people in developing countries would progress from “undeveloped” to “developed” in predictable stages. This theory formed political, economic, and social institutions at each stage that made possible more economically advanced activities (Biggart & Guillen, 1999). Modernizing elites favored a gradual shift from traditional to modern values (Apter, 1965; Gyekye, 1997). Through structural specialization, individuals within a particular country or society were encouraged to acquire skills that increase the index of modernization and competition. This mentality orchestrated

⁵⁰ Others also maintain that participation is exclusive, technical, and conceptually limited, with participatory development paying little attention to community differences (Bastian & Bastian, 1996; Mosse, 1996; Nelson & Wright, 1995).

“a single developmental model, with the aim of achieving a position of dominance,” dismissing alternative forms of development as irrelevant (Peet & Hartwick, 1999, p. 63). With this modernist thinking evolved a tendency to undermine peripheral states and regions as non-contributive. Traditional societies were viewed as limited by their environments and a “disintegration of traditional elements within a society would absorb change and thus develop the qualitative characteristics of modernity” (Peet & Hartwick, p. 76). Modernization theory failed to establish the truth that there is specificity in cultures and contexts that cannot be over-generalized. With traditionalism and local culture identified as obstacles to economic growth and development, modernization theory failed to make headway in developing countries.

Modernization tendencies made participation part of the normal vocabulary in development (Pretty, 1995a), with inquiry approaches in the form of methods and tools for community participation emerging in the 1970s and early 1980s (Brown et al., 2002). During the 1980s, donors and development organizations found it increasingly clear that outsider and expert-driven development approaches worked poorly, so they shifted toward participatory research and planning methods (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Participatory approaches spread tremendously, being widely though often uncritically adopted. The mainstream largely presumed participation as a means for people’s involvement in agency projects, while the rise of participatory development viewed intended beneficiaries as consumers of projects (Cornwall, 2002). The drive for popular participation sought to transform development practice by involving intended beneficiaries in projects. Emphasis began to be placed on human resource development in the context of a shift from the 1950s capital formation approach. For Uphoff (1998), recognition of the significance of *the human factor* in most successful development was the most important shift in development theory in recent years.

Some scholars argued that the concept of beneficiaries was itself problematic because it connotes people as merely recipients of benefits as opposed to active participants and partners in their own social change processes (Pretty, 1995a). Such scholars warned against oversimplification of reality through the use of techniques such as questionnaires, diagrams, and matrices that omit the more-complicated realities. These approaches, they argued, tend to present a normative view of people's lives, promoting a consensual impression among participants regarding the usual and ordinary. They neglect the messiness and complexity of daily life faced by most vulnerable people (Pretty; Chambers, 1983). Alternative approaches to development drawn on Freire (2000) and the *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) movement in the 1980s actively opposed the technical orientation of community participation espoused by the mainstream. In the first half of the 1980s participatory development and approaches remained distinct, but with the rise of neo-liberal economic policies, the development tracks opened in the 1980s by Paulo Freire and PAR converged somewhat. This convergence created opportunities for more local participation in development (Pretty; Chambers), a convergence that resulted to the populist model in development.

(b). The Populist Model: Broader Processes of Governance

A paradigm shift emerged in the 1980s with the *populist model*, coming as a response to the continuing penetration of the capitalist mode of production into the global market (Youngman, 2000). In this model, the role of people as situated agents was being re-appraised in “a relationship of mutual interaction” (Usher et al., 1997, p. 139). The implication of this paradigm shift for poverty eradication was that in developing countries, scholars were beginning to re-examine the meaning of “power” as well as “structures” within organizations. Attention was now being paid to context specificity, bottom-up, people-centered approaches in development. Factors beyond

neo-marxism and the political economy of mere production and economic determinism were assuming significance. Several scholars laid emphasis on the practical concerns of life, often connected to relevance, utility, policies, resources, an capacity.⁵¹ Development ideologies began to weave the positive themes of participation and empowerment to argue for civic engagement (Fischer, 2000)

From the African perspective, scholars in the late 1980s and early 1990s emerged with highly critical views that argued that development theory constitutes practice also (Chambua, 1995). For the most part, African scholars envisaged a problem in the lack of new openings for African countries in this discourse (Kinyanjui & Mburugu, 1995). They hoped for signs of intervention from institutions and organizations in developing countries themselves. However, Chambers (1983, 1994a, 1994b, 1997a, 1997b) energized this trend of meaningful community participation in development, by seeking to place local peoples in developing country contexts at the center of development *as intended beneficiaries* who participate in shaping interventions that affected them (Chambers 1983, 1997b). Chambers' (1983, 1997b) writings on participatory development inspired a more-nuanced approach, placing people at the center of development.

The 1980s and 1990s saw the concept of participation evolving from the capital formation to the human factor approach and widely expanding to include citizenship rights and democratic governance. Emphasis was now placed on self-reliance and the capacity of local people to shape development together with those in “power” (Cornwall, 2002). The growing interest in the way citizens influenced and

⁵¹ Scholars such as Bond (2000) suggested that participation should mobilize and empower local people toward decision making, especially in grassroots social movements and non-governmental organizations (Bond, 2000). Moore (1997) took on the issue of resistance to balance the tension between structure and agency (Moore, 1997). For Fox (1996), a state-society synergy evolves through collaboration between the local and external civil society organizations that lead to high repression and thickness of civil society (Fox, 1996). Keck and Sikkink (1998) recommended a network analysis through the work of NGOs with efficacy in activist leadership (Keck & Sikkink, 1998), while Escobar (1995) came up with the idea of hybridization; a process that cut across class, ethnic, and national boundaries (Escobar, 1995).

held (governments and) development agencies accountable gradually shifted the concept of participation from the notion of users and choosers of external services to that of agents in the *broader processes of governance* (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001). Participation began to *avoid* a narrow-minded view for stakeholders in the development discourse, with attention paid to community difference (Eyben & Ladbury, 1995; Francis, 2001; Guijt & Shah, 1998; Mohan, 2001; Nelson & Wright, 1995; Stirrat, 1996).

The commitment of development agencies to participation now stands on practical concerns for attaining more sustainable initiatives, with community participation regarded as sharing benefits with the poor (Cornwall, 2002). Donors and development organizations were increasingly concluding that outsider and expert-driven development approaches work poorly, hence the shift toward participatory research and local planning methods (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). As participatory development comes to the forefront in development, mainstream discourses on participation extend debates of agencies' support beyond the confines of projects, to embrace the role of civil society (Cornwall, 2000; Pijnenburg, 2004). Beginning in the 1990s, discourses on participation are being broadened from beneficiary participation in projects to include larger issues of citizenship and voice in planning (Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999). More recently, participation has been associated not only with "putting people first" (Cernea, 1985) in rural development, but also "putting the first last" (Chambers, 1977b), ensuring that intended beneficiaries participate in all aspects of governance as much as is feasible (Uphoff, 1985). I will now review the implications of this mentality on CBOs and how they learn as organizations to involve people in their development, with particular application to a diocese.

(c). Participation and Organizational Learning (Applied to a Diocese)

In organizational learning, participation involves a complex of disparate and sometimes opposing forces coming together to lead an organization and its associated groups toward the accomplishments of organizational goals (North, 1990). CBOs that foster participation for social change build on the organizational learning literature. Korten (1990) developed the learning process as one of the most persuasive approaches for leading organizations toward participatory development. According to Korten, a self-critical organization that has the ability to learn from errors is on the way to progress, for “any organization that does not accept or embrace errors and seek to learn from them is a self-deceiving organization, likely to perpetuate mistakes and even accelerate their occurrence” (p. 498). There may be constraints of confidence, trust, and learning complex skills—technical or organizational—to overcome; however, rapid learning is also ensured through new behaviors and the use of values relevant to the context of the organization.

In situations where rural people are given choices to make based on their own priorities and capabilities, mistakes will surely be made. However, the learning process demands that errors be embraced so that they can be instructive on how to foster participation. One way the learning process can be adapted to fit the participatory tradition is by building on the knowledge and experiences of those who have been immersed in rural conditions themselves, through pilot projects or programs. The learning process begins slowly and gains knowledge and experience, building personnel capable of achieving a critical mass to accelerate the inclusion of stakeholders. It validates the metaphor of starting slowly to crawl before walking and then eventually running. The skills of walking need to be mastered before trying to speed up the pace. Some people reject the learning process because it has been argued to be too indeterminate, slow, and likely to waste resources in ambiguous searching.

This perception comes from the linear perspective on schedules that expect the accomplishment of equal amounts of tasks in each time period.

According to Uphoff et al. (1998), the reason for the success and sustainability of many development projects by organizations in developing countries was that they employed the learning process (pp. 20–44). Chambers (1977b) agrees that the learning process recognizes the nature of reality as “highly contingent, interactive, variable and continually changing” (pp. 162–174). Organizations that adopt the learning process are more likely to foster participation and evolve change toward problem identification and solution than those that are still buried in the blueprint model.⁵² This approach prepares organizations to cope with new problems, opportunities, and challenges that continually arise, thereby achieving fit. Uphoff et al. (1998), delineate the components that lead an organization to successfully implementing the learning process. These are “creative leadership, effective local participation, appropriate technologies and training, adaptive systems for the management of programs, linkages with key local, regional, national, and international actors, and political support deftly mobilized and managed”, among others (Uphoff et al., p. v).

Other authors have also developed their own theories whereby organizations embrace change. Agyris and Schon (1983) build on the notions of single-loop learning and double-loop learning to argue for an organizational learning approach. Here organizations move from an old mentality to a newer one, with the intention of carrying along its members. In an earlier work by Agyris and Schon (1983), technically referred to as Model I or single-loop schemes, the basic behavioral perspective focused heavily on defensive actions of organizations with organizational

⁵² The learning approach is opposed to the blueprint model propounded by instrumentalists and argued to be inappropriate for poverty eradication in rural settings. The blueprint approach is a textbook version, derivative of the rational paradigm which addresses how decisions should be made where a single actor is involved. Administrators of the implementing organizations are supposed to execute the project faithfully, much as a contractor would follow construction blueprint specifications and schedules (Korten, 1980, p. 497).

behavior or strategies focused on a single direction. Model I fails to inquire into the values and behaviors that underlie organizational actions. Such organizations respond to problems by reproducing the behaviors that created the problems, while the ultimate source of the problems is left unexplained. This attitude creates other problems about legitimating authority and expertise. According to Argyris and Schon, single-loop learning is blind to power in organizations and actually reinforces certain kinds of hierarchies. Single-loop, learning, therefore favors a situation in which organizations alter their behavior but do nothing to change the behavioral strategies that give rise to the problematic situation initially. The problem situation is taken as given, and participants fail to improve their ability to solve specific challenges. The effect is to possibly achieve a brief amelioration of the problem, but because the underlying situation is not confronted the problem returns and regains strength as soon as another dilemma is encountered.

Argyris and Schon (1983) offer a more-nuanced view of organizational learning with a clear presentation of the double-loop scheme, which centers on understanding the underlying causes of problems. Action from this model flows from changes in the values and behaviors that created the original problem. In linking values and organizational transformations, problems are solved. Double-loop (DL) learning involves the “out-of-the-box thinking” needed to resolve fundamental conflict over values and norms, promoting change in the face of high uncertainty. By presenting well-developed case studies, the authors show how double-loop learning identifies conflicts over competing visions or goals, resolves conflicts, implements preferred alternatives, understands power relations, evaluates results, restructures norms and values, and embeds new structures in collective memory.⁵³ A major trend that helps to

⁵³ Collective memory investigates linkages between individual and organizational learning. The theory of action perspective treats individual learning as a necessary but insufficient condition for organizational learning. Since individuals are the agents for organizations, collective learning does not occur until individuals embed what they have learned in organizational memory. The memory is stored

boost the learning process in organization in double-loop learning is its emphasis on linkages as they pertain to organizational learning. Double loop learning also addresses the readiness of professional practitioners or organizations to solve society's problems through reflective thinking, in the contexts in which people deal with complexities and uncertainties.

In a later work, *The Reflective Practitioner*, Schon (1983, p.5) outlines the argument that professionals have “shown signs” of a loss of confidence, leading to a crisis of legitimacy in their practice. This crisis seemingly has rendered professional practice inadequate at solving society's problems, and it is evident that the status of professional practice is in question. He concludes that the problem is with the technical rational model (TRM), which employs the instrumental methodology of problem solving through the application of specialized scientific theories and techniques. This has led to a professional pluralism whereby irrationality, complexity, uncertainty, instability, and value conflicts are shaping professional practice, and Schon is quick to forgo the technical rational model altogether, opening the space for moving beyond the TRM. An alternative new “theory” is proposed to address this crisis; to reflect-in-action. To reflect-in-action means to take advantage of tacit, spontaneous knowledge, the repetitive experience, recognizing its rigor or relevant (in its own right) rather than feeling threatened by uncertainties or uniqueness. It means professionals should make new sense of such tacit knowledge, as those who reflect in action become researchers in the practice context. They cease to depend on the categories of established theory and technique, and rather “construct a new theory of unique cases” (Schon, 1983, p. 68).

in “public maps” (e.g., legislation, organization charts, diagrams of workflow, management plans, informal institutions) and “private images” (i.e., mental models of self in relation to others and in relation to the organization).

Senge (1990) further offers a framework for understanding how organizations are better able to solve society's problems in the face of uncertainties, through his theory of learning organizations with a vision of "The Fifth Discipline." Senge realized that a learning organization would likely become a new management fad and thus decided to use the five disciplines of systems thinking, mental models, personal mastery, shared vision, and team learning and dialogue as inescapable elements in building learning organizations. These five disciplines explain the connection between individual and collective behavior in the context of the learning organizations. The first three disciplines have particular application for the individual participant,⁵⁴ while the last two have collective application. "Shared vision" involves the skills of unearthing shared "pictures of the future" to foster genuine commitment. "Team learning" starts with the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine thinking together through dialogue and discussion. These two principles afford organizations the ability to connect with its members and build better commitment strategies. Whereas he agrees that "learning organizations" are where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, Senge (1994) lays out key theoretical arguments for reaching such a goal (Senge, 1999) by:

- Viewing organizations as products of the ways individual in them think and interact
- Changing organizations for the better as individuals change the ways they think and interact.
- Pulling resources together to change attitudes and beliefs rather than relying on one or two people to evolve change

⁵⁴ *Systems Thinking*: is a conceptual framework consisting of knowledge and tools that make full patterns clearer and help us see how to change them effectively. Its essence lies in a shift of mind, seeing interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains, and seeing processes of change rather than snapshots. *Personal Mastery*: is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively, by continually focusing with vision on the current reality.

