

Assessing the Impact of Advocacy Programme on Economic Empowerment and Sustainable Growth in Khana and Gokana Local Government Area

Amachree, T & Nweke, D.C,
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt,
Department of Adult Education & Community Development
Corresponding Author's Email: telemaamachree09@gmail.com
DOI: 10.56201/jpslr.v11.no2.2025.pg1.13

Abstract

This study examines the impact of advocacy programmes on economic empowerment and sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas of Rivers State, Nigeria. The research aims to identify the barriers hindering the successful implementation of advocacy programmes, assess the effectiveness of community involvement, determine key factors of community participation, and evaluate the role of lobbying in enhancing economic empowerment and sustainable growth. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with a population of 3,200 respondents drawn from 63 communities in Khana and 17 communities in Gokana, consisting of members of MOSOP advocacy programmes. The sample size of 320 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane model, with proportionate sampling techniques employed to select 32 communities. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, validated by experts in Adult and Community Education, with a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.85$ obtained through the test-retest method. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that various barriers, including inadequate funding, low community engagement, infrastructure deficiencies, and corruption, significantly hindered the implementation of advocacy programmes in both areas. Advocacy leadership was generally perceived as effective, particularly in community mobilisation and strategic stakeholder partnerships, although differences were observed in communication effectiveness and prioritization of women and youth empowerment. Community participation was found to be critical, with active decision-making and partnerships enhancing programme success, while community ownership was lower in Khana and cultural relevance posed challenges in Gokana. Lobbying played a significant role in influencing policy decisions, advocating for economic interests, facilitating partnerships, and promoting good governance. The study concludes that strengthening advocacy programmes through increased funding, awareness campaigns, capacity-building workshops, and strategic lobbying efforts will significantly enhance economic empowerment and sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas. It recommends collaborative efforts between government agencies, private organizations, and community stakeholders to overcome identified barriers and maximize the impact of advocacy initiatives.

Keywords: *Advocacy, Programme , Economic, Empowerment , Sustainable & Growth*

Introduction

In recent years, advocacy programmes have emerged as powerful tools for promoting social change, particularly in the areas of economic empowerment and sustainable development. In the context of the Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Rivers State, Nigeria, the role of such advocacy initiatives in fostering economic resilience and growth remains largely underexplored. The lack of a structured evaluation of these programmes' effectiveness poses a significant gap in understanding how advocacy contributes to the economic advancement of communities.

One of the most pressing issues in these regions is the continued economic challenges faced by local communities, exacerbated by limited access to resources, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of awareness on sustainable development practices. These barriers hinder the realization of long-term economic growth and self-sufficiency, leaving many individuals and families reliant on unsustainable livelihoods. Consequently, there is a crucial need to assess how advocacy programmes can influence economic empowerment and sustainable growth.

Despite the increased presence of advocacy efforts aimed at addressing these challenges, the impact of these initiatives on the ground has not been sufficiently documented or analyzed. The gap between advocacy goals and tangible outcomes needs to be addressed to determine if such programmes are genuinely contributing to the economic well-being of the people of Khana and Gokana LGAs.

Statement of the Problem

This study seeks to examine the effectiveness of advocacy programmes in promoting economic empowerment and sustainable growth in the Khana and Gokana LGAs. While there are various advocacy efforts underway, it remains unclear how these programmes have affected local economies, and whether they are achieving their intended objectives. The lack of detailed research on the specific impacts of these programmes in the on economic empowerment and sustainable growth in the Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas underscores the need for a comprehensive evaluation.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of advocacy programmes on economic empowerment and sustainable growth in the Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas of Rivers State. By evaluating these programmes, the study aims to understand the effectiveness of advocacy in fostering long-term economic improvements for the communities involved. The Specific Objectives include to:

1. Identify the barriers that hinder the successful implementation of advocacy programs and their impact on economic empowerment and sustainable growth in the Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas.
2. Assess the effectiveness of community involvement in advocacy contribute to sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana LGAs?

3. Determine the key factors of community involvement in advocacy in enhancing economic empowerment and sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana LGAs.
4. Assess the role of lobbying in enhancing economic empowerment and sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana LGAs.

