

Evaluation of Nigeria Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development

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Abstract: The studies evaluate Nigeria poverty alleviation strategies and sustainable development. These strategies and initiatives were introduced by both the present and past government of Nigeria with the aim to reduce poverty to a minimum level. Nigeria poverty situation has made the country to become one of the poorest country in the world with the citizen surviving with less than \$2 per day because effort to reduce poverty level over the years has not been successful. These initiatives are judge to be unsatisfactory and poorly implemented in meeting the number one sustainable development goals (SDG) by year 2030 if not properly adjust. Government need to come up with ideas and policy to address all the obstacles hindering the success of the various strategies programs. More so, the government should pursue aggressive diversification of the economy to non-oil sector like the agricultural sector so as to address poverty at the rural communities.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Poverty, Alleviation, Strategies, Sustainable development goals.

I. INTRODUCTION

Poverty is about not having enough money to meet basic essential needs including food, clothing, shelter etc. However, poverty goes beyond not having enough money. The World Bank organization describes poverty as hunger, lack of shelter, being sick and not able to see a doctor, not having access to school and the fear for the future. Poverty is a global issue which affects various continents, nations and people differently. It affects people in various levels at different times and phases of existence. The main difference is the prevalence and intensity of this phenomenon (Akeredolu, 2005).

Poverty has made Nigeria to attain an undesirable status as one of the poorest country in the world (Anyawu, 2007) such that no government, community or family can survive effectively without introducing any poverty reduction strategy. A united nation report in 2016 on Nigeria's common analysis has described the country as one of the poorest and unequal country in the world with over 80 million or 64% of her population living below poverty line. In the same way, political instability, corruption, tribalism and absence of good governance experienced in Nigeria over the years subjected the various poverty alleviation strategies in the country to uncertainty.

Poverty in Nigeria is associated with high unemployment, poor governance and corruption, lack of accountability, gross violation of human rights, nepotism and a skewed income

distribution. Additional factors include impaired access to productive and financial assets by women and vulnerable groups. Poverty has a gender dimension as women contribute to the larger percentage of the poor due to the subordinate status of women, traditional, cultural practice, discrimination and lack of access to productive assets. Available data from the Federal office of statistics indicate that the incidence of poverty declined between 1985 and 1992 but since then, it has been on the rise. (CBN, 2005)

Since independence in 1960 from British colonial rule, the various leadership of this country have adopted numerous developmental strategies with view to reduce to some extent or do away with poverty but could not reduce it due to the complex nature of the country's Poverty which can be termed as chronic poverty. These programme comprises operation feed the nation (OFN), the green revolution, agricultural development projects (ADP), National fadama development programme (NFDP), rural banking schemes, the National accelerated food production programme, peoples bank of Nigeria, National poverty eradication programme, National directorate of employment, N-power programme e.t.c. These programs were all place by both the present and the past government in the country. This paper seeks to examine the various past and present poverty alleviation strategies in Nigeria and to evaluate the factors hindering these programmes in creating a sustainable development.

Objectives of the study

- i. To examine the constraints encountered in implementing various poverty alleviation programme
- ii. To analyze the impact of the programmes in Nigeria
- iii. To examine the impact of these programmes in creating a sustainable environment.

Conceptual Clarification

Sustainable Development

According to todaro and smith 1985, sustainable development is the organizing principle for meeting human development goals, whereby the current generations have a moral obligation to provide essential needs for sustainable living conditions to their future generation.

Poverty Alleviation

Poverty alleviation is a set of economic measures and initiatives that is intended to lift or move people out of

poverty. Is also the process which seeks to reduce the level of poverty in a community or state (Ajakaiye and Olomola, 1999).

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

There are several theories related to poverty, these theories are based on different schools of thought. Marxian economists and other radical theorists highlighted the possibility that economic growth alone may be insufficient to lift poor people out of (relative) poverty, because those who belong to certain classes may not reap any of the benefits of income growth. Similarly, by emphasizing the idea of class, it provides a shift in perspective to focus on group rather than individual characteristics. In a capitalist system of government, alleviation of poverty may require increase in minimum wage and antidiscrimination laws to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. The exploitation of the poor by the rich groups in society may also occur as a result environmental factor; for example, the poor groups tend to suffer most from air pollution that is normally generated by the wealthier groups given their residential location. (Davis and Miguel, 2015).

The individual attribute theory assumes that each poor person is responsible for his condition because individual status and level of income can be influenced and re-determined due to changes in his abilities and motivation in a market. The hierarchy of individual in the society can't be questionable and that individual can operate within the structure and limit set by forces of the prevailing capitalist class that trap him to poverty at the end. This is more common in the western region and some less developing countries (Nwaobi, 2003)

III. METHODOLOGY

The data collection for this study is obtained mainly from secondary sources, particularly National poverty eradication programme (NAPEP), CBN Statistical Bulletin, journals, national bureau of statistic (NBS) and united nation development programme.