Senge (1994) emphasizes that the practice of learning organizations involves developing and taking part in tangible activities that will change the way people conduct their work. Senge (1999) encourages organizations that face odds, by affirming that all organizations that innovate or learn come up against innate challenges that block progress.

An entry point for CBOs in defining participation revolves around these three organizational learning models: the double-loop learning of Argyris and Schon (1978), the learning process of Korten (1980), and “The Fifth Discipline” in Senge’s (1990, 1999) concept of learning organizations, as represented in Table 13. By paying attention to the processes of governance and the place of values, a diocese reviews the concepts of “power” and “structures” as suggested by the above analysis. This analysis finally enables a definition of participation as *a process whereby an organization (diocese) strengthens its “structure” and reviews its understanding of “power” to include stakeholders at the local level, allocating to them a vision for “values” that enable them to confront uncertainties within their local “contexts.”* In the next section, I describe how this can be applied in CBOs for poverty eradication to evolve.

Table 13: Using three organizational learning models to review “structure” and “power” in organizations (diocese)

PARTICIPATORY DYNAMICS IN ORGANIZATIONS	Double Loop Learning Agyris & Schon (1978), Schon (1983)	Learning Process Korten (1990)	Learning organizations Senge (1990, 1994, 1999)
Nature of organizations	Organizations embrace change through values that underlie causes of problems	Organizations are self-critical with the ability to learn from errors.	Organizations are products of the ways individual in them think and interact.
Structure	-Develops “social” concept of organizational structure. -Resolves conflicts through “Out-of-the-box thinking”	-Slowly accelerates to include stakeholders -Overcomes constraints of organizational skills	- <i>Team learning</i> enables genuine dialogue -Faces odds by affirming innate challenges.
Power	-Seek understanding of group power relations -Reflection-in-action in high uncertainty. -Inquires into <i>values</i> to solve problems.	-Gives choice to rural people -Errors help to foster participation. -Uses <i>values</i> in the organizational context	-Pull resources together to change attitudes -Does not rely on one or two people for change. -Team members use <i>values</i> for dialogue

3. Implications of Participation for Poverty Eradication in CBOs

Two implications arise from my analysis of participation in the foregone section:

1. CBOs will have to build on a new view of the structure of a diocese as an organization that employs the broader processes of governance to include stakeholders in their own process of development.
2. CBOs have to reappraise the concept of power within the diocese as an organization to include local contexts.

I will describe the above suggestions in the following two sections of my conceptual analysis.

(a). Power and Participation: Seeking Empowerment through Local Contexts

Power in participatory development

Power is central to a discussion of participation in the development discourse. A narrow-minded view of its meaning and role can lead to poor results in the fight against poverty and rural community development (Eyben & Ladbury, 1995; Francis, 2001; Guijt & Shah, 1998; Mohan, 2001; Nelson & Wright, 1995; Stirrat, 1996). Ignoring “power” in CBOs, for example, could lead to instrumental rather than empowering outcomes, and this will benefit the non-poor more than the poor.⁵⁵ The traditional view defines “power” as the ability to control the behavior of others through the manipulation of behavioral contingencies (Goltz & Hietapelto, 2002). In the conventional sense, to be powerful means that to have access to effective behavioral consequences and the skills to use them in an appropriately contingent manner within a strategic location. This concept of power is, to say the least, misleading and fosters an unequal mentality. It also serves to portray the interests of elite groups. Scholars in the emerging paradigm tend to see power as the ability to create value and the capacity for that value to influence others especially those who are in a state of dependence (Emery, 2003).⁵⁶ In arguing for a nuanced participation of CBOs in social dilemmas, I affirm Emery’s (2003) view of power as a starting point for this analysis.

⁵⁵ Cohen and Uphoff (1980) cautioned against this narrow-minded view nearly 25 years ago, arguing that in order to make analytical distinctions among the rural poor, groups need to specify who is actually participating in development and who benefits, as this could be more easily be achieved by paying more attention to intra-community politics (Simon, McGregor, Nsiah-Gyabaah, & Thompson, 2003, p. 50).

⁵⁶ Emery (2003) also talks about the power or ability to destroy, whether intentionally or inadvertently, but also admits that the true mark of power is the ability to create positive value.

In the past, the discourse on power has followed the traditional view that tends to neglect local intra-community power relations, asserting a simplified notion of “power” as constituted in central locations reasserting social control (Simon et al., 2003). The social theorist Michael Foucault argued that power is always present in any effort to know and generates its consequences through its close interrelation with knowledge (Usher et al., 1997). Kothari (2001) draws on Foucault’s ideas to examine some of the key features of participatory development. Participatory development, according to Kothari, views power as something that some persons have and others do not. This has led to disempowering practices based on the notion that power lies in conventional social and political structures.⁵⁷ Rather than view power as a social practice, participatory development discourse instead recognizes power in dichotomies, presenting several morally charged oppositions such as local and professional, uppers and lowers, thus reconfirming the “naïve” idea that social power is confined to particular central sites or with the elite. Polarizations such as these underlie the premise that those who exert power are located at central institutions, while those under power’s control are situated in local or peripheral locations, thus making participation a smokescreen for valuing local knowledge.⁵⁸

Adult education reverses traditional view: Understanding power within local contexts

The traditional understanding merely links power to politics, without ascribing to it more-nuanced implications for practice and structural balance (Cevero & Wilson, 2001, p. 2). As a clear social commitment, adult education as a social policy, and

⁵⁷ A core assumption of participatory development is that its intervention empowers intended project beneficiaries, whereas empowerment can sometimes be closer to subjection. Guijt and Shah (1998) argue that the attempt to empower people through participatory development projects is sometimes an attempt to reshape the individual identities of the participants without a corresponding attention to social group differences (Cornwall, 2003; Guijt & Shah, 1998).

⁵⁸ According to the Foucauldian argument championed by Kothari, the problem lies in the assumptions that power can be located in both individuals and institutions. In the view based on Foucault, power can never be localized in an individual, institution, or global force because power is exercised throughout the social body and all individuals are vehicles of power.

practice seeks to reverse this trend by redistributing power (Apple, 1996). According to Cevero and Wilson (pp. 6-10), because power is both practical and structural, it has consequences on the equality of stakeholders; structurally and in practice. As a practical dimension, power focuses on “the ability to get things done” and mobilizes resources to reach the goals (Cevero & Wilson, p. 6).

Since this study deals with learning in CBOs, I follow the adult education viewpoint to reject the traditional understanding that associates power with unequal relationships. My approach suggests an account for power as strategic to Church-based organizing when CBOs learn to reflect-in-action, professionally seeking an understanding of power by inquiring into local contexts to solve problems that relate to poverty (Schon, 1983). Rather than rely on one or two individuals for change, CBOs pull their resources together through team building to change attitudes about power, using *values* for dialogue (Senge, 1990, 1994, 1999). According to Korten (1990) voluntary organizations that learn like this change their “development roles and strategies” and are likely to view power differently in the spirit of a self-criticism, and ability to learn from errors (pp. 91–132).

Participatory development has for a long time sustained an idyllic picture of rural communities by presenting a rather simplistic view of local contexts with groups or communities often seen as culturally and politically homogeneous and harmonious (Stirrat, 1996).⁵⁹ Here relationships of power and control are legitimized, and rural populations are perpetually placed in need of the action of external agencies. This harmonious view of community differs acutely from reality and impoverishes the ability to deal with power differences among participants. It discounts muted voices, reproduces the gender biases that characterize most communities and “to a greater or

⁵⁹ Several authors have also argued that such presentations create a neo-orientalist mentality that subjugates rather than liberates (Bevan, 2000.; Eyben & Ladbury, 1995; Guijt & Shah, 1998; Mohan, 2001; Nelson & Wright, 1995; Stirrat, 1996). This neo-Orientalism originated from colonialism’s view of societies as organic, harmonious, oriental, and rural alongside progressive ones.

lesser extent—the attitudes of most development” (McGee, 2002, pp. 105–106). Adult education calls for a break from these assumptions of homogeneous communities or institutions to the recognition of role of people as agents of empowerment. In the next section I discuss empowerment and the role of CBOs in creating a balance in power.

Toward empowerment: How CBOs create balance in the understanding of power

To correct the imbalance in the understanding of power, CBOs redefine and apply power in a more holistic manner in local contexts within organizational and local contexts. Empowerment in participation entails a reappraisal of the social needs of people, paying close attention to the use of spiritual values. Bush and Folger (1994) see empowerment as the restoration to individuals of a sense of their own value and strength and their own capacity to handle life’s problems. By using methods and processes within local church groups, CBOs restore a sense of value and strength to members, convincing them of their own capacity to handle problems. CBOs seek empowerment by differentiating local groups, arguing for their interest, giving them collective awareness and confidence to confront their situations (Senge, 1990). The challenge here is to shift the balance, making reductionism, measurement, and economics servants, not masters, and “putting the weak before the powerful” (Chambers, 1997b, p. 74)⁶⁰ This means breaking out of the prison of the old fixed, linear, unitary professionalism of things and establishing bottom-up approaches that privilege the local.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Chambers (1997b) presents a challenge to uppers, rejecting what he calls “reductionism of participation in professionalism. Top down, center-outwards patterns become self-re-enforcing through rewards status and power. He instead advocates for normal professionalism which helps to explain how bad policies and programs are generated by “uppers” who seek to transfer their own realities to lowers (Chambers 1997b, p. 74). Chambers (1997b), therefore, argues for a new professionalism to be embraced by all agents of development, by asking who gains and who loses. Development agents “help those who are deprived to help themselves” (Chambers 1983, p. 189).

⁶¹ By focusing on the individual and the local (e.g., the village) as the sites of empowerment, Mohan (2001) argues, participatory development confines awareness and action, premising the insider/outsider division as critical to meaningful development. This mentality places the outsider at the center of the development process because only the outsider can change things, while emphasizing cultural

At the organizational level, CBOs empower people by making broad pronouncements that inform the public on participatory ideals and the progress of people. The focus on the need for this kind of empowerment emerged in various communities during the 1960s.⁶² Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio* written in 1963, addressed the needs of a changing world in relation to the “progress of peoples.” The encyclical supports the rights of people in their own development by critiquing capitalism, when it does not serve the common good. The Pope rejects the trickle-down effect of development, fostering ecumenical leadership in word and deed. His work and pronouncements had communitarian grounding as he was deeply committed to participation (Mich, 1998). The Pope challenged the sacred cows of private property that legitimate the drastic inequalities among the rich and the poor. The Pope did leave the door open to a justified revolution when the common good is threatened by the tyranny of the so-called powerful, by pointing to the poor of developing nations as the locus of power. Though his position as Bishop of Rome did not allow him to be grounded in local contexts as such, he had a deep concern about the moral and spiritual needs of the local community (Mich, 1998).⁶³

difference at the neglect of the structural barriers to development. Such privileging suggests that the technical, western knowledge has more to offer, and undermines authentic learning between locals and outsiders.

⁶² In the 1960s the focus on power analysis and the need for empowerment in various communities saw “black power” and the civil rights movements expressing themselves in the African American community.

⁶³ A criticism leveled against Paul VI’s encyclical by Mich (1998) is that while there is “a social vision of the common humanity of all peoples as a strategy of social change, the call to altruism does not fully face the underlying reality of power and the empowerment of the poor” (p. 162). His appeals to altruism alone were often seen as naïve because they seem to support the continued domination of the poor by the powerful, thereby reinforcing an attitude of paternalism toward the poor. Understandably, Pope Paul’s encyclical *Populorum Progressio* is rooted in the classical Catholic social vision that views political power in an idealistic way. According to the vision of the society, the purpose of the state is to serve the common good. This Catholic social tradition views (political) power “from the top-down” rather than the “bottom-up”(Mich, 1998). This tradition sees power as the responsibility and prerogative of those in leadership roles, in business, government education, and the church, whose duty and responsibility it is to care for the needs of the poor. Only in later documents do we begin to see the awareness that the poor themselves must become agents of change, and thus exercise political power through empowerment. While the church’s social tradition has supported the importance of workers organizing through unions, some have observed that the Catholic Church has been rather slow in applying this strategy for empowerment on the global scene (Dorr, 1991).

Having a social vision is one thing, and finding the means to achieve the vision is another. The political strategy of the encyclical is rooted in a harmonious social vision that relies on the goodwill and largesse of the rich and powerful. It fails to bring out the view of a “people power” that looks at the power that emanates from below and serves to change local contexts (Curan, 1985). To be effective, “people power” must be coalesced and organized, and that is where the need for an organization is apparent, especially at the local level. As Pierce (1984) noted, “even congregations that are decisive to seek power as the means to defend their families and communities often do not know how to get it and so power is obtained through organization” (p. 44). According to Mich (1998), one person in the Catholic social tradition that serves as a good example of being rooted at the local level was Cesar Chavez, a Catholic priest and social activist. He led the effort to empower farm workers through labor organizing efforts. His focus on power was unique as he drew on the altruism of ordinary people who supported fledgling unions. The centerpiece of his efforts was to organize the workers’ power, and he could not avoid the question of political and economic power either. He explicitly analyzed these issues as he galvanized countervailing power to bring about change.

