

Social Policies and Poverty Reduction in Africa: Nigeria in focus

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Abstract: One of the daunting challenges in the development of human capital and the general wellbeing of the people is the rising incidence of poverty across regions. Many policies and strategies have been adopted to address this challenge. In this paper, we explore all such social policies adopted to tackle poverty incidence in Africa using Nigeria as a focal point. In particular, we reviews nine social policies employed by the Nigerian government to reduced poverty in Nigeria and accesses their outcomes. Our outcome expresses mixed feelings on the performance of social policies in poverty reduction in Nigeria. Specifically, while implementers advocate for successes of the programmes, the beneficiaries pointed to non-effectiveness of the programmes due to noticeable challenges peculiar to the sub region. However, the African sub-region, including Nigeria, benefits fully from conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes of social policies across poverty line and multi-dimensions in dipping poverty across all strata of the African society. We recommend strengthening social policy integration among competing policies as an onion in ensuring social policies-poverty reduction synthesis in the African region.

Key Words: Social Policies, Poverty, Poverty Alleviation Programmes, Rural Poor, Nigeria

I. INTRODUCTION

Poverty constitutes one of the most social development challenges the world ever faced. It is only now followed by terrorism and insurgency more or less to trigger poverty the more. Poverty in its most general sense is the lack of necessities. Basic food, shelter, medical care, and safety are generally thought necessary based on shared values of humandignity (Bradshaw, 2006). However, what is a necessity to one person is not uniformly a necessity to others. Needs may be relative to what is possible and are based on social definition and past experience (Sen, 1999). Valentine (1968) says that “the essence of poverty is inequality. In slightly different words, the basic meaning of poverty is relative deprivation.” A social (relative) definition of poverty allows community flexibility in addressing pressing local concerns, while objective definitions allow tracking progress and comparing one area to another.

In March 2013, Africa was identified as the world's poorest inhabited continent. However, the World Bank also expects that most African countries will reach "middle income" status (defined as at least US\$1,000 per person a year) by 2025 if current growth rates continue. This should not be surprise,

because, as Table 1 shows, poverty in some part of Africa is still on the increase.

Table 1: Share of population living in extreme poverty by world region, 1981 to 2018

Region/Year	1981	1993	2012	2018
Sub-Saharan Africa	-	61.06%	42.65%	40%
Europe and Central Asia	-	5.19%	2.11%	
Middle East and North Africa	-	6.95%	-	5%
Latin America and the Caribbean	23.87%	14.95%	5.58%	10.2%
East Asia and Pacific	80.09%	51.99%	7.21%	
South Asia	58.09%	47.86%	18.75%	29%
World	44.3%	34.65%	12.73%	9.1%

Source: World Development Indicators, 2013, 2020

According to Table1, the number of people living in extreme poverty in parts of Europe is 2.11%. The closest region to Sub-Saharan Africa is South Asia, with 18.75%. The number of people living in extreme poverty in Sub Saharan Africa was approximately 43% in 2012. The decline witnessed in 6 years could not push the poverty rate beyond 40% in 2018. As at 2020, the Sub Saharan Africa was the only region with the highest number of persons living in extreme poverty with a total of 413.3 million people. South Asia had 216.4 million people; East Asia and the Pacific had 47.2 million people; Latin America and the Caribbean had 25.9 million people; The Middle East and North Africa had 18.6 million people while Europe and Central Asia had only 7.1 million people living in extreme poverty. This adds to the assertion provided by the World Bank above. According to World Poverty report, 2020, the life expectancy rate in the United States is expected to be higher than that in Sub Saharan Africa by at least 18 years apart.

Poverty in Africa is predominantly rural. More than 70 per cent of the continent's poor people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for food and livelihood, yet development assistance to agriculture is decreasing. In Sub-Saharan Africa, more than 413 million people live in extreme poverty as at 2015 (World Bank, 2018). Among them are rural poor people in Eastern and Southern Africa, an area that has one of the world's highest concentrations of poor people. The incidence of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa is increasing faster than the population. For instance, while the number of

people living in poverty increase from 278 million in 1990 to 413 million in 2015, urban population growth and urbanization in the region was the slowest. Overall, the pace of poverty reduction in most of Africa has slowed since the 1970s (Rural Poverty Portal, 2014).