Research Questions:

- 1 What are the barriers that hinder the successful implementation of advocacy programs and their impact on economic empowerment and sustainable growth in the Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas.?
- 2 To what extent does community involvement in advocacy contribute to sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana LGAs?
- 3 What are the key factors of community involvement in advocacy that influence economic empowerment and sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana LGAs?
- 4 To what extent does lobbying play a role in enhancing economic empowerment in Khana and Gokana LGAs?

Significance of the study

The significance of the study, "Assessing the Impact of Advocacy Programme on Economic Empowerment and Sustainable Growth in Khana and Gokana Local Government Area," lies in its potential to contribute to both local and broader socio-economic development. This research aims to evaluate how advocacy programs influence the economic conditions of communities in Khana and Gokana, which are regions often faced with challenges like poverty, limited access to resources, and environmental degradation. By examining these programs, the study seeks to understand how advocacy can foster economic empowerment, helping individuals and communities achieve greater financial stability, improved livelihoods, and reduced poverty. Furthermore, the study addresses the issue of sustainable growth, examining whether these advocacy efforts promote development that is not only economically viable but also environmentally responsible and socially inclusive.

The findings of this study are crucial in evaluating the effectiveness of advocacy initiatives as tools for driving sustainable economic growth in underdeveloped areas. By providing evidence on the impacts of such programs, the research will offer valuable insights for policymakers and development practitioners, informing strategies that could lead to more effective interventions in the future. Additionally, the study could offer a model for replicating successful advocacy approaches in other regions with similar challenges, thereby expanding the scope of economic empowerment efforts across the country. Ultimately, the research seeks to deepen the understanding of the role advocacy programs play in creating pathways for economic independence, fostering sustainable development, and contributing to the well-being of local populations in Khana and Gokana.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey design with a population of 3,200 respondents from 63 communities in Khana and 17 communities in Gokana Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

The 3,200 respondents consisted of 2,000 members of MOSOP advocacy programs organized in communities in Khana L.G.A. and 1,200 members of MOSOP advocacy programs organized in communities in Gokana L.G.A. of Rivers State. These respondents were identified through the local government council, which provided information on the number of MOSOP advocacy programs organized in their communities. The sample size for the study were 320 respondents, determined using the Taro Yamane model of sample size determination. To select the 320 respondents, a proportionate sampling technique was used to choose 24 communities out of 63 and two kingdoms in Khana, according to MOSOP classifications, as well as 8 communities out of 17 and one kingdom in Gokana Local Government Area, resulting in a total of 32 communities sampled. Ten respondents were chosen from each of the selected communities using a simple random sampling technique, bringing the total number of respondents to 320. This comprised approximately 240 respondents from Khana and 80 respondents from Gokana. The instrument used to gather information for the study was a structured questionnaire, which was administered by the researcher to respondents in their respective communities. The questionnaire was titled "Assessing the Impact of Advocacy Programs on Economic Empowerment and Sustainable Growth in Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas" (AIAPEESGKGLGA). The validation of the instrument was carried out through a critical evaluation of the questionnaire by the researcher's supervisor and other experts in the field of Adult and Community Education in the Department of Educational Foundations. The test-retest method was used to assess the reliability of the instrument, and a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.85$ was obtained, confirming that the instrument was reliable. The research questions were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation,

RESULTS

Research Question one: What are the barriers that hinder the successful implementation of advocacy programs and their impact on economic empowerment and sustainable growth in the Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas.?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of the barriers that hinder the successful implementation of advocacy programs and their impact on economic empowerment and sustainable growth in the Khana and Gokana Local Government Areas.?

S/N	Statement Items	Khana LGA n= 240		Remarks	Gokana LGA n= 80		Remarks
		Mean	Std.		Mean	Std.	
1	Insufficient funding can limit the scope and effectiveness of advocacy programs, making it difficult to achieve economic empowerment and sustainable growth.	2.46	0.72	Low Extent	2.67	0.97	High Extent
2	Low levels of community engagement and participation can hinder the success of advocacy programs, as community members may not be invested in the initiatives.	2.93	0.75	High Extent	2.78	0.89	High Extent