A meeting point between a local-level understanding of empowerment and the broad level view in CBOs can be seen in the examples of Chavez and Paul VI. They were both grounded in the *communitarian spirit*, with a commitment to a *common good* of the entire society. Because the common good is always jeopardized when the wealthy and the “powerful” hoard the resources meant for humanity, Chavez and Paul VI opposed such mentalities by working to *empower the voiceless*, for without their active participation in the economic and social political process the common good is not achieved. Both Chavez and Pope Paul VI shared a *sacramental worldview* with a spirituality that is rooted in commitment to social justice. Both leaders shared a

conviction about nonviolence as the way to bring about social change. They were both *committed to the marginalized*, and while their strategies for change were diverse, their intended audience was the same: those whose basic needs were denied them. For Chavez, his focus was on those farm workers within the most “developed” nation, and for Paul VI, his focus was the world. The two men were committed not only to the economic needs, but also the moral and spiritual needs of the human being. Most other clergy and lay Catholics have sought empowerment through their writings and the witness of their personal lifestyles. Their views have often been expressed in ecclesial documents with a focus on development. I shall now trace a few of such documents with a view of locating the power embedded in them.

The power of ecclesial documents in participatory development

As a mechanism for social change, written documents also explain the role of CBOs in human development, against varying contexts at given historical moments. Ecclesial documents are platforms through which deaneries, parishes, and the various departments and commissions within a diocese can stand to announce reforms based on the Social Justice Agenda. In this section, I mention only the encyclicals by popes that have existed over the years to expound major teachings that attempt to provide guidance for members in relation to the values of social justice. A major concern, however, has been that many of the Church’s social teachings have neither been well-published nor put into practice. In fact, some commentators have referred to the ecclesiastical statements and documents as “the Church’s best kept secrets.” (Henriot, 2001, p. 33). In 1971, the Synod of Bishops in Rome “Justice in the world” (World-Synod-of-Catholic-Bishops, 1971), insisted that ecclesial documents should be publicized to enable ordinary members of the church be involved in its decision making process (No. 46). Such publicity enables dioceses develop more fitting voices that seek to involve lay people in decision making process (Dorr, 1991, p. 3).

To conclude this analysis, I reiterate Mohan's (2001) argument that knowledge generation is an inter-subjective process and that the subtle danger of re-inscribing power relations between the expert and the other fails to empower the marginalized. By failing to question the relationship between expert and non-expert, and how reality is portrayed in different groups, participatory development in the past has enthroned a rational view of power. Its methodologies have tended to generalize and homogenize and to regard communities as consensual and harmonious (Mohan, 2001). A break from these assumptions of homogeneous communities or institutions to the review of power in the emerging paradigm of development could be a project for CBOs. Cornwall (2003) argues for ways in which people identify themselves with particular structures that can offer a better ground for advocacy and action. In the next section, I delve into this role in CBOs.

(b). The Role of Structures in Participatory Development in CBOs

The effect of paradigm shifts on the understanding of structural change

The capital formation approach in the 1950s saw participation following a gradual enthronement of authority structures by modernizing the elite as the primary engine of change (Apter, 1965; Gyekye, 1997) Traditionalism and local efforts were identified as obstacles to economic growth and development. Here participation was modeled after the structure of "rationality and efficiency" (Peet & Hartwick, 1999, p. 76), with *neo-liberal traditions* presuming the capacity of an organization through the effectiveness of market structures that produce capital for the organization.

According to Mintzberg (1987), represented in Figure 17, organizational structures are made of the top-level management, the mid-level and the operational core at the bottom level as a strategy for controlling (Mintzberg). Figure 17 depicts a typical organ-o-gram based on the capitalist formation approach, showing the development model for extension services. Components of the organ-o-gram show

their relative emphasis within an organization. The “strategic apex” represents the head of the organization, which operates on a hierarchical level, bearing responsibility for services and funding the project. At the apex is the one-person “management” level. At the middle level, the organization is divided into two arms showing the “techno-structure” and “support staff.” At the base of the organ-o-gram is the extension unit, with field agents interfacing with the poor forming the operational core. In CBOs, such a top-down organizational model is often represented by the head of a diocese, who takes responsibility for facilitating the entire process though often ill-equipped for the job. In most cases, such a person has little knowledge about development but is empowered to do it by virtue of his position. This mentality was influenced by the modernist and neoliberal capital formation approaches. This study suggests that this mentality leads to non-participation of poor people in their development because in such a structural setup, the poor continue to lose, while the elite continue to gain.

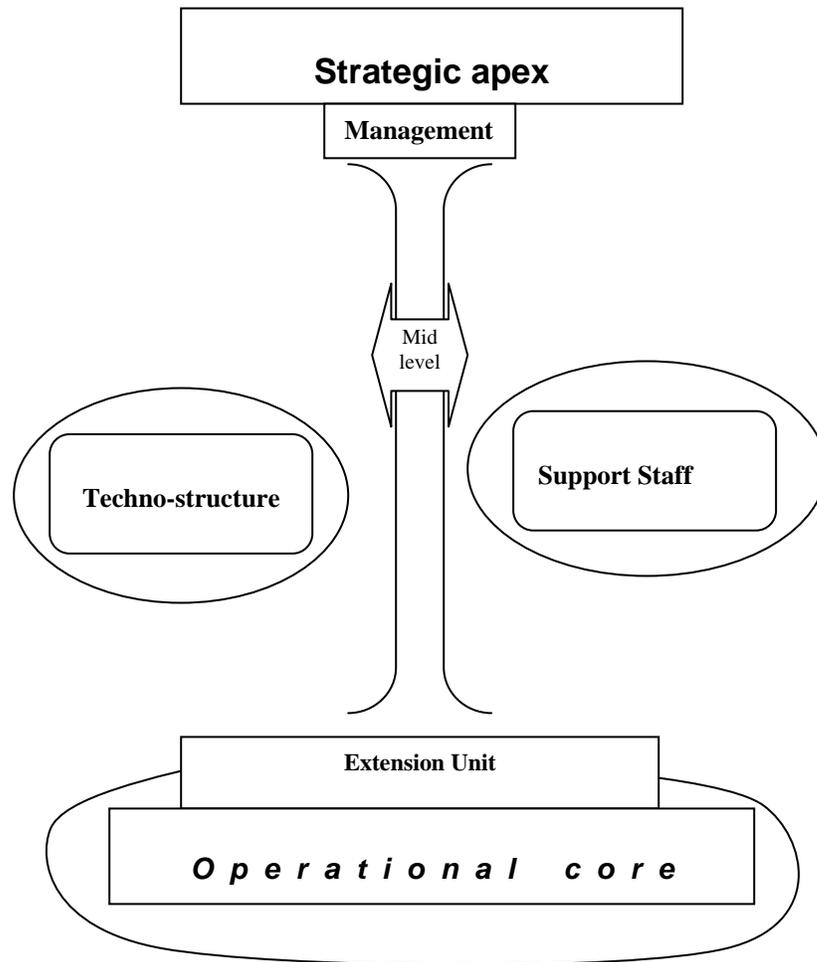


Figure 17: Mintzberg (1987) organizational structure based on the capital formation approach

More recently, with the paradigm shift in development thinking around the globe, the structures of organizations are changing with the drive for popular participation seeking to transform development practice, involving intended beneficiaries in projects. This shift began in the 1970s, with the understanding of development as a human factor rather than as capital formation, culminating in increasing efficiency in relation to complex community differences (Mohan, 2002). Inquiry approaches in the form of methods and tools for community participation also

emerged in the 1970s and early 1980s (Brown et al., 2002). These approaches have made incursions into CBOs, with participatory approaches such as PRA spreading tremendously. Though still maintaining a hierarchical structure in terms of their project operations and relationship with intended beneficiaries, CBOs are now beginning to include more lay people in the development structure of their diocese and parishes than ever before. Figure 18 represents a typical organizational model of many dioceses in developing countries, although this model is still based on the basic-needs approach.

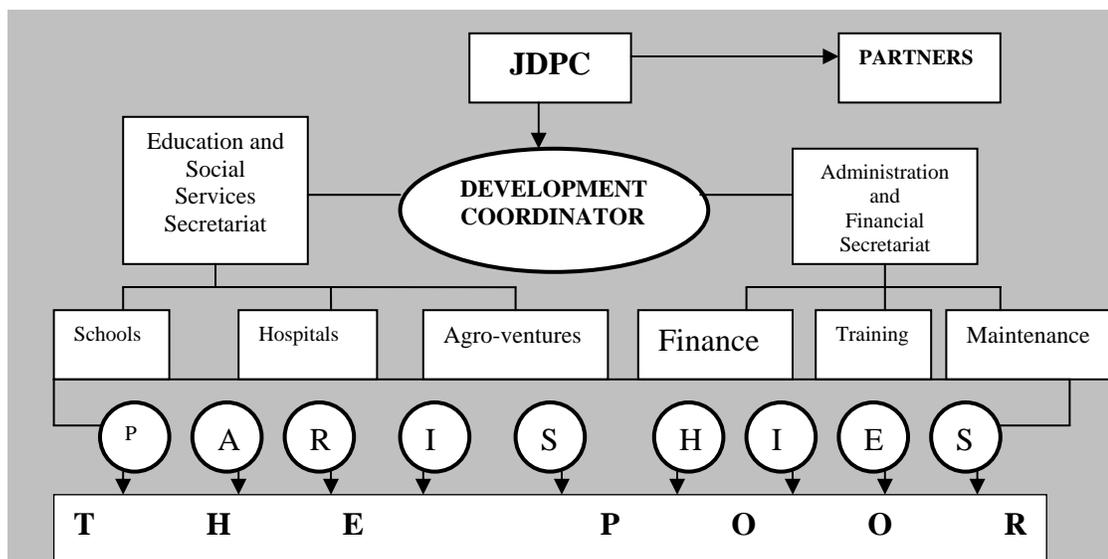


Figure 18: The popular organizational model of a diocese based on the basic-needs approach

More desirable, however, is the need for a structure that embraces the populist model that emerged in the 1980s, reappraising the role of people as situated agents. Since local people are now becoming the focus of development and are not just regarded as intended beneficiaries, organizations need to update their structures to reflect this change. The implication of the paradigm shift in CBOs is that emphasis is now placed on self-reliance and the capacity of structures to enable local people to shape

development together with those in the hierarchy. CBOs that adopt such a bottom-up development structure embrace lay stakeholders who are trained as qualified proprietors of development activities more than the clergy who are trained for pastoral ministry. As participatory development comes to the forefront, mainstream discourses on participation in CBOs will have to extend their structures toward such inclusiveness. These structural approaches will practically put the poor first in the Church's social agenda, ensuring that they gain in the effort of development and thus implement the much-talked-about option for the poor (SOCIAL-AGENDA, 2002).

According to #301 in the Social Justice Agenda,

This is an option, a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness. It affects the life of each Christian inasmuch as he or she seeks to imitate the life of Christ, but it applies equally to social responsibilities and structures and hence to the manner of living, and to the logical decisions to be made concerning ownership and the use of goods. (SOCIAL-AGENDA, #301)

A new view of structural change in CBOs

In Nigeria, dioceses are fast adapting themselves to the emerging trend of development as a way of recovering their lost voices regarding poverty eradication by developing structures relevant to the task of social development. Departments and commissions of development are fast springing up in dioceses, with the hope of becoming more inclusive than ever before. Structures such as deaneries, parishes, secretariats for the administration of financial matters, hospitals, schools, personnel boards, commissions, departments, and various pious groups are springing up in dioceses. These are becoming more aware of their roles not only in evangelization, but also in contributing to the poverty eradication of church members.

By reviewing the meaning and role of their structures, CBOs employ broader processes of governance to include stakeholders in their own process of development.

Uphoff et al. (1998) delineate “structures” that lead to beneficial change and “can alter possibilities for production and well-being of the group toward the desired directions in developing country contexts” (p. viii). A taxonomy of organizational mechanisms is usually developed by the group itself based on the ability of such mechanisms to facilitate knowledge acquisition, lead to productive results or change, while enabling stakeholder participation and collective action (Anglin, 2004; Owens, 2004). In general, a diocese has become more relevant as the main structure for (evangelization and) development for CBOs in Nigeria, and according to North (1990), the diocesan model as a structure is designed to fulfill given set of roles, rather than rules.

To foster this role for individuals at the local level and for leaders within the hierarchical level, the diocesan model needs to become a model that fosters collective learning in an organizational setting with linkages between the diocesan model and other local context to characterize poverty eradication strategies. Korten (1990), in his analysis of churches as voluntary organizations, makes a critical assessment that sees beyond the individual community, while seeking structural change at the organizational level:

Voluntary organizations could no longer confine themselves to peripheral roles in providing relief to the worst victims of poverty and supporting scattered village development projects. They would need to interject new perspectives into decision making about the policies and structures that set the direction for local and national development... The job of the voluntary organization is to coalesce and energize self-management networks through the power of ideas values and communication links. (pp. 92, 127)

To determine the capacity of a diocese as a voluntary organization, the structure of the diocese needs to evolve and reinvent itself in line with the shifting paradigm of development. Such a structure reviews social intervention with specific duties and requirements of personnel along the time lines of its development history.

The challenge of Small Christian Communities in top-down structures

Traditionally, the diocese has been used as a main structure or model for organizing development in the Catholic Church in Nigeria. The emergence of the more-informal Basic Christian communities or Small Christian Communities (SCCs) is challenging this structure. SCCs are grassroots community structures of lay people that thrive on the value of *sharing* not only their material belongings but also common liturgical experiences in the light of participation (Dorr, 1991; Freire, 2000). Such structures are fast emerging in local settings.⁶⁴ Richard (1990, p. 5) describes who participates and what participation means for those in SCCs:

Participation here includes ordinary farm-workers, the urban poor, and people of indigenous descent, women and young people. A creative participation in the Church is extremely difficult for most people from these sectors, and when it does occur it is most often a subordinate or superficial participation. This participation is possible in the SCCs because everyone comes in with dignity and freedom.