A policy on the other hand is a definite course of action chosen by an individual or an organization. Where the organization is a government, the policy is referred to as public policy. Social policy is a term which is applied to various areas of policy, usually within a governmental or political setting such as the welfare state and study of social services. It can refer to guidelines, principles, legislation and activities that affect the living conditions conducive to human welfare, such as a person's quality of life. According to the Department of Social Policy of the London School of Economics social policy can be seen as "an interdisciplinary and applied subject concerned with the analysis of societies' responses to social need", which seeks to foster in its students a capacity to understand theory and evidence drawn from a wide range of social science disciplines, including economics, sociology, psychology, geography, history, law, philosophy and political science. Social policy might also be described as actions that affect the well-being of members of a society through shaping the distribution of and access to goods and resources in that society.

The process of making social policy is iterative in nature. It involves the identification of a problem or problems by policy entrepreneurs affecting the society in the negative, setting the agenda for the problem, formulating a policy proposal and possible adoption of the policy. More than that, the policy may be implemented and evaluated for effective feedbacks and corrections. To implement a social policy, a plan is needed. More often than not, social policies are reflected in the programmes of the government. A country's programme of economic events shows the citizenry the direction of how the economy move.

The interest of the paper is to examine poverty in the African context and how social policies of the region affects poverty. In doing so, attention will be placed on policies of poverty alleviations in Nigeria and their impact on the economy. Social policies in the region may be closely related, given the structural development status of the region as a developing continent. Furthermore, as the largest economy in the continent, Nigeria closely measures the region's characteristics. Following this introduction, the rest of the paper is structured as follows: section two discusses the theoretical underpinnings on the subjects and literature review; section three discusses how social policies are implemented for poverty alleviation in Africa and section four concludes.

II. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Scholars have characterizes the debate about poverty as falling into two theoretical camps, namely individual and/or structural.

2.1.1 Individual Poverty

The right-wing view is that poverty is an *individual* phenomenon. On this view, people are in poverty because they are lazy, uneducated, ignorant, or otherwise inferior in some manner (Murray, 1985). If this theory were true, it would follow that impoverished people are basically the same people every year. And if that were true, we could whip poverty by helping that particular 15% of the population to figure things out and climb out of poverty. Thus, a program of heavy paternalistic life contracts to help this discrete underclass get things together might conceivably end or dramatically reduce poverty. Elesh, (1970) noted that individual poverty can also be called cultural theories asserting that it is the valuational, attitudinal, and behavioral patterns of the poor which prevent them from being socially mobile

2.1.2 Structural Poverty

The left-wing view is that poverty is a *structural* phenomenon. On this view, people are in poverty because they find themselves in holes in the economic system that deliver them inadequate income. Because individual lives are dynamic, people don't sit in those holes forever. One year they are in a low-income hole, but the next year they've found a job or gotten a promotion, and so their income jump. But that hole that they were in last year doesn't go away. Others inevitably find themselves in that hole because it is a persistent defect in the economic structure. It follows from this that impoverished people are not the same people every year. It follows further that the only way to reduce poverty is to alter the economic structure so as to reduce the number of low-income holes in it (Murray, 1985).

Other concepts of poverty frequently used in the literature and applied to the African context include the following;

- Absolute poverty: "a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services" (United Nations, 1995). Concern for such absolute poverty is naturally greater where there is a risk of destitution than where all have access to means of survival (Laderchi et al 2003).
- Relative poverty: "a standard which is measured in terms of the society in which an individual lives and which therefore differs between countries and over time." An income-related example would be living on less than 60% of median UK household income adjusted for household size and after housing costs (JRF 2013).
- Poverty line: "the minimum level of income deemed adequate in a particular country" (Ravallion, 1992). To aid in cross-country comparisons, in 2008 the World Bank revised its international poverty line to \$1.25/day at 2005-based purchasing-power parity (Ravallion et al., 2009).

- Poverty trap: a state where poverty tends to persist due to "self-reinforcing mechanisms" (Azariadis and Stachurski, 2005). These negative feedbacks are found between poverty and a number of circumstances such as undernourishment, lack of access to insurance, population growth, a degraded environment and even economic growth.