Causes of Poverty in Nigeria

The causes of poverty in Nigeria are multi-dimensional, several authors has examined the issue of poverty in Nigeria. For instance, Olowa (2012) highlights the causes of poverty in Nigeria to include poor economic growth, inappropriate macroeconomic policies, deficiencies in labour market resulting in limited job growth, low productivity and low wages in the informal sector and a lag in the human resources development. Ucha (2010) identifies unemployment, retrenchment of workers, corruption, non-diversification of the economy, over dependence on the oil sector, income inequality and a poor education system as some of the major factors contributing to poverty in Nigeria.

The World Bank Poverty has identified the following as the major causes of poverty:

- i. Inadequate access to employment opportunities

- ii. Inadequate and minimal access to physical assets, such as land and capital by the poor.
- iii. Inadequate means of supporting rural development in poor regions.
- iv. Insufficient access to markets where the poor can sell goods and services.
- v. Low endowment of human capital.
- vi. Destruction and miss-management of natural resources, leading to environmental degradation and reduced productivity.
- vii. Lack of inclusive participation; which is the failure to include the poor in the process of designing development programmes.

Trend of Poverty in Nigeria

The issue of poverty in Nigeria has been for a long period of time and has been the major concern of all the government in the country. Originally, much attention were place in developing rural areas because the rural dwellers constitute the larger percentage of the poor and overall planning of the country as documented in the 2nd and 4th national development [plan of the country as one of the means to minimize poverty in the country. For the purpose of minimizing the causes of poverty, the country calls for immediate provision of certain essential facilities such as the provision of potable water, electricity, communication network and good transport system after establishing the necessary institution for the maintenance and monitory of these facilities (Nwobi, 2013). But the failure of these plans due to ineffective and improper implementation increases the level of poverty in the country. This is shown by the report of the federal office of statistic (FOS) on the trend of poverty in Nigeria.

Table 1.1 Trends of poverty level in Nigeria (1980 - 2018)

Year	Poverty level (%)	Total population in poverty (Million)	Total population in (Million)
1980	27.2	17.7	65.0
1985	46.3	34.7	75.0
1992	42.7	33.9	91.5
1996	65.6	67.1	102.3
2004	54.4	68.7	126.3
2010	69.0	112.5	163.0
2012	72.0	128.3	168.0
2015	75	135.8	181.1
2018	80	156.6	195.8

Source: National bureau of statistic, Nigeria (2018)

From the above table, the poverty level increased heavily from 1980 to 1985 and from 1992 to 1996 but there was a slight reduction in poverty level from 1985 to 1992. The 27.2% poverty level shows that about 17.7 million people are in poverty in 1980 and 34.7 million people in 1985. There was a drop in poverty level in 1992 but the rate of people in [poverty was almost 5 million increase on the 1985 figure and it increased sharply to 67.1 million in 1996. The trend

continues to increase up to 2018 with about 156.6 million people in poverty which tag Nigeria as one of the poorest countries in the world. This continuous trend in poverty level is due to the rapid population growth with the highest unemployment rate in the country. (Ayinde, 2011).

Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Nigeria

Widespread poverty have serious implications for the government and people at large, it implies the race and the

pattern of economic growth and development. It is also physically and psychologically dehumanizing. In view of the grave consequences of poverty on individuals and society, governments in the global economy are continuously seeking ways of reducing the incidence of poverty. Over the years in Nigeria, both past and present government have formulated and introduce diverse policies, initiatives and programs aimed at reducing or alleviate poverty. The table below presents poverty alleviation programmes from 1976 till date.

Table 1.2 Poverty Alleviation Programme in Nigeria (1976- date)