One reason Richard (1990) advances why ecclesiastical institutions fail to participate in the life of the people is that institutional Churches tend to be closer to the dominant powers than to the poor. However, for the SCCs it is a different experience:

Because of their small size, their creativity and their spirituality SCCs are able to participate in the life of the people, especially in the life of the poor and the oppressed who live on the margins of society. The SCCs do encourage basic religious activities such as prayer, bible readings and theological reflection, but they also participate in the promotion of labor unions and cooperatives, alternative health care and education, the defense of human rights, and solidarity with the struggles of indigenous peoples and women. (Richard, 1990, p. 5)

⁶⁴ Simply defined as a gathering of 8–12 people who pray, share, support one another, learn, and go forth in mission, evangelizing one another (Dorr, 1991), SCCs are a form of the Church lived in a communitarian manner, especially among the poor. From the earliest Christian times, such patterns used for community development were detected (Sider, 1997, p. 213). Korten (1990) believes Small Christian communities do help to build alliances and mutual trust between poor people and their external networks at broader levels while also affording essential services to the poor by working simultaneously to build the capacity of people.

In this chapter, I have reviewed participation in the building of capacity of viable communities by tracing the historical evolution of participation and its changing role in development and poverty eradication. By analyzing how power helps to shape the image of CBOs in local contexts and the changing role of a diocese as a structure of development, I locate the emergence of small Christian communities as a model for building a new understanding of participation that meaningfully involves stakeholders. This conceptual overview of participation and development lays a useful foundation for empirical analysis on how CBOs could employ participatory processes in accomplishing poverty eradication goals within a particular context.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

(a). Data Collection Method

Data collection for this section was aimed at soliciting input that would inform my main research question: How do church-based organizations in Ogoja diocese organize to facilitate the participation of people in their own development? I focused my data collection method on two levels: the institutional level and the personal level. At the personal level, I identified two categories of respondents; the clergy and the laity. Because each category is located differently in the organizational structure of the diocese and played specific though often overlapping roles, I deemed it important to gain their insights relating to the important question of participation and the organizational dynamics of Ogoja diocese. For the clergy, key questions asked reflected on issues of power and structure and how these affected ordained priests and nuns with regard to inclusiveness. For the laity, I concentrated on lay women, men, youths and catechists, teachers, principals, fieldworkers, health workers, and how stakeholders envisaged power in development in the diocesan structure. Within these two categories, I equally used three levels of data collection; focus group discussions, individual interviews, and questionnaires.

Individual interviews were inputs from selected individual stakeholders to enable a deeper understanding of their thoughts, feelings, and actions with regard to their ideas on participation in the diocese. Such interviews included households and semi-structured interviews during the *PRA* as well as in-depth one-on-one interviews with two individuals. *Focus group discussions* were conducted at both local and diocesan levels to enable me to determine the organizational space whereby church members discuss and debate fundamental issues that are hard to tap through ordinary processes. Such focus groups encouraged participants to explore positive avenues with a critical spirit, linking this with a desire for action as a way to improve the organizational system. *Open-ended questions* were also solicited from selected individuals to corroborate information from group discussions and personal interviews (See Figure 19).

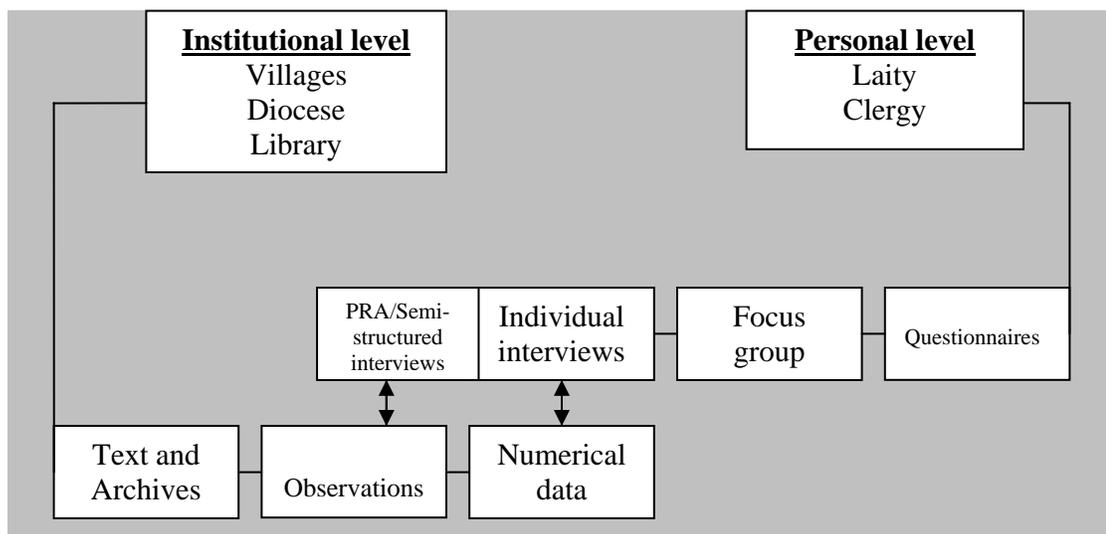


Figure 19: Levels of data collection on participation

At the institutional level, *observations* were made within villages and the diocese to review the level of participation within these settings. Observations would inform this

study on the structures that are on ground to influence participatory development in the diocese. *Numerical data* and PRA findings also enabled diagrammatic representations of how levels of poverty affected participation, while *textual analysis* of ecclesial documents informed me on the relationship of the diocese to the wider church in ideological terms. Data collected from all five (5) deaneries in Ogoja diocese had the following categories in mind: the place of values in participation, power dynamics in the diocese, as well as the uses and abuses of structures within the organizational setup of the diocese.

(b). Data Analysis and Discussion

i. Structural Analysis of Ogoja Diocese

Paternalistic structures

Paternalistic tendencies were observed in already-established structures in the diocese. Of the 7 schools established in Ogoja deanery, four (4) of the institutions were specifically directed toward the handicapped. Other institutions were specifically geared toward benefiting members often visualized as living in very poor conditions. Structures established by the diocese for such purposes included hospitals, schools, clinics, welfare homes, and so forth. A clergyman observed in a focus group in Ogoja deanery that

If you look at it carefully, you will discover that though we are doing one or two things in terms of trying to build schools and so on, the real target of education is not only to teach the person in the classroom but to also help him to be useful to himself and to the wider society in terms of what he too can do. But we are not really leading the way for those who are looking to say they are making some effort to enable that support to come.

The present organizational structure of the Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), the official development structure of the diocese, was seen to be operating under the framework of what Mohan (2002) refers to as “the basic-needs

approach,” with a lot of interest in beneficiary benefits. Inquiry participatory approaches such as Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) are making their way into the diocese; however, their impact is patronizing. A clergyman in Ogoja deanery who was involved in the PRA commented that the exercise did not create the impact that members expected:

During the last PRA, it appeared that parishioners were happy that the diocese was trying to help them solve their problems. Not many people have seen any improvement in the structures since that time. During PRA the diocese was promising that they will do something to help the poor, but till now none of us has seen anything.

Most of the laity who appraised PRA also observed that although interactive learning was for the first time integrated into the life of the diocese, development projects and decision-making processes are still top-down, controlled by the clergy to the exclusion of lay people. A development worker in a personal interview described JDPC in the following words:

The problem of JDPC and most of the church-based initiatives when they bring proposals for me to look at for fundraising, the proposals will always start with saying the archbishop decided that this is will be a good idea. The development coordinator decided that this will be a good idea. So at a point I tell them look: you have to tell me what you think yourself and not what you think others want because your own ideas are important. I think that is the problem.

Structural arrangements as observed in the diocese are not helping JDPC reverse this paternalistic tendency. Diocesan structures were observed to be generally ill-coordinated and ill-equipped.

We lack an organizational structure to make people see the church as an agency for progress. And because that unified structure is not there, with set up objectives, aims, and policies, the people are not brought to that level of understanding that the church is committed to development.

Diocesan structures were run by levies such as school fees, hospital bills often demanded from parishioners who had little or no income sources, and nothing was organized to increase their economic standing. The Community Based Rehabilitation program (CBR), a group of lay fieldworkers who focus on self-help projects and micro-credit facilities is now falling apart because of a lack of organizational support from the diocese. A fieldworker remarked that

CBR in Ogoja diocese is dying because of lack of support from parish priests. They do not see we need to equip the field workers with mobility, by providing money or maintaining the motorcycles. Without money, it is impossible to buy motor cycle for the field workers to aid them to go to visit the rural areas. Parish priest are asked to help with fuelling the machine and maintenance and in most cases that help does not come. Some times they convert the machine and ask their boys to use it for errands.

Though paternalistic tendencies were found within the diocesan model, it has been serving as an organizing model in educational programs for the diocese for a long time, with Catholic value-systems in vogue.

The Catholic value-system: a catalyst for structural change.

The diocesan model was appraised by members, as one nun said:

If you compare our schools we any other public schools, our standard is quite high. If we are able too raise the standard of our low salaries, I think we will do a lot of good. The future of any educational enterprise depends on if teachers are given refresher courses from time to time it will refresh the knowledge they had before. Because some of us were in the labor market for years before getting this job, so we need refresher courses. And then of course I have always talked of incentives I have always talked about something like a pension scheme.

The incentives that were constantly mentioned to boost the morale of school employees were increase in salaries, refresher courses, and pension schemes. This was seen as a mechanism for raising the already high standard of Catholic schools. It was

also seen as making the church fall in line with the regular institutions in the treatment of employees.

I feel at a certain point we should begin to reason in line with the needs of the society. Because I am afraid other organizations are beginning to see, to reason into this pension scheme thing. It really will not add anything into the wage-bill of the church if that is what we are afraid of.

What most members agreed catalyzed change was the inculcation of spiritual values in the curriculum of studies for the school. Most parents preferred to send their children to Catholic schools because they cherished the inculcation of values in the curriculum. One teacher observed:

People come to our school... because of our curriculum not that we are performing magic. From time to time we gather ourselves, gather a team and we say look into the curriculum and what is going on in the world to address what is lacking. If we depend on the Ministry of education, nothing will get done. We include moral instructions, which some other schools regard as a waste of time. They will just be expecting children to behave well, but you don't have time to teach them.

Semi-structured interviews conducted among households revealed two sets of values or principles that were randomly mentioned: Human life (the value to sustain human life, especially for their young growing children and teens) and perseverance (the value of determination to do things without fail). There were indications that members of the diocese had a high esteem for Biblical values because they tended to refer to such *values* as a moral justification for championing pro-poor causes. In response to the question "Which values influence your actions?" during a focus group discussion with 12 *Lishie gie ushu* women who founded a school project for girls, ten (10) of them insisted that moral values propelled them more than the need to maximize economic profit. One of the women said,

We try to put moral values first in our curriculum. We advise the headmaster to always use the bible. In the morning assembly, one of the things they do is to

read the Bible, say some prayers and things like that. Moral values specifically entails the child being taught about God, learning certain prayers, and realizing that he must have a strong relationship with his creator as well as his or her neighbors. (Ogoja)

For a member of the small SVP group in Ikom, the primary purpose of being a Vincentian is to live out the values of altruism to the full. Their aim is

to see that services in whatever capacity mean something to somebody somewhere, even when you don't know the person. We don't have tribal boundaries, nor do we do things based on favoritism. In St. Vincent, we are looking beyond that.

Using spiritual values, the diocesan model was seen to present itself as a believable structure compared with government structures, especially in the fight against HIV/AIDS. A clergyman said,

If funds are provided for the care of people living with HIV/AIDS it would not be diverted, unlike the government where there is lack of accountability.

Members also described the relevance of Catholic education for them, as such structures helped not only in inculcating values, but also to build sustainability.

Catholic schools as structures that build sustainability

I observed that Catholic schools in the diocese are also seeking to foster participation through implementation in the school curriculum of moral instructions and vocational studies. A focus group with school teachers and principals of Catholic schools revealed that members understood education with moral values in the diocese to include teaching about God, Biblical principles, prayers, and even ethical norms such as acceptable dress codes, appreciating sacramental marriage, and so forth.

In our church we emphasize that fact that parents get married in the church and if any of our teachers take-in (becomes pregnant) before marriage, the person

is sent away as a typical example to help the children understand that it is not a good thing. But in public schools its not there, they don't value that aspect provided you teach your subject.

Members argued how curricula of vocational subjects enable children, especially girls, to learn interior decoration, cookery, sewing (girls), tailoring (boys), and so forth.

However, many lay respondents decried the high school fees and cost of textbooks required of parents as most parents who seek education for their children are often of a low income. Though the standard of Catholic schools and hospitals was perceived to be higher than those that were government-owned, members identified a number of bottlenecks in the diocesan educational system. A major problem identified during semi-structured interviews was the dwindling standard of education and the falling standard of schools in the region as a whole, summarized by the PRA report (Abue & Baldeh, 2000):

There is a 100% access to primary schools and about 95% enrolment. However, there are inadequate teaching and learning materials in almost all schools in Ogoja diocese. There is high rate of school dropout. These youths are poorly educated and have no means of accessing vocational training centers to enhance their skills. (p. 33)

These factors inhibited participation in the structural setup of diocesan schools.

Employees are losing incentives because of low income or poor salary structures.

Eleven out of the 12 school principals and teachers in a focus group discussion in Ogoja deanery agreed that education has not been taken to the grassroots because of these obstacles. One of the teachers put it this way:

If you look at it carefully, you will discover that although we are doing one or two things in terms of trying to build schools and so on, the real target of education is not only to teach the person in the classroom but to also help him to be useful to himself and to the wider society in terms of what he too can do.

Members during a focus group with teachers in Ogoja deanery mentioned some of the factors that kill incentives for teachers as low salaries, a lack of refresher courses, pension schemes, and gratuity for retired staff. Lay respondents reasoned that more (retirement) benefits to employees will increase participation. They argued that early missionaries encouraged more participation compared with the Church's effort at present because they offered more benefits to employees. A clergyman in Ogoja deanery argued that schemes such as early retirement and benefits for workers were not strictly necessary. This was because such schemes led to an increased early mortality rate, alcoholism, idleness, smoking, and similar social ills. The clergy tended to present the view of lay peoples as mere recipients of the church's benefits.