2.1.3 Regimes Theory of Social Policy

Regimes are the specific institutional arrangements adopted by societies in the pursuit of work and welfare. A given organisation of state-economy relations is associated with a particular social policy logic (Esping-Andersen, 1987). Regime theory extends and enhances common factor analysis in two main directions. First, the idea that there are different types of welfare state replaces the emphasis on ranking welfare effort. Second, regime theory looks at whole configurations of policies, emphasizing the conjunctions and interactions between social policies and "its reciprocal political and economic institutions. Whereas regression analysis requires that the relationship between variables obeys a common structure across countries, regime theory allows for different patterns of relationships.

2.2 Brief Review of the Literature

Obike, Ukoha and Nwajiuba (2007) investigated the role of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in poverty reduction in Nigeria using Abia State as a case study. Structured questionnaire were used to obtain information on 120 respondents, half of which were beneficiaries of NDE services and the others were not. Foster, Greener and Thobecke (F-G-T) measure of poverty and multiple regression analysis were applied on the sample. The result shows that credit, farming experience, and farm income obtained from National Directorate of Employment (NDE) were significant determinants of poverty reduction among National Directorate of Employment (NDE) beneficiaries in Abia State.

In their study, Kanyenze, Mhone, and Sparreboom (2000) underscores that trainings in vocational and technical skills will reduce youth marginalization in Anglophone Africa. In the survey of six Anglophone countries of Africa including Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, they found that these countries have instituted various programmes of skills acquisition but unemployment is still on the rise. They, therefore suggest that youth unemployment should not be seen as an incidental or special anomaly of an otherwise employment friendly environment, but as a manifestation of the overall structural problem that affects adults as well as youths. Therefore, the point in contention is that policies aimed at enhancing the welfare and employability of youths should preferably be undertaken in the broader context of policies aimed at enhancing the overall labour absorption capacity of African economies.

Adofu and Ocheja (2013) investigated the conduct of skills acquisition and training in alleviating poverty and unemployment in Kogi state, Nigeria. This relationship

between entrepreneurship skills acquisition and poverty/unemployment was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The descriptive tools consisted of the use of percentages and frequencies presented in a tabular form. A chi-square test (χ^2) was employed to test the validity or otherwise of the effect of entrepreneurship skills acquisition on poverty alleviation and unemployment reduction in Nigeria using primary data obtained in six local government areas that made up the four districts of the state. The result shows that 65% of the respondents accepted that lack of entrepreneurship skills among youth is responsible for the high rate of poverty/unemployment in Nigeria. The result also revealed that at least 60% of the people that benefitted from the skills acquisition programme can now afford the basic necessity of life. The study therefore recommended that since most of the people that benefitted from the programme could afford the basic necessity of life, hence the government should begin to think of the way of developing the programme to the status of poverty/unemployment eradication programme.

Akpama, Esang, Asor, and Osang (2011), observed that acquisition of vocational skills can lead to a significant reduction of poverty among young adults and unemployment reduction. Entrepreneurial studies are inter-disciplinary training that focuses on the tools needed to start a new business or vocation. Because Nigeria is fast becoming a predominantly youthful society with high rate of unemployment, it requires training the youth in entrepreneurship skills in technical vocational education and training to tackle unemployment which has reached alarming proportions.

III. IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL POLICY FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION: NIGERIA IN FOCUS

In a bid to actualize Nigeria's dream towards poverty reduction, various government policies contain several development programmes of employment generation and human resource development. These programmes included

1. the National Directorate of Employment (NDE),
2. the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP),
3. the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI),
4. the Better Life Programme (BLP) among others.

With particular reference to NDE, the programme was aimed at designing and articulating policies to tackle general unemployment problem and poverty in the economy. This includes obtaining and maintaining a data bank on declared vacancies and employment in the economy with a view to reduce job search cost. The activities of NDE cover all sectors of the economy. For instance, Alabi and Osasogie (2006) reported that in order for NDE to cater for employment generation in agricultural sector, two subprogrammes were developed including the school leavers agricultural scheme and the graduate agricultural loan scheme, the objectives of which were to create large crops of graduate farmers in the

rural areas. This, if it has sustained, were to reduce employment pressure in the formal sector and also lead towards reduction in Nigeria.