3	Poor infrastructure, such as limited access to transportation, communication, and technology, can impede the implementation of advocacy programs.	2.84	0.77	High Extent	2.83	0.82	High Extent
4	Inadequate institutional capacity, including lack of skilled personnel, limited resources, and poor management, can hinder the effectiveness of advocacy programs.	2.73	0.63	High Extent	2.76	0.89	High Extent
5	Corruption and nepotism can undermine the integrity of advocacy programs, diverting resources away from intended beneficiaries and perpetuating inequality	2.80	0.87	High Extent	2.81	0.87	High Extent
Grand Total		2.75	0.75	High Extent	2.77	0.89	High Extent

Source: Research's Field Result, 2025

The results from Table 1 indicate the extent to which various barriers hinder the successful implementation of advocacy programmes and their impact on economic empowerment and sustainable growth in Khanna and Gokana LGAs. The overall average rating for Khanna LGA (2.75) and Gokana LGA (2.77) indicates that these barriers impact advocacy programmes to a **high degree** in both LGAs. Inadequate funding was rated as **low** (2.46) in Khanna but **high** (2.67) in Gokana, meaning that financial constraints are more significantly perceived as a challenge in Gokana than in Khanna. On the other hand, low community engagement was identified as a barrier **to a high degree** in both LGAs, with average ratings of 2.93 in Khanna and 2.78 in Gokana, indicating that community engagement remains a critical factor in the success of advocacy initiatives. Lack of adequate infrastructure, such as poor transportation, communication and technology, was also rated **highly** in both LGAs (2.84 in Khanna and 2.83 in Gokana). This indicates that infrastructure-related constraints pose significant challenges to advocacy programme implementation, limiting accessibility and efficiency. Similarly, inadequate institutional capacity, including lack of skilled staff, inadequate resources and poor governance, was rated **highly** in both LGAs (2.73 in Khanna and 2.76 in Gokana). This highlights the importance of strengthening institutional frameworks and human resources to improve the success rate of advocacy programmes. Corruption and nepotism were also identified as **high barriers** in both LGAs, with similar average ratings of 2.80 in Khanna and 2.81 in Gokana. This finding underscores concerns about misallocation of resources, lack of transparency and governance issues that may undermine the intended impact of advocacy initiatives. The findings suggest that while funding may be less of a challenge in Khanna than in Gokana, other factors such as community engagement, infrastructure, institutional capacity and corruption remain significant barriers to the success of advocacy programmes in both local government areas. Addressing these challenges through improved governance, strategic planning and community engagement will be essential to enhance the effectiveness of advocacy programmes in promoting economic empowerment and sustainable growth.

Research Question Two: To what extent does community involvement in advocacy contribute to sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana LGAs?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of the Effectiveness of Advocacy Leadership in Promoting Economic Empowerment and Sustainable Growth in Khana and Gokana Lgas.

S/N	Statement Items	Khana LGA n= 240		Remarks	Gokana LGA n= 80		Remarks
		Mean	Std.		Mean	Mean	
6	To what extent do you agree that advocacy leaders in Khana and Gokana LGAs demonstrate visionary leadership in promoting economic empowerment and sustainable growth?	2.84	0.93	High Extent	2.84	0.86	High Extent
7	How much do you agree that advocacy leaders in Khana and Gokana LGAs effectively mobilize community members to support economic empowerment and sustainable growth initiatives?	2.82	0.86	High Extent	2.76	0.85	High Extent
8	To what extent do you agree that inadequate infrastructure is a significant barrier to the successful implementation of advocacy programs in Khana and Gokana LGAs? To what extent do you agree that advocacy leaders in Khana and Gokana LGAs establish strategic partnerships with stakeholders to promote economic empowerment and sustainable growth?	2.81	0.86	High Extent	2.84	0.85	High Extent
9	How much do you agree that lack of government support is a major obstacle to the success of advocacy programs in Khana and Gokana LGAs? How much do you agree that advocacy leaders in Khana and Gokana LGAs communicate effectively with community members and stakeholders about economic empowerment and sustainable growth initiatives?	2.96	0.82	High Extent	2.79	0.83	High Extent
10.	To what extent do you agree that advocacy leaders in Khana and Gokana LGAs prioritize the economic empowerment of women and youth in their initiatives?	2.65	0.83	High Extent	2.81	0.87	High Extent
Grand Total		2.82	0.83	High Extent	2.81	0.85	High Extent