The diocese as a learning organization

There were indications that the diocese is ready to learn to improve its structure to become a more viable development mechanism. According to Korten (1980, p. 498), a learning organization is a self-critical organization that has the ability to learn from errors. The diocese has made a lot of strides in the area of grass-root evangelization, and consequently members believed they can learn to improve on its performance practice for social development by applying values to social development. Another member of clergy, a nun and school teacher, observed how the diocese could help the poor acquire skills:

The church has always done much in terms of grass-root evangelization and can be taught how to engage in self-help activities and programs. But you see such people (the poor) do not have knowledge and the skills that can be applied to do productive work. I think the church can help in providing such skills.

A structure or value system that people believe in and can depend on was found to be grossly lacking. Both clergy and laity agreed that if the diocese admits that development does not rest on the clergy alone, there will be improvements. They

recommended adequate training for members, especially the laity. A clergyman observed:

I think also that we lack incentives and trained manpower. This issue of having the emphasis on the clergy and religious and so on, the first thing is that in this generation of ours, we don't have well-trained Catholics who are as fully committed as the priests and sisters are. Because when you talk about people who are committed, you need to think of training them. We should look for lay people and train them effectively.

Another subtle tendency mentioned as a militating factor against the diocesan model was its tendency to see development always in terms of *charity and relief to those in need*. A priest confirmed that charity was the motivating factor for the diocese in most of her projects.

The intention is that whatever the church is doing is charity oriented, the Church wants to help one another. That's why you find out that there is not that seriousness in relation to pension.

However, the tendency for the diocese to organize on charity bases tended to make the poor in the diocese become dependent on those in the hierarchical positions for support. There are no external networks that connect the diocese to partners. The diocesan model was described by one clergyman as "more like a program in theory, with the practical dimension grossly lacking in human resources and infrastructures." These constrains were also spilled over at village level churches. Table 14 shows the constrains at both diocesan and village levels as identified and analyzed during a poverty discussion at the PRA in Ogoja diocese.

Table 14: Empirical constraints within diocese/villages as identified during a poverty discussion

Diocesan level	Village level
1. Top down mentalities	1. Lack of grassroots organization
2. Clergy/laity dichotomies	2. Excessive religious practices
3. Men are highly favored	3. Lack of collective action
4. Charity based organizing	4. Few projects in villages
5. No external networks	5. Projects poorly organized
6. Overbearing influence of state	6. Lack of small groups
	7. Deeply embedded practices

These constraints had structural consequences at both the diocesan and village levels, and participants highlighted how such constraints affected their poverty conditions. Participants during semi-structured interviews also indicated the need for the diocese to shift its attention to the local level by working with community-based organizations at the village level. Such community-based organizing was seen to encourage the formation of more viable structures such as schools and hospitals at the local level.

The emerging influence of small groups in the diocese

I found an emergence of informal small community groups at the grassroots community level in the diocese. Semi-structured interviews conducted with some of such small groups revealed that the laity were becoming interested in how self-help projects undertaken in small groups could give them a sense of independence. Respondents argued for self-help projects that encourage employment opportunities for local peasants. A village women observed in a focus group:

By establishing a garri factory you encourage people by way of employment. Also people can be encouraged, through soft loans or micro credit and the cassava can be processed into garri and starch. Poultry farming can also be encourage and even palm-oil processing through the hand–press, fish farming,

at a small scale, computer education, small scale trading by graduates, vocational and skill acquisition centers for rendering such necessary service like shoe-mending, tailoring, and upholstery.

Such projects were noticed in most parishes, as members piloted them to encourage participation: A total of (20) self-help projects initiated by small groups were identified in Ogoja deanery alone: poultry farms, *baba-jobs*, (begging for money on the streets), weeding farm lands, rag-days, appeal cards, launchings, communal labor, harvesting in families, *Susu* (save as you like or can), working for the rich, joint ownership of grinding engine, mill or oil processing, substance agriculture, buying farms to weed, establishing cassava farms or selling it at the end of the year, fetching water or carrying sand or stones for builders, and reciprocal labor by turns. A catechist in a focus group in Boki deanery observed that such projects lead to self-sustenance for the parish:

We must do something that can generate income for the parish to let reduce poverty and not just to bring money, bring money. Each parish must look for a meaningful project that will bring money to each parish.

From my observations, the St Francis Parish Marriage Encounter group at Obudu deanery was building a hall so that parishioners would not have wedding receptions outside, but in their hall, and a fixed amount would be paid for each use of the hall. The Christian Men Association at Ugep deanery was also building a house that could be rented to people during pilgrimages and similar programs. One member gave an example from outside the diocese during a personal interview:

The St Joseph Akwa-Ibom Central Christian Association have more than enough buildings that are rented to people in pilgrimage and similar programs, they also have houses that ply the routes and this activities provide enough income for the church development and enhance individual life standard. So that people are happy to belong, because both their spiritual and material needs are supplied.

The most prominent small group found in almost all the parishes was the SVP society, which caters to poor cases. These exist in 20 parishes in the diocese. Their “conferences” cater specifically to the poorest of the poor. Also the Legion of Mary, a group that engages in social work in support of the poor, exists in the 36 parishes and in most outstations. Parishes were doing a lot at respective grassroots outstation locations to enhance the work of social development. What I did not observe, however, was a coordination of such activities within JDPC in the diocese. A development worker suggested a more flexible approach by JDPC that would make parishes and outstations become more coordinated with each other:

To succeed, JDPC through good development coordinator will need to have a coordinated link between the social services departments and the financial administration to ensure adequate and strict financing for existing schools and hospitals, personnel training and implementation of projects in the parishes. Only such a coordinated bottom-up structural administrative set-up in the diocese will ensure that development reaches the poor.

Small groups could also help give a sense of direction to youths throughout the diocese that did not seem to find solutions to problems they encountered on a regular basis. No forums in the diocese was observed where youths come together to address social issues. Such social groups that meet and discuss self-help efforts corroborated by church teachings could intervene in poverty eradication. Suggestions were made by individuals in their answers to questionnaires for the formation of such groups (see Appendix A(f)). These questionnaires pointed to how the groups within the diocese that organize to address pressing social issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, and premarital sex, based on moral values.

ii. Power Dynamics and Consequences in the Local Context

How members defined power

Respondents in Ogoja diocese had simplified notions (Simon et al., 2003) and tended to view power, according to the traditional understanding (Goltz & Hietapelto, 2002), as constituted in central locations (Kothari, 2001). Fieldworkers in the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program revealed that there was a lack of attention paid to factors at the local level by the clergy in parishes, and this led to the failures of the CBR program. This indicated their view of power as centrally located on the clergy.

Parishes may feel reluctant but if the parish priest gives the order the money will be released. At training, fieldworkers are trained on how to relate with parish priest because without the priest giving the order, nothing will work. But the priest feels that the federal government has put a lot of money in the program and so no matter how you explain to them they will not be satisfied. If they had the interest they will make it work, but without their cooperation nothing will work.

Nine (9) out of the ten (10) fieldworkers, except the nun, during a focus group in Obudu agreed that because priests are showing little interest in donating their levies, taking care of the motor cycles, or paying the fieldworkers in their parishes, parishioners are not in touch with the program. By reinforcing their power and ignoring the knowledge generated at local contexts by fieldworkers, the clergy in the diocese are orchestrating an end to the CBR project initiated to address the needs of the poor. One of the fieldworkers suspected that the reason priests are doing little to educate the people on the CBR program because they *do not relate to the problems of the poor*, since they do not experience the issues of poverty themselves:

Some priests have refused to pay a diocesan levy of at least one thousand naira every month for the CBR. Some priests have paid that, but most of the priests *do not encourage financial contribution* from members. If the parish priest gives the order the money will be released. But the priest feels that the federal government or a foreign agency has put a lot of money in the program and so

no matter how you explain to them they will not be satisfied. If they were interested they would.

Class and gender power struggles

Though rural women within parishes were observed to work hard, form co-operative groups, and organize and sell their local products, there were without micro-credit loans or preservation methods. Women groups were found to be far fewer in number than men groups. This was because there was a higher premium on men's contribution to development than on women's. A nun who was an AIDS worker in the diocese thought that women needed more empowering roles in the diocese. She said,

Most of the rural women are not encouraged to form co-operate groups so that they can organize and sell their products through micro credits, preservation method so that they don't just sell to middlemen and get back to their poverty again. The women should be given loans and encouraged to sell and return the capital after a given period. By so doing they will be setting up their own property and the profits can then be put to church use at least on a 50% bases.

Of the score of voluntary organization operated by both the diocese and secular enterprises in the region, men groups were found to be higher than women, youths, and children combined. Below is the numerical data of groups found in Ogoja within the diocesan and local government areas: 550 men groups (320 secular, 230 diocese), 155 Women groups (80 secular, 75 diocese), 220 Youth groups (150 secular, 70 diocese) and 46 Children groups (36 secular and 10 diocese). From this numerical data, represented in Figure 20, it can be seen that the women were grossly underrepresented in comparison with how hard they worked and sought to raise their voices seeking for empowerment.

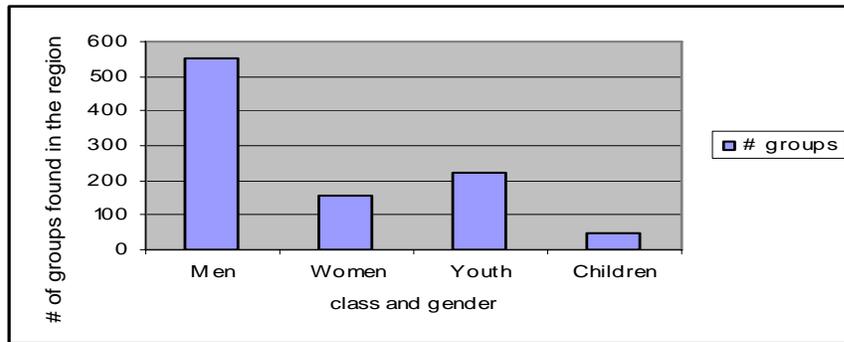


Figure 20: Groups found in Ogoja region represented by class and gender

Women groups were, however, creating awareness of poverty eradication schemes in villages. A group of local women in Edor have formed a conscious-awareness group for youths. They agreed during a focus group discussion that what propels them is the spiritual orientation they bring to bear from the parish. *Lishi gie ushu* women in Obudu deanery are creating an enormous impact in rural education for children. A member said:

When we did our launching the people we invited came and saw our project and did not believe that a small group can do that and went to with draw their children from other schools to our own.. So I am sure the people have started to benefit from what we did and seemed to have appreciated that these little women will do something which the men have not done or even bring themselves together to form something like that One of the lessons we have learnt is the joy we see our children in the streets, like when we have coming many member have picked two of them whenever they see us they feel so happy yes that is the joy.

Women found joy in seeing more educated and morally upright children in the streets and the unity derived from seeing that all of them share the same faith. They debunked the myth, often held by some men. that women cannot stay together as a group for a long time. One said about their group,

People say it is difficult for women to stay for 6 months; I will say the group is still standing strong and would say what binds us together is the religion we profess. All of us in the group are Catholic members. Only one person is a drop

out from the Catholic faith. Moreover, all of us go to church on Sunday and I don't see why we cannot come back to practice the doctrine.

Power struggles

Concrete evidences of hierarchical power relationships between the clergy and the laity were observed at various levels in the diocese. A member indicated that at the handing over of schools and hospitals back to the missions, some laity members in government displayed aggressive and selfish tendencies toward the church and the clergy. Even the Knights of the church stood against the Church based on the impression of the clergy as powerful figures in the church. One priest at a focus group summarized his own experience of the struggle in these words:

When we talk of government, some of those in government are even Christians or Catholics, but are the worst enemies of the church because of their own selfish motives. They wouldn't want to give out to others. For example some of those who were fighting against the handing over of schools were even knights of the Church. So you discover now that, we are trying our best at a personal level. Knights are now becoming problematic. They see their work as merely ceremonial and this is chiefly because the priest are loosing control of the knights.

As state citizens, the laity is affected by societal influence in the secular world and sometimes as a result they engage in power struggles with the church that result in acrimony. A member of the clergy in a focus group at Ogoja deanery thought that those who engage most in power struggles with the clergy are often Catholics:

When we talk of government, some of those in government are even Christians or Catholics. But then because of their own selfish motives, that personal interest, they wouldn't want to give out to others. For example some of those who were fighting against the handing over of schools were even knights of the Church. So you discover now that, we are trying our best at a personal level.

In general the clergy felt embarrassed by this kind of power struggle and did not see such as opportunities for learning. Members, especially the clergy, did not seem to see

the view shared by some scholars that churches as learning organizations also meet with innate challenges and so learn to face these challenges by affirming themselves as organizations that learn (Senge, 1990). A clergyman who seemed concerned about these struggles suggested that lay people be trained and raised in equal social status as priests in order to counteract conflict tendencies, as a way of facing such challenges and preparing for the future:

There are no lay Catholics trained to have the same commitment as the priests and nuns are. Therefore the church should look for lay people and train them effectively, so that the interests of the church will be protected or defended.

A view of power as “knowledge”

Conscientizing the laity on the basic social doctrines of the church could lead to empowering results. It is often said that “knowledge is power.” The laity members were seen to be lacking awareness of what the church’s true values and platforms are at the local level. Most laity members I observed at local settings were ignorant of basic church doctrines and social teachings. The reason could be that such teachings were not often translated to suit the local contexts. Textual studies on various ecclesial documents revealed that since 1940, the popes have produced several encyclicals on development issues to create knowledge and awareness among church members. As seen in Table 15, popes have always stated the church’s position on social development issues beginning with a response to the Industrial Revolution by Pope Leo XIII on May 15, 1891. A score of encyclicals have been written by popes to educate both the clergy and the laity on the role of the church in human development and poverty eradication.