Other programmes of the NDE include:

(i) *Vocational Skills Development Programme*

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) realizes that one of the major causes of unemployment is that of skills mismatch. Also, the potentials of the informal sector and the traditional apprenticeship system practices contribution to economic development cannot be overlooked. In this regard therefore, the Directorate designed and commenced implementing vocational and technical skills acquisition schemes such as National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS), School-On-Wheels Scheme (SOW), Skills Acquisition for the Special Needs (Vulnerable and Disabled), Waste to Wealth Scheme, Resettlement Loan Scheme (RLS) and Trainers Capacity Upgrade (TCU). These schemes address the problem of unemployment resulting from lack of productive and marketable skills among the unemployed. The target group for these schemes includes but not limited to:

- Persons without formal education
- School leavers and school dropouts
- Persons with special needs, and
- Fresh graduates of tertiary institutions who desire to require functional and marketable skills especially in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and related modern skills.

(ii) *Small-Scale Enterprise Promotion Programme (Entrepreneurial or Business Training and Enterprise Creation):*

Small scale entrepreneurs play significant role in the development of the economy. They employ a good proportion of the labour force especially from the informal sector thus depopulating the over saturated labour market. They are also empowered to know how to combine factors of production to create self-employment and wealth for themselves and the nation. The target population includes graduates of tertiary institutions, retired public/private sector workers, school leavers and artisans. Schemes implemented under this programme include Start Your Own Business (SYOB) for graduates of tertiary institutions, Basic Business Training (BBT) for school leavers and artisans, Improve Your Own Business (IYB) for ongoing businesses as a mentoring/support activity, and Women Employment Branch (WEB) to foster gender sensitivity of NDE programme among women organizations.

(iii) *Rural Employment Promotion Programme*

With the advent of the oil economy in Nigeria, there has been a systematic abandonment of the agricultural sector through rural-urban drift in search of paid employment which today is almost non-existent. In a bid to awaken the interest of unemployed youths in agriculture and to exploit the

tremendous opportunities for employment and wealth creation in the agricultural sector, the NDE designed special training programmes for youths in agriculture. The training programme covers modern agricultural practices in the area of crop production, crop processing and preservation, livestock production and management, and other agro-allied ventures. This is handled under the Rural Agricultural Development and Training Scheme (RADTS) at Agricultural skills training centres which are established in almost all the states of the Federation and Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

(iv) *Special Public Works (Training for Labour-Based Works):*

The present poor state of the economy had had its toll on the acquisition of heavy equipment in adequate quantities to meet the high demand for infrastructural development and maintenance in the country. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) therefore views infrastructural construction and maintenance as capable of becoming a labour sponge. Also, as a way of providing transient jobs under the Graduate Attachment Programme (GAP), fresh graduates of tertiary institutions are recruited and attached to willing corporate organizations for tutelage for a period of six months. It is expected that the attachee(s) would have gained needed skills and practical experience that would help address the skills mismatch identified as one of the causes of graduate unemployment in the country thereby enhancing their employability and/or potentials for self-employment.

In 1986, the Federal Government established the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), charged with the responsibility of gearing all efforts towards the development of the rural life. Specifically, DFRRI were to organize and encourage agricultural and any other activities towards an increased earning power of the rural dwellers (Ekong, 2007). This was to increase community participation in rural production, enhances the availability of industrial raw materials, and creates income within the community with the attendant effect of contributing to the general macro-economy. It will also make rural areas more productive and less vulnerable to natural hazards, poverty and exploitation and to give the people a mutually beneficial linkage(s) with other parts of the National economy. Ekong (2007) reported that by 1993, it was obvious that DFRRI was unable to meet some of its towering objectives, mandating the government to harmonize its functions with the ministry of agriculture.

Equally, the Better Life for Rural Women came into being in 1987 with the sole objective of addressing the need of the women and the vulnerable in areas of health, education, farming, social and political affairs. This was an attempt to given women a place in the production function of the economy. Through this programme succor came to the women and children in that expanded programme on immunization reduces children mortality and expanded life expectancy of the children and mothers. Thus, women were more able and capable to complement the labour force of the economy. The

programme was said to have been hijacked by urban and better-to-do women at the detriment of the precariously poor rural women (Ekong, 2007). Following this, the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) came into being in 1993. The focus of FEAP was mainly the setting up and running of cottage industries through cooperative groups with specific attention to agriculture (farming), mineral mining, processing, manufacturing (craft) etc. Ekong (2007) listed the targets of FEAP to boost employment generation as:

- Improved food security through increased production;
- Increased employment opportunities in the rural areas, thus curbing the erstwhile rural-urban drift for employment;
- Enhancement in the utilization of locally available mineral resources for cottage industries.