PROGRAMMES	OBJECTIVES	OUTCOME
Operation feed the nation (OFN) – 1976	To arouse and motivate Nigerians, the habit of cultivating food and cash crops both in subsistence and commercial scale in order to be self reliant.	Many Nigerians refused to go back to the farm, since the rapid increase in oil revenue encouraged people to migrate to the city looking for greener pasture
Green Revolution Programme- 1980	To ensure self sufficiency in food production and to introduce modern technology into agricultural sector through the use of modern inputs.	Despite the programme, food supply is insufficient in the country because of the farmers reluctant to adapt modern agricultural technology
Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) – 1986	To check the economic crises and poverty alleviation	Poor implementation resulted in high inflation rate and poor performance of the manufacturing sector.
National Directorate of Employment (NDE)- 1986	To reduce unemployment and promote skills acquisition and health care	Little success was recorded by providing vocational training on different skills to many Nigerian youth
Better Life for Rural Women- 1987	To encourage self help and rural development, skill acquisition and healthcare	Slight achievement on women's right and their awareness to become self reliant
Nomadic Education Programme (NEP)- 1989	To raise the literacy level among the nomadic people of Nigeria	The programme succeeded in fighting illiteracy among the nomads at the primary level
Family Support Programme (FSP)- 1994	To improve the life of rural dwellers, especially women	The programme failed due to lack of supervision and monitoring
The Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF)- 1994	To rehabilitate and provide urban roads, water, educational materials, health and agricultural facilities	There are serious criticisms of massive fraud and nepotism on the contract awarded by the officials.
Family Economic Advancement (FEAP)- 1997	To target rural areas through the granting of credit facilities to support the establishment of cottage industries	Corruption, poor supervision and poor management defeat the programme
Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) -2000	To provide employment opportunities and infrastructures	Poor management and corruption did not allow the programme to succeed
Nigeria Agricultural cooperative and rural development bank- 2000	To improve agricultural activities and rural development	Remarkable success has been recorded in the area of agriculture and development of SME.
Bank of Industry – 2000	To finance SMEs and accelerate growth development of the industrial sector.	Poor outreach performance and politics hinders the operation of the bank.
National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)- 2001	To empower youths, provide rural development, healthcare, education and natural resource conservation	Poor management and corruption affect the performance of this programme
National Economic Empowerment Strategies - 2004	To provide social amenities and poverty reduction.	The programme failed as 70% of the country's population are poor.
Subsidy Reinvestment and empowerment programme (SURE-P) – 2012	To pay attention to the critical infrastructure projects and social safety net programmes with the aim of having a direct impact on the citizens of Nigeria.	Complete failure because the money set aside to finance the programme was siphoned by the government officials.
Needs for Power Programme (n- power) – 2016 till date	To reduce youth unemployment and facilitate transferability of employment, entrepreneur and technical skills	Little success was recorded because few unemployed youths with connections are trained and engaged in temporary employment and allowances are paid in cash.

Source: Extracted from Arogundade and Ogunro (2011) and Author's compilation

It is evident that past and present administration in Nigeria have launched several programmes, policies and initiatives in an attempt to improve the standard of living of the poor and the low income group in the society. These programmes were

geared to improve basic social services, agriculture, welfares, housing, infrastructures and increasing access to credit facilities thereby creating employment opportunities for the citizens. However, there are lots of hindrance facing poverty

alleviation programmes in Nigeria, which is an obstacle to the nations' sustainable development.

Reasons for Persistence poverty in Nigeria

The incidence and scourge of poverty has persisted in Nigeria over the years because of some problem associated with the successive poverty reduction programmes. Ajakaiye (2003) identifies the problems hindering the positive outcome of all the present and past alleviation programmes to include the following

- i. Policy inconsistency and poor governance.
- ii. Ineffective and weak targeting of the poor (leading to leakage of benefits to unintended beneficiaries)
- iii. The difficult and unclear scope of the programmes resulting in resources being thinly spread among projects
- iv. Overlapping of functions which ultimately led to rivalry and conflicts
- v. Lack of complimentary from beneficiaries
- vi. Uncoordinated policy initiatives
- vii. Lack of involvement of social partners and stakeholders in planning, implementations, and evaluation and Poor human capital development and inadequate funding.

Other factors hindering the success of poverty alleviation strategies in Nigeria include:

Corruption, gross mismanagement of funds and absence of lack of financial discipline, politicization of the strategies, lack of effective and co-ordinate implementation, poor monitoring, political instability, terrorism and insurgency. Generally, Oyemomi(2003b) identifies the factors that enable the prevalence of poverty in Nigeria to include the following: macroeconomic distortions, corruption, effects of globalization, governance, low productivity, unemployment, debt burden and poor human resources development.

IV. IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

Poverty in Nigeria can be reduce to a minimal level if the various poverty alleviation programme can be handle with sincerity and practice of good governance during the implementation. To achieve sustainable development in Nigeria, there is need to diversify the nation economy into agricultural base economy as the larger proportion of poor household are the rural dwellers living below poverty line. The agricultural sector provides the major occupation in rural

communities but due to the negligence of this sector has a result of oil discovery diverted the attention of government from this sector. More emphasis should be on provision of basic socio economic infrastructure which is also part of the poverty alleviation strategies, implementation of rural policies that will enhance better living condition base on current and future needs should not be left out, effective provision of public services needed to maintain quality and smooth accessibility to social welfare such as education, health services, portable drinking water, accessible roads etc.

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