Source: Research’s Field Result, 2025

The results from Table 2 indicate that advocacy leadership in Khanna and Gokana LGAs is generally perceived as effective in promoting economic empowerment and sustainable growth, as reflected in the overall average ratings of **2.82** in Khanna and **2.81** in Gokana, both rated as **high**. Advocacy leaders in both LGAs are perceived as demonstrating **farsighted leadership**, with average ratings of **2.84** in both areas, indicating a strong commitment to advancing economic empowerment initiatives. Similarly, their ability to **mobilize community members** for economic empowerment and sustainable growth is also rated highly, with average ratings of **2.82** in Khanna and **2.76** in Gokana. These findings highlight the important role that advocacy leaders play in

promoting community engagement. Advocacy leaders' ability to **build strategic partnerships** with stakeholders was also recognized as a key strength, with ratings of **2.81** in Khanna and **2.84** in Gokana. This suggests that engagement with relevant stakeholders is a central strategy for promoting economic empowerment initiatives. However, **effective communication with community members and stakeholders was rated slightly higher in Khanna (2.96)** than in Gokana (**2.79**), suggesting a potential difference in the extent to which advocacy leaders engage with the public in these areas. Similarly, the priority of **women and youth empowerment was rated lower in Khanna (2.65)** than in Gokana (**2.81**), suggesting a greater focus on these groups in Gokana. The results suggest that advocacy leadership in both local government areas is seen as effective, particularly in terms of visionary leadership, community mobilization, and engagement with stakeholders. However, there are slight differences between the two areas, particularly in the focus on women and youth empowerment, as well as communication effectiveness. Strengthening advocacy efforts in these areas could enhance the impact of economic empowerment initiatives and sustainable growth.

Research Question Three: What are the key factors of community involvement in advocacy that influence economic empowerment and sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana LGAs?

Table 3: Mean Ratings of the key factors of community involvement in advocacy that influence economic empowerment and sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana LGAs?

S/N	Statement Items	Khana LGA n= 240		Remarks	Gokana LGA n= 80		Remarks
		Mean	Std.		Mean	Mean	
11	Community ownership and control of the advocacy	2.43	0.87	Low Extent	2.81	0.84	High Extent
12	Active participation in decision-making processes relating to advocacy initiatives?	2.75	0.85	High Extent	2.83	0.85	High Extent
13	Capacity and empowered community members in Khana and Gokana LGAS	2.57	0.87	High Extent	2.56	1.11	High Extent
14	Partnerships and collaborations of members of Khana and Gokana LGAS	2.71	0.80	High Extent	2.80	0.85	High Extent
15.	Advocacy initiatives has to ensured that programs are culturally sensitive and relevant to the needs of community members in Khana and Gokana LGAS?	2.80	0.76	High Extent	2.39	1.04	Low Extent
Grand Total		2.65	0.83	High Extent	2.68	0.94	High Extent

Source: Research's Field Result, 2025

The results from Table 3 indicate that community engagement in advocacy plays a significant role in influencing economic empowerment and sustainable growth in both Khana and Gokana LGAs, with an overall average rating of 2.65 in Khana and 2.68 in Gokana, both rated as high extent .

However, there are differences in the perceived impact of specific factors across the two LGAs. In Gokana, community ownership and control of advocacy programmes was identified as a key factor with an average rating of 2.81, indicating high extent of impact. In contrast, this factor was rated as low extent (2.43) in Khana, indicating that community ownership is less well established in that area. This discrepancy highlights the need for stronger community-led advocacy efforts in Khana to enhance their impact. Active participation in decision-making processes is consistently rated as high extent in both LGAs, with scores of 2.75 in Khana and 2.83 in Gokana. This suggests that engaging community members in decision-making contributes significantly to the effectiveness of advocacy initiatives in promoting economic empowerment. Capacity building and empowerment of community members were also rated highly in both localities, with scores of 2.57 in Khana and 2.56 in Gokana. This means that advocacy efforts that focus on skills development and empowerment contribute positively to economic growth in these areas. Partnerships and collaboration among community members were seen as important in both localities, with average ratings of 2.71 in Khana and 2.80 in Gokana, reinforcing the idea that collective efforts and collaboration enhance advocacy effectiveness. However, cultural sensitivity and the importance of advocacy programmes show contrasting perceptions. While this factor was rated as high (2.80) in Khana, it was rated as low (2.39) in Gokana, suggesting that advocacy programmes in Gokana may not always be aligned with local cultural values and needs. This may indicate a gap in the design of advocacy initiatives to fit specific community contexts, which may hinder long-term success. Some of the key factors that influence economic empowerment and sustainable growth through community engagement in advocacy include community ownership and control, participation in decision-making, capacity building, partnerships and collaboration, and cultural sensitivity of advocacy initiatives. Strengthening these areas, particularly in addressing community ownership in Khana and cultural significance in Gokana, would further enhance the impact of advocacy programmes in both localities.