FEAP training and exchange programmes were to lend support to the technological development and self-reliance.

Following Nigeria's transformation from military to democratic governance, several programme aimed at increasing employment was vigorously pursued. Inyang and Ebong (2006) reported that Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) were some of the most recent of such programmes. NAPEP was sub divided into four components apparently to accommodate key economic issues of development including Youth Employment, Rural Infrastructural Development, Social Welfare Services, and Resource Conservation and Development. The overall objective of NAPEP was to be achieved in three phases. At the first phase, there would be attempt at restoring hope to most poor people by lowering their poverty level and pushing more people above the poverty line. At the second phase, economic independence and confidence will be restored to most Nigerians. In particular, rural inhabitants would be made to actively participate in clearly defined national development activities. The third phase concern wealth creation where all Nigerians are expected to be empowered to afford the basic necessities of life and to be part of National Development (Inyang and Ebong, 2006).

3.1 Tackling Poverty in Nigeria – The SURE-P Way

The Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), was established in January, 2012 by the Federal Government to oversee and ensure the effective and timely implementation of projects to be funded with the saving accruing to it from the removal of subsidy on petroleum products in the oil sector, which was estimated at about N1.3tn annually. This programme is a 3-4 year programme designed to mitigate the immediate impact of the removal of fuel subsidy and accelerate economic growth through investments in critically-needed infrastructure – including investment in Human resources empowerment and development. The proponents of SURE-P said that the

programme was basically a cushioning effect of the pains occasioned by the partial removal of subsidy in the downstream sector of the petroleum sub sector, with a view to transferring the proceeds to more critical needs of Nigerians, especially the infrastructural needs and poverty alleviation (FMI, 2013).

Meanwhile, President Goodluck Jonathan had launched the Public Works Programme and Women/Youth Employment (PW/WYE), with the objectives of generating 370, 000 new jobs before the year runs out. The PW/WYE project which is a component of the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) is scripted to provide immediate employment opportunities to women and youths in labour intensive public works. To this end, the project is expected to create 50, 000 skilled and 320, 000 unskilled job opportunities and would be implemented in partnership with the States, Local Government and Private organizations. Consequent upon this, the government recently inaugurated the State Implementation Committee of SURE-P (SIC), to give credence to its resolve to decentralize the activities of the board, to ensure plurality of its positive impact across the length and breadth of the country.

Thus, the 2012 budget saw a big assistant in financial plans from the SURE-Programme in various sectors including: Works – 46.5bn, Power – 155bn through the period 2012 – 2015, Transport – the SURE-P allocated 20.9bn to transport development, Education – an additional 24.6bn will be spent on vocational training centres from the SURE-P, on Health – 73.8 bn will be spent on Maternal and Child health from SURE-P, on Niger Delta Development – 21.7bn was allocated in 2012 from the SURE-P for east-west road construction, on Water Resources over the period 2012 – 2015, an additional 205.5bn will be invested in rural water scheme, water supply scheme, irrigation scheme and other water related projects from SURE-P. According to NgoziIweala in Nigeria Magazine,

These projects will not only significantly improve the country's infrastructure, but will also create millions of jobs for Nigerians.

This struggle is not between the government and Nigerians, because government is squarely on the side of the people. The fight is between the government and Nigerians on one side, and persons who are bent on continuing their age-long “milking” of the system for their personal benefits on the other side.

The Subsidy Reinvestment Programme follows the NEEDS policy module in that both the state and the local governments were to set up a system of integrating into the subsidy funds so that the funds residue spills over to every Nigerians (Umobongand Ekong, 2015). The fears to effective functioning of the programme, however, is that the programme committee would only monitor the use of about 47 per cent of the total subsidy savings which was the amount accruable to the Federal Government. This is the same thing

as saying that over 53 per cent of the subsidy is lost, given the Nigerian inherent problem – corruption. Already, there are alleged fears of the funds mischanneling for political campaign come 2015.

3.2 *The You Win Programme and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria*

The Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (*You WiN*) Programme is a collaboration of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Communication Technology (CT), and the Ministry of Youth Development that will launch an annual Business Plan Competition (BPC) for young business entrepreneurs in Nigeria, in line with the Federal Government's drive to create more jobs for Nigerians and reducing poverty. The programme will be implemented in partnership with the private sector, who will provide funding support the sustenance of the programme.