Table 15: More than 100 years of development-related papal encyclicals, (1891–2005)

Name	Subject Matter	Pope	Year
<i>Rerum Novarum</i>	Condition of Workers	Leo XIII	1891
<i>Quadragesimo Anno</i>	Social Order	Pius XI	1931
<i>Mater et Magistra</i>	Social Progress	John XXIII	1961
<i>Pacem in Terris</i>	Peace on Earth	John XXIII	1963
<i>Populorum Progressio</i>	Development of Peoples	Pope Paul VI	1967
<i>Octogesima Adveniens</i>	A Call to Action	Paul VI	1971
<i>Justitia in Mundo</i>	Justice in the World	Synod	1971
<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>	Evangelization	Paul VI	1975
<i>Laborem Exercens</i>	Human Work	John Paul II	1981
<i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i>	Social Concern	John Paul II	1987
<i>Centesimus Annus</i>	Subsidiarity/ Markets limit.	John Paul II	1991
<i>Deus Caritas Est</i>	Charity to the Poor	Benedict XVI	2005

Table 16 depicts that during the second Vatican council, a handful of ecclesial documents sought to enlighten the laity on development issues on the very important and epoch-making council for the Church in 1965. The idea of these documents was to buttress the existing structures in the Church and to enable a more-informed opinion by all stakeholders, especially at the local level, on the best strategy for participation in poverty eradication. From observations, however, I found that members at the local level were unaware of these social teachings by the church within the diocese. This showed that members were powerless at organizing since they lacked knowledge of basic values to propel their organizing.

Table 16: The Second Vatican Council Documents

Name	Subject Matter	Document	Year
<i>Gaudium et Spes</i>	Church in Modern World	Vatican II	1965
<i>Inter Mirifica</i>	Social Communication	Vatican II	1963
<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i>	Sacred Liturgy	Vatican II	1963
<i>Lumen Gentium</i>	The Church as Light	Vatican II	1964
<i>Gravissimum Educationis</i>	Christian Education	Vatican II	1965
<i>Ad Gentes</i>	Church Mission Activity	Vatican II	1965
<i>Dignitatis Humanae</i>	Religious Freedom	Vatican II	1965
<i>Perfectae Caritatis</i>	Renewal of Religious Life	Vatican II	1965
<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i>	Apostolate of the Laity	Vatican II	1965

In this section, I have reviewed how members in the diocese viewed power. For the most part, members had simplified notions of power as centrally located in the clergy. Members depended on the clergy for the success of most programs. The constant power struggles between the clergy and laity in the diocese showed that both parties were yet to understand the nuanced view of power. Such limited understanding explains why there was minimal participation in programs in the diocese. Members of the diocese needed more grounding on the prevalence of power in ubiquitous contexts, especially how power is embedded in ecclesial documents

(c). Summary and Policy Recommendations

Empirical data on the relationship between “participation” and “development” in the diocese was reviewed in this section. How do church-based organizations in Ogoja diocese organize to facilitate the participation of people in their own development?

Findings showed that structures in Ogoja diocese still favored paternalistic tendencies. The diocesan structure, which is the dominant model of organizing, did not seem to encourage the participation of members in their own development. This was because its view of power as located centrally among the clergy supported a limited

understanding of participation. The presence of class and gender struggles among members, as well as the lack of attention paid to the rich ecclesial document in the local contexts, pointed to a lack of participation by the people themselves in their development. There are hopeful signs that the emerging influence of small groups in the diocese, the use of spiritual values by members, and the clamor for inculcation of moral instructions in the curricula of the Catholic schools indicated that the diocese is moving toward participatory development. The following conclusions arise from this analysis.

1. Diocesan model is top-down and charity-based: Development projects and decision making process are still top-down and controlled by the clergy to the exclusion of lay people. The clergy tend to present the view of lay people as mere recipients of the Church's benefits while neglecting the messiness and complexity of the daily life of the more-vulnerable members. The laity, on the other hand, views the clergy as directing all of the decision making processes and thus wielding the power to influence development. The diocese still organizes solely on a charity basis, with some clergy seeing no need to evolve structures that cater to lay people's welfare, such as retirement homes, as beneficiaries were expected to be grateful for the Church's efforts for them so far. The implication of this for the diocese is that the top-down models are failing to achieve results. The diocese needs to evolve a change in its organizational model in order to live out its option for the poor, by being absorbed in the newer trend of development.

2. Structures need organizational change: Catholic hospitals, schools, and welfare homes were mentioned as some of the few facilities the diocese owned that bring about development. These structures evoke minimal participation because they are generally ill-coordinated and ill-equipped. Money to run them is often acquired locally from poor beneficiaries through school fees, hospital bills, and diocesan levies, with

no corresponding measures to raise poor people's credit. There is a lack of presence of a functional organizational structure in terms of social development. As a diocese, the major way to bring about structural change is for the organization to think outside the box, to be critical of itself and to involve those at the local level in the development process.

3. Emergence of small groups for bottom-up approach: Whereas traditionally the diocesan model has been used as the main structure for organizing development in Ogoja, informal small communities are now challenging this structure. Small groups are better fitted to pilot self-help projects because they encourage employment opportunities for local peasants as well as raise income for the local Church. Projects at the local level were noticed in most parishes, but the diocese needs a bottom-up development structure that embraces lay people trained as qualified proprietors of development activities. Small Christian Communities (SCCs) can also become pivotal points of development, if the dioceses can initiate, in each parish, a coordinated form of small Christian communities while also encouraging other forms of small group programs in project planning and implementation.

4. Nuanced view of power: Development in Ogoja diocese tended to define power as constituted in central locations, neglecting local intra-community power dynamics. There is a lack of attention paid by some clergy to the micro-level understanding of power, as seen in the way they show little interest in poverty programs. This makes people in various parishes not be in touch with such programs. By reinforcing hierarchical positions, while ignoring the knowledge generated at local contexts by fieldworkers, the clergy and the diocese are orchestrating the demise of projects initiated to address the need of the poor. In order to evolve a balanced view of power and to involve all in the process of development, the diocese should empower

individuals and groups at the local level by emphasizing the role of the laity, women, and the poor in their own development.

5. *Reducing power imbalance:* As state citizens, the laity in the diocese were affected by societal influences, which caused them to engage in power struggles with the church. Training of the lay people to raise their awareness and social status to the level of the clergy could counteract such conflict tendencies. A reappraisal of these organizational differences can be achieved, using methods and processes within Church groups to restore a sense of value and strength to members, and a conviction in their own capacity to handle problems.

6. *Social discussion forums corroborated by ecclesial platforms:* Only few forums exist presently in the diocese to rally members together to address social issues. Social groups that discuss self-help efforts corroborated by church teachings are few. The diocese should organize small group settings to address pressing social issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, premarital sex, and so forth, at the station, parish, deanery, and diocesan levels. Such group settings should use the rich traditions of church documents or ecclesial teachings as platforms for discussion. The idea of these documents is to buttress the existing structures in the church and to enable a more informed opinion on power and other values by all stakeholders. This will be a good strategy for participation and poverty eradication.

7. *Need to empower women groups:* Though women groups in the diocese were found to be active in villages, they were also found to be the most affected by the chronic poverty wrought by dominant power dynamics and thus could not participate in community development. Women groups were far less in number than men groups and the women were observed to operate without micro-credit loans or preservation methods. The diocese placed a greater premium on men's contribution to development than on the contributions of women, youth, and children. However, women were most

propelled by the spiritual orientation they brought to bear from the parishes. By implication, the diocese needs to place equal emphasis on women groups as they do on men's, empowering women groups by restoring a sense of value and strength to them, and a conviction in their own capacity to handle problems. This goes for other minorities as well in the diocese.

8. Improving education: Affordable with high incentive: Catholic schools in the diocese are seeking implementation of moral instructions and vocational studies in the school curriculum to foster participation. Such education includes moral values; teaching about God, Biblical principles, prayers, and even ethical norms such as acceptable dress codes, appreciating marriage, and so on. The major problems were declining quality of teaching, inadequate teaching and learning materials, high rate of school dropout, lack of access to vocational training centers, and lack of infra-structural amenities. In addition, low salaries, and a lack of refresher courses, pension schemes, or gratuity for retired staff were factors that inhibited participation in the diocesan schools and health care systems. As a policy, the diocese should design a new educational structure, including curriculum at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Such a design should pay close attention to remuneration of workers in and out of service, based on a working financial system in the diocese.

I have investigated the structure of a diocese in relation to power and empowerment and how these dynamics foster participation in development. Ogoja diocese can foster participation by evaluating the present top-down diocesan model and charity-based organizational structure. A reappraisal of this model can lead to change in the poor condition of structures presently existing in the diocese. By embarking on the emerging small group model, the diocese can also review its understanding of power to include dynamics of local settings. There are certainly challenges that include power struggles often generated at both parish and diocesan

levels. However, there are potentials for empowerment of the laity, especially women and the groups that propel them. Empowerment can also be wrought by the diocese through the creation of social discussion forums that build on the social justice agenda of the church. Upgrading Catholic education and healthcare systems to include affordability of resources by low-income earners will create high incentives for employees in the system, while fostering participatory development in the new dispensation.

CHAPTER SIX:
RESEARCH FINDINGS, POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS, AND
CONCLUSIONS

1. Research Objective

My overall *research objective* was to explore the potentials of Church-based organizations (CBOs) as alternative mechanisms for poverty eradication in Nigeria. Spiritual values drawn from the Bible, early church traditions, and church teachings were investigated as possible potentials that enable CBOs in the Roman Catholic tradition to become agents of social change in developing countries. I used social learning as a theoretical framework to evaluate the kinds of learning that occur among individuals and groups in CBOs. In proposing the role of spiritual emotions in building interdependence among stakeholders, I further explored the mechanisms CBOs use to foster participation by inquiring into existing structures in a diocese and a new understanding of power as located in local contexts. Organizational learning affirms the ability of organizations to employ the learning process to bring about social change. I located how a diocese adopts such a learning process to foster participation that leads to poverty eradication.

2. Methods and Conceptual Framework

I developed a range of *qualitative methods* to enable a comprehensive collection of data from the Catholic diocese of Ogoja in Southern Nigeria. Using constructivism as a research paradigm, my main focus was to generate knowledge between me as the principal investigator and other research participants. This was to enable findings that would be supported by the theories of social learning, organizational learning, and participatory research. Drawing inferences from aspects of participatory research and social learning, I used a range of qualitative data collection tools to ensure the

necessary depth and breadth of this study. The methods employed for data collection were focus group discussions, individual in-depth interviews, open-ended questionnaires, participatory rural appraisals (PRA), and textual materials.

Social learning theory was used as a conceptual framework because of its guiding principle, which is that learning applies not only to individuals but also to social collectives. As a philosophical concept, social learning informs practice with a mutual premise in the idea that learning with negotiated stakeholders and interdependent cognitions constitute the basis of a new foundation. The new social learning goes beyond individual cognitions to the social collective level, and I build on this framework to suggest a strategy of poverty eradication based on CBO members finding and implementing solutions to problems together. Because communication among local people themselves is often difficult, I draw on the means of social communication to enhance social learning within the context of CBOs.

3. Key Research Findings

*i. Root Causes of Poverty in the Study Area*⁶⁵

I identified some major social factors and practices as root causes of poverty within Ogoja region. My findings revealed that there were *embedded cultural practices* that impoverish people (especially women, children, youths, and those living in villages). Factors such as reluctance to invest in girl-child education, early marriages, early pregnancies, prostitution, expensive funerals, high bride prices, and expensive weddings were often regarded as normative within villages.

2. There was relative *neglect for rural sector development by the state*, often attributed to the eroding production base of the family, undiversified income sources, and overdependence on rainfall crop agriculture. However, it resulted in an acute lack of social and human capital bases in rural villages. Only a few income-yielding

⁶⁵ A root cause is a social factor or a combination of factors that remotely generates other effects.

opportunities for rural people were found in villages. It is ironic that a score of natural resources such as clay, rock salt, limestone, and uranium were seen to exist in rural areas (Ogar, 2000).

3. I found a *devaluation of local knowledge* among individuals and groups within Ogoja region. Individuals with local initiatives or natural talents were rarely encouraged to improve their talents, especially within local institutional settings. The result of this was a corresponding high prevalence of dependency mentalities, interpreted by members as residues of modernistic strategies by the state. Member cognitions had been informed by a European mentality rather than the peasant context in which they found themselves, and this fostered negative orientations, especially among the youth.

4. In the diocese, members were found to harbor *dependency mentalities*, which they tied to the belief that the church of the early missionaries was better than the indigenous church, for example. Owing to such mindsets, the following effects were noticed: lack of collective action among members, lack of forums to rally members together to address social issues, different levels of rift factors existing at different social levels leading to social conflicts, lack of ethical orientation in the dominant paradigm of development by the state, with a corresponding effect on individual members and groups in the diocese.

5. Traces of *modernization* were found in the organizational setup of the diocese, which was still buried in the top-down model of organizing. Projects and decision-making processes were still clergy-controlled to the exclusion of local contexts, and this modernizing tendency led to structural imbalance. I found existing structures that were ill-equipped and ill-coordinated to subsume development for the teeming population. There were instances of the privileging of knowledge that tended to favor clerical inputs at the detriment of lay initiatives. This easily led to gender, class, and

urban bias, among other effects. Though women groups were found to be active, they were also found to be far fewer in number than men groups. The diocese placed a greater premium on men's contribution to development than on that of women, youth, and children.

ii. Policy Recommendations

1. To move members from mere spectators to participants in their development, the diocese needs to *officially adopt an ethical platform* that applies spiritual values to the implementation of social programs. The *Social Justice Agenda (SJA)* may serve as such a platform. However, presently the SJA has no impact at the grassroots level and therefore fails to guide individual consciences in making just decisions, to shape the response of the Church to social issues, or to influence activities of the public sector. Individuals and groups in the diocese need to be constantly reminded of the values they share, which can be applied as tools to counteract the dominant strategies. For the diocese to appear believable, an official teaching of moral values to members at various forums needs to be made.

2. There were *dependency mentalities prevalent in the study area*, which tended to socially exclude some categories of people from active involvement in their development. To act as an advocacy voice for those who have such dependent mentalities, the diocese needs to clearly act in three ways. First, in differentiating member-roles between the clergy, the diocese should clarify whose roles should pertain to spiritual matters and the laity, and whose role should fittingly pertain to social matters. Second, training lay human resources who can command influence will also help to create a needed balance in the organizational structure of the diocese and reduce dependency mentalities. Last, a religious orientation of self-help group projects encouraged at the local level will address the problem of dependency mentalities, which often have repercussions for poverty-stricken members.