Research Question Four: To what extent does lobbying play a role in enhancing economic empowerment in Khana and Gokana LGAs?

Table 4: Mean Ratings of the role of lobbying in enhancing economic empowerment and sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana LGAs.

S/N	Statement Items	Khana LGA n= 240		Remarks	Gokana LGA n= 80		Remarks
		Mean	Std.		Mean	Std.	
16	Lobbying can influence policy decisions that impact economic empowerment, such as policies related to agriculture, trade, and infrastructure development	2.76	0.72	High Extent	2.67	0.97	High Extent
17	Lobbying can advocate for the economic interests of community members, such as access to credit, markets, and technology.	2.95	0.75	High Extent	2.78	0.89	High Extent

18	Lobbying can facilitate partnerships and collaborations between community organizations, government agencies, and private sector entities, leading to increased resources and support..	2.84	0.77	High Extent	2.83	0.82	High Extent
19	Lobbying can increase access to resources, such as funding, expertise, and networks, that can support economic empowerment initiatives.	2.73	0.63	High Extent	2.76	0.89	High Extent
20.	Lobbying can promote good governance and accountability, ensuring that policies and programs are transparent, inclusive, and effective.	2.80	0.87	High Extent	2.81	0.87	High Extent
Grand Total		2.75	0.75	High Extent	2.77	0.89	High Extent

Source: Research’s Field Result, 2025

The results from Table 4 indicate that lobbying plays a significant role in promoting economic empowerment and sustainable growth in both Khana and Gokana LGAs, as reflected in the overall average ratings of 2.75 in Khana and 2.77 in Gokana, both rated as high . Lobbying is recognized as a critical tool for influencing policy decisions that impact economic empowerment, with average ratings of 2.76 in Khana and 2.67 in Gokana. This indicates that advocacy efforts through lobbying contribute to shaping policies in key sectors such as agriculture, trade and infrastructure development. Lobbying also serves as a mechanism to advocate for the economic interests of community members by improving access to credit, markets and technology. This is evident in the high ratings of 2.95 in Khana and 2.78 in Gokana, highlighting its role in expanding economic opportunities for individuals and businesses in both LGAs. The ability of lobbying to facilitate partnerships and collaboration between community organizations, government agencies, and private sector entities is rated highly in both localities, with scores of 2.84 in Khana and 2.83 in Gokana. This indicates that lobbying efforts contribute to increased resources and support for economic initiatives, and promote sustainable growth. The role of lobbying in increasing access to resources such as finance, expertise, and networks was also recognized, with average ratings of 2.73 in Khana and 2.76 in Gokana. This indicates that lobbying activities help to bridge resource gaps that often hinder economic empowerment efforts. Furthermore, lobbying is seen as a tool in promoting good governance and accountability , with average ratings of 2.80 in Khana and 2.81 in Gokana. This indicates that lobbying efforts contribute to ensuring transparency, inclusiveness, and effectiveness in policy implementation and program delivery. The role of lobbying in promoting economic empowerment and sustainable growth in Khanna and Gokana Local Government Areas includes influencing policy decisions, advocating for economic interests, facilitating partnerships and collaboration, increasing access to resources, and promoting good governance and accountability. Strengthening lobbying efforts in these areas will enhance economic development and ensure the sustainability of empowerment initiatives in both areas.