The main objective of the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (*You WiN!*) Programme is to generate jobs by encouraging and supporting aspiring entrepreneurial youth in Nigeria to develop and execute business ideas that will lead to job creation and poverty reduction. The programme will provide aspiring youth with a platform to show case their business acumen, skills and aspirations that can be appreciated by business leaders, investors and mentors in Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the Programme includes to:

- Attract ideas and innovations from young entrepreneurial aspirants from Universities, Polytechnics, Technical colleges, and other post-Secondary institutions in Nigeria;
- Provide a one-time Equity grant for 1,200 selected aspiring entrepreneurs to start or expand their business concepts and mitigate start up risks;
- Generate 40,000 to 50,000 new jobs for currently unemployed Nigerian youth over the three years during which the three cycles will be implemented;
- Provide business training for up to 6,000 aspiring youth entrepreneurs spread across all geo-political zones in Nigeria;
- Encourage expansion, specialization and spin-offs of existing businesses in Nigeria; and,
- Enable young entrepreneurs to access a wide business professional network and improve their visibility.

According to former president Goodluck Jonathan, as at 2014, the YOU WIN which was founded to tackle the growing unemployment rate and poverty, had provided over 26,000 direct jobs across the 6 geo-political zones of the country. The YOU WIN programme is unique in the sense that it depends on the Nigerian youth to create jobs for the Nigerian youths to reduce unemployment and poverty.

3.3 *The Trader-Moni Initiative*

The trader-moni initiative is one aspect of the social intervention programmes implemented by the government in 2016 with the aim helping the petty informal business groups in the country to grow out of poverty. The *Trader-Moni* initiative is a zero interest loan scheme promoted by the Government under Government Enterprises and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) which ensures initial cash transfer of ten thousand naira (#10,000), and could rise to hundred thousand naira (#100, 000) to specifically petty traders and artisans in Nigeria. With this initiative, the government intends to reach over two Million Traders Money Loans in the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory

The operational strategy of trader moni is that a citizen gets a free utility loan paid through the bank of ten thousand naira (#10,000) to start up or grow his business for a certain period of time. After business stability, the loan can be returned, and a much higher amount of loan will be given the citizen. According to Onyishi and Ogbu (2019), the trader moni initiative grow in near geometric progression of #10,000 to #15,000 to #20,000 to #50,000 until it terminates at #100,000 after successive collection and payment. To qualify as a beneficiary in the trader moni initiative, Sparkgist (2018) noted some criteria including being a Nigerian citizen, running a verifiable bank account, having a valid mobile phone line among others. Onyishi and Ogbu (2019) are one of the recent scholars who investigated the impact of the trader moni initiative in Nigeria using primary data obtained for Abuja district and came to the conclusion that the Trader-Moni scheme has encouraged the spirit of rural development in Federal Capital Territory despite implementation challenges.

3.4 *The N-Power Programme*

This was the government poverty reduction strategy aimed at reducing the rising unemployment rate and high school and the tertiary school leavers. Targeted at youths between 18 to 35 years of age, the programme was to provide skills and temporary engagement to Nigerian youths for a maximum period of 3 years, during which period they might have acquire the needed skills and a reasonable savings to start up their own businesses for self reliance, growth and sustainability.

To achieve this goal, the N-power programme was grouped into two categories, the N-Power graduate and N-Power non graduate. The N-power graduate were to train and attached applicants in four key areas- N-power Agro; N-Power Teach; N-Tax and N-Power Health- areas considered critical in national development. N-Power Non-Graduate programme provides training and certifications in two key areas, namely N-Power Knowledge which provides incubation and acceleration of the technology and creative industries and N-Power Build engages and trains young unemployed Nigerians to developed skilled and competent workforce of technicians, artisans and service professionals (Onah and Olise, 2019).

Beneficiaries enjoyed a monthly allowance of thirty thousand naira (#30,000)

As at 2017, more than 162,000 N-Power graduates were successfully registered and received monthly allowance of thirty thousand naira (#30,000) and more than 200,000 candidates were already adopted for 2018 enrollment.