3. The lack of an organizational structure in the diocese resulted in a corresponding *lack of collective action* among members. Members were eager to evolve an organizational structure that enables collective action, but lacked a coordinated strategy. To design such a structure, JDPC should liaise with communities to form a consortium of social groups that bring church groups in the diocese together as interdependent stakeholders on a regular basis. The focus of such a structure should be on communication and decision making by the people themselves. Such a structure could also enable outsider networks to view the diocese as a partner in progress. Meeting at such forums on a regular basis should aim at improving interdependent relationships and the use of shared emotions to generate interdependence and group cohesion. Close social relationships are fostered by religious emotions, made possible through common worship, as the interaction of ritual practices reaffirms and strengthens social solidarity.

4. *Adopting a nuanced view of power:* Power tended to be defined as constituted in central locations, neglecting local intra-community dynamics. The lack of attention by some clergy to the micro-level understanding of power was seen in the lack of interest in poverty programs. In order to evolve a balanced view of power and involve all in the process of development, the diocese should empower individuals and groups at the local level by emphasizing the role of the laity in their own development. As state citizens, the laity in the diocese were affected by societal influence in the secular world and as a result engaged in power struggles with the church. In the past this has resulted in certain acrimony. To prevent such acrimony, the training of lay people in a bid to raising them to a social status equal to that of the clergy could counteract this trend. A reappraisal of these organizational differences can be achieved, using methods and processes within church groups to restore a sense of value and strength to members, with a conviction in their own capacity to handle problems.

5. The overwhelming definitions of poverty in econometric terms by male respondents in the diocese showed that men are still favored in decision making compared with women. By defining poverty as socially inclusive, women in Ogoja affirmed the shift in paradigm and aligned themselves in the emerging paradigm. This entails that first the diocese emphasize a definition of poverty in terms of social inclusion to integrate the creative capacities of all stakeholders, enabling new platforms and processes needed to facilitate the eradication of poverty. Second, a more-empowering role should be accorded to *women groups in the diocese*. To support women in the latter approach, the diocese needs to build on their capabilities and include women in social development as well as speak out in favor of their rights, especially in local contexts.

6. The diocese is still buried in a top-down mentality, with rules and norms fostering dependent tendencies that kill incentives for option for the poor. The need for a new organizational structure, mentioned earlier, could lead to a bottom-up development approach. Such an approach would emphasize *an option for the poor* that would make pronouncement in favor of the poor, with a view to perpetually stamping out practices that keep the poor at risk. An option for the poor excludes no one but rather embodies a priority of service to the immense multitudes of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without medical care and, above all, those without hope of a better future. The diocese can achieve this by initiating in each parish a coordinated form of activities, programs, and projects through its small Christian communities to address the needs and concerns of the poor in an empowering style.

7. The diocese needs to *form small Christian communities* at each parish and outstation to address the diffusion of power in local contexts. This will also counteract the neglect of the rural sectors. Rural sectors need social and human capital through small Christian communities. Bottom-up approaches wrought by *small Christian communities (SCCs)* are becoming pivotal points of development, *challenging the*

diocesan structure that gives the impression that power is located centrally. SCCs enable social discussion forums to be initiated at the local level. Stakeholders can also take on pressing social issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, premarital sex, and so forth, at the station, parish, deanery, and diocesan levels. Such rich ecclesial teachings can be used as platforms to enable members to become ideologically guided in their daily social activities.

8. One major way of empowering the rural poor toward sustainable livelihoods is to strategically *adopt educational institutions* at the local level. Only a few existing institutions are located at urban parishes, while a majority of the poor dwell in rural areas. The Catholic school system could concentrate its efforts on the rural sector, upgrading formal community-based education to mitigate the embedded practices that foster chronic poverty at the local level. The diocese should design a new educational structure, including curriculum at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, that provides adequate teaching and learning materials to ensure vocational training and social learning.

9. *A new paradigm of communication:* There was found to be enormous power available from the various media in the diocese; the traditional media, business centers, the print media, the Internet, and radio. With such enormous power, the new role of communication as innovation is evolving, making members participants rather than clients who assume the role of problem owners. To ensure the strengthening of group positions as an intervention goal, planning for the use of both traditional and emerging media tools among rural people is necessary to boost capacity for in-depth social learning. As a first step, the diocese could seek partnerships to establish a radio station that uses traditional media to create interdependence among stakeholders. As a later development, innovations with the Internet, the print media and business centers could follow. It is hoped that such communication interventions could lead the diocese

into a new understanding of the role of communication in creating collective stakeholder participation in development.

10. A *communitarian response* to poverty will counteract the lack of communication within groups and communities that aggravates poverty. Given the lack of collective action between individuals and groups, such a response would use the emerging media to create stakeholder interdependence. Means of communication such as the traditional media, business centers or cybercafés, cell phones, the print media, the Internet, and radio could scale up social learning among individuals and groups. A purposeful effort to plan a communitarian communication strategy will help foster development and enable the diocese serve as a viable agent of poverty eradication.

4. Conclusion

Given the prevalence of poverty in the region of Ogoja in Southern Nigeria, the main purpose of this study was to explore the potential of a diocese as alternative mechanisms for its eradication. The following propositions guided my study:

1. The organizational dynamics of the diocese as a CBO indicate that its structures favor social inclusion of the poor in the diocese.
2. Elements of the Catholic Social Justice Agenda can lead the diocese toward participation for poverty eradication.
3. Individuals and groups as stakeholders within the diocese collaborate to eradicate poverty within a social learning process.
4. The means of communication play a major role in the evolution of social learning for poverty eradication in the diocese.

Key findings indicate that the diocese as an organization was concerned about the level of poverty and appeared interested in building capacity among members to address its root causes. However, in answer to my key research question concerning the potential of the diocese to involve people in their development, there were

indications of weak mechanisms to subsume development. These weak mechanisms could prove to be obstacles to the implementation of policy recommendations in this research. Some of the major obstacles are summarized below.

- The *top-down mentality* and minimal bottom-up approaches within CBOs that disable the implementation of an *option for the poor*.
- The *tendency to play down the problems faced by poor people*, explaining such problems away by recourse to transcendental values alone. The church must learn to blend practical issues with spiritual values in making policies for social development.
- *The clergy/laity dichotomy*. The laity is still seen as subservient within the hierarchical structure of a diocese or parish and, unfortunately, this mentality plays out as a negative variable of social development in CBOs.
- *The male/female dichotomy* within the CBOs also indicates a larger obstacle to the Church's organizational impacts. Women are not often seen as equal partners in the role of organizing social progress, while CBOs are perceived as perpetuating unequal access to resources.
- Elements of the Catholic *Social Justice Agenda* have *minimal impact at the grassroots*, rendering members unaware of the power embedded in local settings.
- Individuals and groups are *unaware of the potentials of the spiritual values* they share, which can be applied as tools to counteract the dominant strategies that keep them poor. *Dependency mentalities* tended to socially exclude some categories of people, especially women, from active involvement in their development.
- At present there is a *lack of collective action* and decision making by the people themselves, indicating that the diocese is not yet to scale up to the

use of modern means of communication for social development and community education.

- There seems to be a subtle *inability by CBOs to accept the organic process* of establishing self-reliant groups at the local level. Other local institutions are replete with local biases and distorted versions of what CBOs stand for within the community.
- *Constant clashes with state-based initiatives* in the past have tended to “suffocate local institutions” at the expense of individual initiatives under the guise of modernization. Local people are often made to be dependent on formal state institutions.
- CBOs also face issues such as the *inability to develop a firm financing capacity with resources of their own*, to develop structures, or elect representatives, to enable them attain a legitimate voice, or to achieve self-reliance for the planning, management, and provision of effective services.
- The *institutional framework of CBOs does not easily favor the introduction of innovations*, since such innovations have to pass through the hierarchy, and the innovative ideas may become lost in the process.

If the diocese as a Church-based organization must facilitate social development and eradicate poverty among its members, there is need to address these obstacles and to be submerged in the “third approach,” which entails more participation at the organizational level and social learning at the individual and group levels.

5. Issues for Future Research

As an aspect for further research, there is a need for the diocese to build partnerships with external networks. Partnerships are collaborative relationships that accelerate structural change in CBOs to enable a more grounded use of development tools as

well as *access to funding* opportunities designed to improve organizational capacity. Such collaborative partnerships were advocated by CBO members in order to create program sustainability. At the local level, such partnerships enable local church groups to grow to become self-subsistent and viable agents of poverty alleviation. At the extra-community level, partnerships enable CBOs as larger organizations to boost organizational capacities as well as their relationships with community partners. With the decisive role Information Technologies (ITs) are playing in development today, CBOs can scale up toward viable partnerships with other development agencies

APPENDIX A:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

THE FOLLOWING RESEARCH QUESTIONS WERE COMPILED BY THE TEAM OF RESEARCHERS AND USED TO GUIDE ALL INTERVIEWS, DISCUSSIONS AND FURTHER QUESTIONS POSED TO RESPONDENTS THROUGHOUT THE DATA COLLECTION EXERCISE.

(1) Key Research Questions

How do church-based organizations in Ogoja diocese organize to facilitate the participation of people in their own development?

What elements underpin the Catholic Social Justice Agenda (SJA) as a solid mechanism for poverty eradication?

How do elements of the SJA promote organizational dynamics and social inclusion in the poverty eradication strategy of the diocese?

How does a diocese organize for poverty eradication at the local level using individuals and groups?

How do churches build on emotions and values to improve their professional practice and catalyze social change?

What role do the means of communication play in the evolution of social learning for poverty eradication?

(2). Focus Group Questions and Individual interviews questions

(a) On Poverty

1. What kind of assistance do you give to the poor? To what extent do poor people themselves assist? What effects do your projects have on a long term basis?
2. How far does economic assistance help the poor? Describe the nature of your economic assistance? Do you have any programs to educate recipients on the need for sustainability?
3. What are your major sources of income? How do you compare that with the time of early missionaries? Is there any improvement? If not why not?
4. Is there any effort to make poor people aware of their role in development?
5. How will you classify education male/female?
6. What are the setbacks against youth education? Who is gaining and who is loosing? Explain the consequences of this gain or loose

7. How do your projects benefit girls? What ways do you organize for empowerment?
8. What are the greatest obstacles against youth empowerment today? What are you doing to solve the problem?
9. What values do you propagate? How do you make the values you share a model for the children in the future?
10. What kind of activities do you embark on at the local church level regarding development and poverty eradication? Do such projects exist in your Parish? Mention them?
11. Do you think there is collective action in villages? What is the level of Collective action now and during the time of missionaries? Why is there a difference?
12. Do you think Christians would organize differently from government officials?
13. Does indigenization of the church have any negative effect as far as establishing local projects in the Diocese? What gains and what losses?
14. How do people look at assistance or charity as was rendered to them by the early Missionaries?
15. Does the diocese have any system of banking? How does this treat local people? Are there other income-yielding projects in the diocese?

(b) On Values

1. Are there examples of values to be found in the bible? How do such biblical values or principles lead to community action?
2. How do biblical concepts help to explain community or foster communal responsibility?
3. What role does truth-telling play in abrogating systems of corruption and exploitation within the group?
4. What is your perception of charity? A mere assistance or a stepping-stone to sustainability? How does charity overcome or foster traditional constraints to development?
5. Do Church institutions differ from secular institutions in the area of structural justice? Do churches challenge or complement traditional structures? Are such challenges subtle exemplary faith innuendoes or violent, unstable and conflict ridden? Do you agree that church values help to abrogate systems of corruption and exploitation within your community? Explain how or how not?
6. Define the level of collaboration, problem-sharing and team-building that exists among local Churches? How does this enable Churches organize around communal responsibility?
7. Is collaboration in development seen as spiritual value or a financial/technical problem?
8. How do Church-based values strengthen the human spirit of individuals members to the point that greed and egotism play a lesser role? What specific way does your diocese or local church organize or fail to organize towards these objectives.

9. Name some common values, attitudes, policies or an explicit development principle or a theory known throughout your organization that helps your organization to grow or fail to grow?
10. Values generally require time (up to a generation) to materialize. Do I feel that there are some ideologies that have become knowledgeable enough in this diocese (local church) and thus act as catalyst for institutional transformation.
11. Do collaborative groups exist at the local church level? If so are they agreed rules based on common values of teambuilding and collective action established? What development activities exists that benefit members as well as entire communities?
12. How do group activities evolve? How are common action projects initiated?
13. What is the major difference between the way development has been treated by the state and the churches understanding of development? what shifts in paradigm exist?

(c). On Social Justice Agenda (SJA)

1. How does your local church view development as a process? Is it a financial and technical problem? What is the relationship between evangelizing and developing?
2. In the past, Churches defined their roles as instruments of charity engaged in the transfer of material resources to communities in need. Has this mentality changed? Explain how and how not.
3. Has religion a larger role in the education of people on issues of social justice and conflict?
4. Explain the power structure in your church and its effects on the development process? Is there equal power or power imbalance between the hierarchy and the faithful? Is this good or bad? Explain.
5. Is there a difference or relationship between development work and charity work? What are the advantages or disadvantages of each?
6. Do church projects lead to the growth of the human person? How and how not?
7. How does development help collective action or solidarity? Give practical examples of how a church project led to or failed to lead to collective action? Give reasons why and why not.
8. How do individuals generate income through group action?
9. What common tasks do local church groups engage in? How are they propelled?
10. What do you define as a common good? How is the common good a spiritual value. Give examples from scriptures of Christian practices?
11. Is there a balance or not between good works and pious works in your local church? Which one is more emphasized and why? How does this effect the lives of ordinary Christians? What is difference between evangelization and social action?
12. How are decisions that affect the physical development of local people made? At the level closest to those affected by the decision or outside their level?