Discussion of results

The results from Table 1 indicate that there are various barriers that significantly hinder the successful implementation of advocacy programmes in Khana and Gokana local government areas, affecting economic empowerment and sustainable growth. The overall average ratings of 2.75 in Khana and 2.77 in Gokana indicate that these barriers are perceived to be highly significant in both areas. Inadequate funding was rated low (2.46) in Khana but high (2.67) in Gokana, implying that financial constraints are more pronounced in Gokana. Previous studies, such as Okafor and Uche (2020), have found that limited financial resources continue to be a significant barrier to advocacy efforts in local government, in line with these findings. In addition, low community engagement was identified as a barrier highly in both areas, with average ratings of 2.93 in Khana and 2.78 in Gokana. This finding corroborates studies by Afolayan and Adeyemi (2019), which have confirmed that community engagement is a critical factor for advocacy success. Infrastructure deficiencies, such as poor transport, communication and technology, were also rated as high in both localities (2.84 in Khanna and 2.83 in Gokana), consistent with Nwankwo (2021), who highlighted infrastructure deficits as major barriers to advocacy programme success. Furthermore, corruption and nepotism were identified as major challenges, with ratings of 2.80 in Khanna and 2.81 in Gokana, consistent with research by Eze and Chukwu (2022), which found that governance issues often undermine advocacy efforts. Addressing these challenges through improved governance, strategic planning and community engagement will be essential to enhancing the effectiveness of advocacy programmes in promoting economic empowerment and sustainable growth.

The results from Table 2 indicate that advocacy leadership in Khanna and Gokana LGAs is generally perceived as effective in promoting economic empowerment and sustainable growth. The overall mean ratings of 2.82 in Khanna and 2.81 in Gokana indicate a high degree of effectiveness. Advocacy leaders are perceived as demonstrating farsighted leadership, with a mean score of 2.84 in both LGAs, supporting the findings of Johnson and Edeh (2020), who asserted that strong leadership is essential for successful economic empowerment initiatives. Advocacy leaders' ability to mobilize community members for economic empowerment was also rated highly (2.82 in Khanna and 2.76 in Gokana), in line with the work of Musa and Okonkwo (2021), who emphasized the role of community mobilization in achieving sustainable growth. Strategic stakeholder partnerships were identified as a key strength (2.81 in Khanna and 2.84 in Gokana), consistent with previous studies (Adekunle, 2018) that highlighted collaboration as a key component of effective advocacy. However, engagement with community members was rated slightly higher in Khanna (2.96) than in Gokana (2.79), suggesting differences in engagement effectiveness, a trend noted by Ogundele (2019) in similar advocacy studies. Furthermore, prioritizing women's and youth empowerment was rated lower in Khanna (2.65) than in Gokana (2.81), supporting findings by Bello and Yusuf (2021) that suggested regional differences in advocacy focus. These findings suggest that while advocacy leadership is effective, improvements in communication and inclusion are necessary to maximize impact.

Table 3 highlights the importance of community participation in advocacy for economic empowerment and sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana LGAs, with overall mean ratings of 2.65 and 2.68 respectively. Community ownership and control of advocacy programmes was rated as high in Gokana (2.81) but low in Khana (2.43), indicating weak community-led efforts in Khana. This finding is in line with the work of Adebayo (2020), who asserted that local ownership enhances the sustainability of advocacy initiatives. Active participation in decision-making processes was rated as high in both LGAs (2.75 in Khana and 2.83 in Gokana), consistent with research by Ibrahim and Nwachukwu (2019) which highlighted the importance of inclusive decision-making in community development. Similarly, capacity building and empowerment were rated as high in extent (2.57 in Khana and 2.56 in Gokana), in line with the findings of Oladipo (2021), who indicated that skills development directly contributes to economic empowerment. Partnerships and collaboration among community members were also important factors (2.71 in Khana and 2.80 in Gokana), reinforcing Okonkwo's (2022) findings that collective efforts enhance advocacy effectiveness. However, cultural sensitivity and the importance of advocacy programmes showed contrasting perceptions, being rated as high in extent in Khana (2.80) but low in extent in Gokana (2.39), suggesting a potential mismatch between advocacy initiatives and local cultural values. This discrepancy is in line with research by Adamu and Mohammed (2020), who stressed the need for culturally adaptive advocacy programmes. Promoting community ownership in Khana and ensuring cultural relevance in Gokana will enhance the effectiveness of advocacy programmes.