3.5 *The conditional cash transfer scheme*

Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programmes started in the late 1990s in Latin America and have become the antipoverty program of choice in many developing countries in that region and beyond (Millán, Barham, Macours, Maluccio and Stampini, 2019). The objective of these programmes, include short-term poverty reduction via cash transfers and long-term poverty reduction through enhanced investment in human capital (Millán, Barham, Macours, Maluccio and Stampini, 2019; Ladhani and Sitter, 2020). Following this trend, Nigeria adopted and kick-start its pilot conditional cash transfer programme known as the 'In care of the people' (COPE) in 2007 (Holmes, Samson, Magoronga, Akinrimisi and Morgan, 2012; Akinleye, Akinola, Akinrimisi, Shadare and Shadare, 2019). However, by 2016, the government has deemed fit to incorporate CCTs into its social investment development programmes and as at 2018, CCTs was operational in at least 26 states of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. In Nigeria, CCTs aims at address poverty, vulnerability and risk of the core poor and bridging the gap in income poverty.

There are significant outcomes of CCTS across Africa. For instance, Kilburn, Ferrone, Pettifor, Wagner, Gomez-Olive and Kahn (2020) experimented on the efficacy of CCTs in reducing multidimensional poverty among young girls in South Africa from 2011 and 2015. Their findings indicates that CCTs consistently dipped poverty deprivation among young South African girls. One of the recent studies to investigate the efficacy of the CCTs programmes in Nigeria were that conducted by Akinleye, Akinola, Akinrimisi, Shadare and Shadare, (2019). In an analysis of two independent studies, they found the workability of CCTs programmes in Nigeria. In their findings, CCTs in Nigeria helped many low income households to meet their daily incomes needs for at least one as an unconditional sum of five thousand naira (#5,000) is transferred to beneficiary accounts, thus popping them out poverty. Okoli, Morris, Oshin, Pate, Aigbe and Muhammad (2014) interestingly found that CCTs programme in Nigeria has encouraged rural women to take up health care related services. In a study of primary health care services after CCTs between 2013 and 2014, they saw statistically significant increase in health care intakes by women benefiting from CCTs in Nigeria.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A closer look at social policies and poverty in Africa taking Nigeria as an instance has revealed Nigeria's effort towards development. Nigeria has implemented a lot of programmes emanated from the various policies adopted to reduce poverty

and the result has been mixed. While the policy implementers are clamoring for the successes recorded, the society is asking for feasible evidence. In one such dispute, Okonkwo (2015) undertook a critical review of government's poverty programmes in the south east zone of Nigeria and found that the programmes were ineffective in tackling poverty in the region for reasons of zonal characteristics and corruption. Equally, Hussaini (2014) did not see any evidence of poverty alleviation programmes in the country wide statistics for reasons of overlapping interest and policy abandonment. In the words of Bello, Toyebi, Ballogun and Akanbi (2009), the policy targetswere at variance with the outcome of such policies. As shown by World Bank fact, social safety net programmes effect on total welfare of households in Nigeria decline from 2.65 percent in 2010 to 0.63 percent in 2012. It further dipped from 2.20 percent in 2015 to 1.98 percent in 2018.

However, there was significant applause to the conditional cash transfer CCT programmes across the region in various strata of human capital development and poverty reduction. Interestingly, the girl child and the women seemed to benefit more from CCTs in areas of health care accessibility, financial independence and multidimensional poverty reduction (Kilburn, Ferrone, Pettifor, Wagner, Gomez-Olive and Kahn, 2020; Akinleye, Akinola, Akinrimisi, Shadare and Shadare, 2019; Okoli, Morris, Oshin, Pate, Aigbe and Muhammad, 2014).

A key issue in the non-performance of social policies in Africa and Nigeria in particular as identified by most studies is lack of policy coordination and synchronization among the policies. The policies end up duplicating effects either on the target beneficiaries or in scheduling. As noted by Akinleye, Akinola, Akinrimisi, Shadare and Shadare (2019) the incordination runs from programmes implementers as well as the target beneficiaries sometimes creating a loop hole such that targets cannot hold implementers accountable for their actions let alone functional feedback channels for redress. The effect is further weakening of the poverty alleviation process.

The two sides of the coin can be better understood. Evidences shows that with the rising level of poverty in the African region than in other places, it is difficult to talk about successes of policies and programmes of the government. It has also been argued that most of the policies and programmes promoted favors male participation than female whereas female and children forms the large part of the population that are poor. Therefore, we recommend prioritizing policies and programmes that target fundamental rights of women in poverty eradication and job creation models. Because of multiplicative nature of social policies, we also recommend that each policy be reassessed for synchronization to avoid duplication functions.

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