13. The church exists to teach doctrines. Do you think the church also learns? How does such learning or failure to learn effect development? What can the church learn? What are the barriers that militate against learning? As a learning organization does the church plan for certainties (blueprint) or for contingencies?
14. Is there a clear-cut agenda that propels church organizing? Are local people aware of such an agenda and does it affect their organizing? What set the pace for a new understanding of the social agenda of the church?
15. During liturgical ceremonies for example, what teaching and learning occurs? Who teaches and learns? What effects does this have for rural livelihoods?

(d). On Participation:

1. Describe your relationship with your clergy / laity? Is there a difference compared to other people/groups? How would you grade your present relationships with your clergy/laity
2. How is Power exercised within the church? How does this help/impede the church in development of local people? How is power sometimes used as a club rather than tool for stewardship, taking responsible accounts of the interest of the weak? How does participation help in overcoming institutional and policy constraints that work against the aspirations and desires of poor people? Give examples of how people in power use/fail to use power as stewardship, taking responsible accounts of the interest of the weak.
3. What kind of literacy programs that increase involvement of the poor exist within churches? How do such programs address the intersecting issues of illiteracy, health, unsustainable agriculture and economic insecurity? How does participation bring essential services to the poor by working simultaneously to build the capacity of people? What is the role of churches in the management of public resources especially the in providing informal public education? Is there horizontal cooperation and collaboration between churches and local government in such programming?
4. What group activities exist? Does dialogue among groups encourage shared and often dramatic experiences among members (in real life issues such as leadership, neighborhoods, relationships, and community)? What about common liturgical exercises? Do groups within local churches share experiences together? How do these provide opportunities for adults, children, women, the poor etc? Name other activities done in common that foster participation based on learning from experience? What meanings do villagers attach to such experiences? How do these evolve into collective identity at the local level? In what ways do common activities such as common worship, retreats, seminars, workshops help to foster participation? In what other ways does worship effect participation? Do members seek to relate symbols to themselves through role-playing? Name the spiritual *values* that lead to collective enterprise? How do these values help to defeat fractionalization? How do such values help enthrone cultural rationality?

5. Are all gender and class equally represented within church activities? Which group is often underrepresented? What activities of inclusiveness involving stakeholders of all gender, class and literacy level take place to create incentives for sustainable livelihoods? How does the local church involve all stakeholders in creating incentives for sustainable livelihoods?
6. What are the educational investments in the diocese? How does this increase participation? What aspects of your curriculum make your school different from other schools? What are the morals that make children behave well? What special programs does the diocese embark on to improve education. Is there any alliance with government for grants and the school fees? What kind of conflicts exist between the church and the state? What level will you place this? What is the best way can the church deal with the problem of antagonism between the church and state elements? As a church group how will you describe quality education? Does this have a flip side? Is there anything like non-quality education?

(e). Social Learning

1. What kind of projects do you take on as a group? And why do you choose these particular projects?
2. Do you face problems as you organize within your groups? Whom do you frequently clash most with? Why do you think this is so? Do you sometimes think of your group as solving people's problems rather than helping the people solve the problems for themselves. Explain this carefully? As a group, would you say that the problems you use to deal with some years ago have changed from the modern day problems?
3. How do you take decisions within your groups? Are you normally influenced by any person or ideas in your decisions? What problems do you face in making decisions?
4. How does being a church group make you different from other groups? What do you do that makes you different from others? What values do you uphold? Describe them.
5. How do you compare your group at present to the time of foreign missionaries? Are you making initiatives of your own compared to former times? What basically is the difference?
6. To what extent does your society/ group use the modern means of communication available to the world today? How do these help your society/group prepare for a sustainable future?
7. How often does group interaction occur? What is the basis of such interaction? What values do both groups espouse? What role do spiritual values play in such interaction? How do values impede or support the interaction? Enumerate like-minded groups that exist within your locality?
8. What is the level of your group participation in such interaction? What programs are agreed upon and who benefits? How does participation strengthen broad-based local control? How does this interaction effect social capital and collective action?

9. Does your group have interactions with national agencies or government? If so what projects do both groups undertake in common?
10. What problems are often faced in these interactions? Does the state sometimes make unilateral decisions through its ministries? What is the role of power in partnerships? How do local churches cope with such difficulties? Does your church intervene in complex national-scale issues? Does this intervention strengthen broad-based local control? Does it promote technical and financial support especially for the poor?
11. Do NGOs exist in the area? What about LONGOS? What collaborations with NGOs in the area exist? In the area of technology development, research, funding, skills enhancement and acquisition? In what ways do partnership build alliances between poor people and their external networks at national and international levels? Does partnership lead to structural change?
12. How will you describe the role of churches in Education/Healthcare? Is it a primary or complementary to state role? What are the institutional issues that warrant attention for productive partnerships in education/healthcare to take place?
13. What of agricultural extension and skills training programs? Can Churches collaborate with state or NGOs in such ventures? If so how does this lead to increase in productivity, food security and reduction of malnutrition? How do these initiatives lead to the appreciation of local knowledge of resource poor farmers.

(f). Open-ended questionnaires

Apart from the numerous questions posed to respondents at focus group discussions and individual interviews, the following open-ended questionnaires were also administered to 25 Priests, 15 Nuns and 10 lay people involved in sensitive positions of policy making and administration in the diocese.

1. How will you define or describe poverty in relation to your parishioners?
2. Describe the various ways (organizational mechanisms) church groups in the parish/outstations use to fight poverty? Identify and name some of such ways. Be sure to mention all common practices known to you.
3. What is more common among parishioners, asking for help or giving help? Give reasons why you think this is the case?
4. Do you know of any project(s) ever undertaken by a church-based group in your parish/outstations? Identify and describe it. If none, indicate issues militating against such ventures.
5. Would you say that all classes of people are equally represented in development? Which group(s) would you identify as under represented?
6. In your opinion do Catholics organize differently from 'others' regarding issues of development? If so identify the points (values) of difference.
7. Do you know of local church groups in your parish that collaborates with other local institutions to address poverty alleviation related issues? If so describe such collaborations (partnerships) or explain why they don't exist.

8. Are modern means of technology (social communication) in any form employed by local churches to enhance human development? If so how, if not why not?
9. Liturgically, the Church uses *organized models* of worship to express a sense of the divine or the infinite through rituals, symbols and symbolic language. In your opinion, can you suggest ways in which liturgical symbols and rituals are (or can be) translated into action?
10. What is the major difference between the way development has been treated by the state and the church?

Numerical data

1. Number of Catholics in parishes/diocese
2. Number of Priests in parishes/diocese
3. Number of functional Catechists and church leaders
4. Number of sisters in parishes/diocese
5. Women groups in parishes/diocese
6. Men groups in parishes/diocese
7. Youth groups in parishes/diocese
8. Children group in parishes/diocese
9. Church-owned and operated schools in parishes/diocese (specification)
10. Church-owned and operated hospitals (Clinics) in parishes/diocese
11. Church-owned and operated agro-ventures in parishes/diocese
12. Local institutions in parishes/diocese
13. Communication ventures in parishes/diocese

**APPENDIX B(1):
APPROVAL LETTER**



Cornell University Telephone: 607 255-5138
115 Day Hall Fax: 607 255-5058
Ithaca, NY 14853-2801

University Committee on Human Subjects

NOTIFICATION OF EXPEDITED APPROVAL

Protocol ID# 04-06-026

To: Peter Abue
From: Elaine Wethington, UCHS Chair *Elaine Wethington /s*
Date of approval: July 2, 2004
Project(s): ***Emerging patterns for church-based organizations in the social learning tradition:
Implications for rural poverty alleviation in Nigeria***

As Chairperson of the University Committee on Human Subjects, I have reviewed and given an expedited approval to the above referenced project as far as the use of human subjects is concerned. **This approval shall remain in effect for a period of one year.**

The terms of Cornell University's Federalwide Assurance (FWA) with the federal government mandate the following important conditions for investigators:

1. All consent forms, records of study participation, and other consent materials **must** be held by the investigator for **three years** after the close of the study.
2. Investigators must submit to UCHS any **proposed amendment** to the study protocol, consent forms, interviews, recruiting strategies, and other materials. Investigators may not use these materials with human subjects until UCHS has reviewed them. For information about study amendment procedures and access to the Amendments application form, please refer to the UCHS website: http://www.osp.cornell.edu/Compliance/UCHS/Approval_Requests.htm
3. Investigators must promptly report to UCHS any **adverse events** involving human subjects. The definition of prompt reporting depends upon the seriousness of the adverse event. For guidance on recognizing, defining, and reporting adverse events to UCHS, please refer to the UCHS website: <http://www.osp.cornell.edu/Compliance/UCHS/Adverse.htm>.

If the use of human subjects is to continue beyond the assigned approval period, federal requirements mandate that the protocol be re-reviewed and receive an updated approval. **You may not continue to use human subjects beyond the stated approval period without an updated approval.** Please note that the terms of our FWA with the federal government do not allow for an extension of this period without review. Continuing without an updated approval constitutes a violation of University policy and federal regulations. Research funds administered by the Office of Sponsored Programs will not be released to any project that does not have a current UCHS approval.

Two months before the expiration of your approval, you will be sent a notification of pending expiration, and an explanation of the renewal process. Applications for renewal of approval must be submitted sufficiently in advance of the expiration date to permit the UCHS to conduct its review before the current approval expires. Please allow at least two weeks for the review.

****If you do not plan to renew your protocol approval at the end of the year, you must provide the UCHS with a Project Closure form. A link to the Project Closure form can be found at http://www.osp.cornell.edu/Compliance/UCHS/Approval_Requests.htm.**

c: Margaret Kroma

APPENDIX B(2):
BISHOP'S LETTER



*All Hallows Chancery
P.O. Box 27
Ogoja, Cross River State
Nigeria*

5th January 2004

Fr. Peter Abue
Department of Education
109 Kennedy Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853

Dear Peter

AN INVITATION TO CONDUCT FIELDWORK IN OGOJA DIOCESE

On behalf of the Catholic Diocese of Ogoja, I am writing to invite you to Ogoja diocese to conduct your fieldwork in view of your doctoral studies. I understand that you are expected to arrive here in August 2004 and conduct your research until March 2005.

Based upon our discussion during your last visit to Ogoja Nigeria in August 2003, all preparations have been made regarding your coming. As one who is already familiar with the terrain of Ogoja, it is my hope that you will have a rewarding visit while here.

It is also our hope that while your research will help you to complete your doctoral studies, we too in our Ogoja diocese will be richly blessed through your inputs, suggestions and findings. At this moment our diocese is exploring avenues to create more impact on our rural parishioners who are presently ravaged by poverty, diseases and illiteracy. We hope your contributions will also help us move forward in seeking solutions to these problems.

Once again we invite you to be our guest and we look forward to you coming in August this year. In union of prayers, I remain

Yours sincerely,


Joseph E. Ukpo
Bishop of Ogoja, Nigeria

APPENDIX C:
MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDA)

**MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT
GOALS AND TARGETS**

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day.

Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education.

Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality.

Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health.

Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.

Target 7: Have halved by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Target 8: Have halved by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

Source: Casey et al., 2005 (pp. 24-25); <http://www.nccusa.org/pdfs/LFP-final.pdf>.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability.

Target 9: Integrate the principle of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.

Target 10: Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.

Target 11: Have achieved by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development.

Target 12: Develop further an open, rule-based predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system (includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally).

Target 13: Address the special needs of the least developed countries (includes tariff- and quota free access for exports, enhanced program of debt relief for and cancellation of official bilateral debt, and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction).

Target 14: Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states (through the Program of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and 22nd General Assembly provisions).

Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.

Target 16: In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth.

Target 17: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.

Target 18: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies.³⁶

**APPENDIX D:
PRA FINDINGS**

Chapter Seven

OPTION FOR THE POOR

Clean Water Supply

Availability of clean water was found at the top in almost all community action plans, especially in those villages with high prevalence of water-borne diseases like Guinea worm. Pipe-borne water, bore holes, deep wells and harnessing of streams with pipes were preferred in the villages. Some communities would like to rehabilitate the non-functioning boreholes and tube wells as their first option. Water treatment to purify the available water was mentioned in some communities.

Local Institution Building

Local institutions were found to be important vehicles for sustainable development. These organisations could be engaged to subsume the overall development processes of their villages. However, the reality of these institutions in Ogoja Diocese is the demand for capacity building to effectively manage their programmes. The need to build the human, physical and financial resource base of these institutions was found to be a legitimate priority. These institutions are eager to engage on effective micro-finance projects, agricultural input and produce marketing and

top priorities in the community action plans. There are inadequate storage facilities at community level, hence low level of added value to their produce through processing or preservation.

Agricultural Input Marketing

The use of rudimentary farm tools and low access to essential farm inputs such as fertiliser, insecticides, improved seeds and extension services were the main culprits of low agricultural production in the communities. Therefore, the need for village level agricultural inputs marketing at very reasonable prices. Provision of extension services were found quite high in some community action plans.

other programmes of sustainable development.

Improved Health Care Programme

Poor environmental sanitation and poor water sources were found to be the main causes of diseases in the communities. The high prevalence of environmental communicable diseases were found in all the villages. Therefore, environmental health education programme was highly prioritised in Community Action Plans. Curative measures were found relevant for the existing diseases. However, this proved problematic at community level as the poor are unable to meet the increasing medical bills. Also, the existing health facilities were ill-equipped. Some village health posts are completely without drugs. Many of them are not functioning. It was found necessary to revitalise these important facilities.

Agricultural Produce Marketing

There are poor market outlets for farm produce, hence the need for effective marketing systems for food crops. Middlemen and market women are offering poor prices for such crops, thus increasingly impoverishing these subsistence farmers. Agricultural produce marketing were the

Enhancing Quality Education

There is 100% access to primary schools and about 95% enrolment. However, transition rate to secondary schools has been very poor due to declining quality of teaching. There are inadequate teaching and learning materials in almost all schools. There is high rate of school dropout. These Youths are poorly educated and have no means of accessing vocational training centres to enhance their skills. There are few vocational technical schools in the diocese, hence low technical skills. These issues were highly pronounced in the community action plans.

(31)

Source: Abue & Baldeh, 2000, p. 28.

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