The results from Table 4 confirm the role of lobbying in promoting economic empowerment and sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana LGAs. The overall mean ratings of 2.75 in Khana and 2.77 in Gokana indicate a significant extent of influence. Lobbying is seen as a tool in influencing policy decisions that impact economic empowerment, with ratings of 2.76 in Khana and 2.67 in Gokana, consistent with Olatunji's (2018) findings on the role of lobbying in shaping local economic policies. Advocacy for economic interests, such as access to credit, markets and technology, was rated highly (2.95 in Khana and 2.78 in Gokana), consistent with research by Emeka (2020) who emphasized the role of lobbying in economic inclusion. Facilitating partnerships and collaboration between community organizations, government agencies, and private entities was also significant (2.84 in Khanna and 2.83 in Gokana), supporting studies by Nduka (2019) on the impact of lobbying in promoting public-private partnerships. Additionally, lobbying was seen as enhancing access to resources such as finance and expertise (2.73 in Khanna and 2.76 in Gokana), consistent with Akinpelu (2021), who noted that lobbying can bridge resource gaps. Furthermore, lobbying was recognized as a means of promoting good governance and accountability (2.80 in Khanna and 2.81 in Gokana), supporting findings by Omeh (2022) who emphasized transparency in policy implementation through lobbying. Strengthening lobbying efforts would further enhance economic development and ensure the sustainability of empowerment initiatives in both localities.

conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the significant impact of advocacy programmes on economic empowerment and sustainable growth in Khana and Gokana local government areas. Several barriers, such as insufficient funding, low community engagement, infrastructure deficits, and corruption, were identified as major challenges to the success of advocacy programmes in both areas. Despite these challenges, advocacy leadership was found to be effective, particularly in community mobilisation and strategic partnerships, although there were differences in communication effectiveness and prioritisation of women and youth empowerment between the two areas. Community engagement was also recognised as a critical factor in advocacy success, with strong participation in decision-making and collaboration among stakeholders. However, community ownership was significantly lower in Khana, and cultural significance was a challenge in Gokana. Lobbying emerged as a key mechanism for influencing policy decisions, advocating for economic interests, facilitating partnerships, and enhancing transparency and accountability in governance. These findings suggest that strengthening advocacy programmes can enhance economic empowerment and ensure sustainable growth in both areas.

Recommendations

1. Government agencies and private organizations should increase funding, particularly community fundraising strategies and donor engagement for advocacy programs in both local governments, where financial constraints are most pronounced.
2. Awareness campaigns should be conducted to increase community participation in advocacy programmes, especially in Khanna, where ownership of advocacy initiatives was less.
3. Capacity building workshops should be organized to enable local leaders and community members to acquire advocacy skills.
4. Expanding Advocacy Efforts Advocacy groups should actively work with policymakers in both local and national governments to influence economic policies that support empowerment initiatives

References

- Adebayo, T. (2020). *Community ownership and sustainability of advocacy programs in Nigeria*. Lagos: University Press.
- Adekunle, F. (2018). *Stakeholder collaboration in economic empowerment initiatives*. Ibadan: Research & Development Journal.
- Adamu, S., & Mohammed, A. (2020). *Cultural adaptation in advocacy programs: Challenges and solutions*. African Journal of Development Studies, 15(2), 45-63.
- Afolayan, O., & Adeyemi, L. (2019). *The role of community engagement in advocacy success*. Nigerian Journal of Policy Research, 10(1), 98-112.
- Akinpelu, R. (2021). *Lobbying for economic growth: Strategies and impacts*. Economic Policy Review, 18(3), 67-85.
- Bello, K., & Yusuf, M. (2021). *Women and youth empowerment through advocacy*. Journal of Gender Studies, 12(4), 78-91.
- Eze, J., & Chukwu, B. (2022). *Corruption and governance in advocacy programs*. African Governance Review, 9(2), 34-50.
- Johnson, P., & Edeh, U. (2020). *Visionary leadership and economic empowerment initiatives*. Leadership & Development Journal, 14(1), 56-70.
- Musa, A., & Okonkwo, C. (2021). *Community mobilization for sustainable development*. African Journal of Economic Studies, 16(2), 112-126.