

# Development Policies and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.809046>

Received: 15 August 2024; Accepted: 21 August 2024; Published: 28 September 2024

## ABSTRACT

Nigeria is not referred to as the Poverty Capital of the World for lack of development policies. Even before the Second Republic, various regimes, have initiated brilliant development policies aimed at positioning the country as real Giant of Africa; as opposed to the demographic giant that we are on the continent today. The country is endowed with enormous human and material resources that could be harnessed for the benefit of the citizenry. But failure on the part of our leaders has led to the staggering level of poverty that inundates the land, especially, the country side. Sadly, poverty is not a phenomenon that can be cast away through prayers; or wished away; neither can development be achieved in the realm of desirability. It takes conscious planning, dogged and pragmatic efforts to conquer these phenomena. The paper adopts the Human Capital Theory by Gary Becker and Jacob Mincer as its theoretical framework. The theory is apt because it prescribes education, training and skills acquisition as mechanisms for attracting productivity, workers' efficiency and overall socio-economic development. The work will take a cursory look at development policies initiated by past regimes, from the Second Republic till date. In that light, poverty reduction in Nigeria shall be viewed through the prism of the impact of the development policies experimented over the years. The study shall also look at the challenges that these policies faced in course of their implementation. The causes of the failures of these well-intended policies shall be looked into and recommendations to ameliorate the problems shall be given.

**Keywords:** Development Plan, Policy, Poverty, Programme and Planning.

## INTRODUCTION

Since political independence in 1960, different regimes have tinkered with various development policies and programmes. Sadly, most of the policies have failed considerably. The economy is still in the woods after several years of experimenting with different policies and programmes. Nigeria remains underdeveloped, and currently occupy a very low position amongst the poorest of nations, despite the abundant natural resources available (Ikeanyibe, 2009). The rate of poverty in the land is very high and shows no sign of abating. A report by Brookings Institute crowned Nigeria, the Poverty Capital of the World, overtaking India, a country with seven times the population of Nigeria (Damilola, 2019).

The condition of lack in the midst of plenty is what the World Bank (1996) referred to as a **PARADOX**. According to Punch (2023), Nigeria earned seven hundred and forty-two billion(\$742bn) dollars from oil revenue in twenty-one (21) years (1999 – 2020). At the same time, she has the highest number of poor people in the world after China and India. But if you compare, the population of India or China to that of Nigeria; you will understand the ratio. With a per capita income of \$ 2, 162.6, around 82.9 million Nigerians live on less than \$ 1 per day (HumAngle,2023).

The vision 2010 committee report reveals that:

1. 50% of Nigerians live below the poverty line.
2. Only about 40% have access to safe drinking water.
3. About 85% of the people in the urban area of the country live in single houses with more than seven occupants on the average.
4. Only about 62% of Nigerians have access to primary healthcare.
5. Most Nigerians take less than of the minimum required protein and vitamins (Edoh, 2003).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) for 2020, ranked Nigeria 168 position out of 174 countries. The conundrums enumerated above are some of the problems that have kept Nigeria in the economic doldrums she finds herself today.

The aim of this work (among others) is to X-ray the various development policies that have been implemented from the Second Republic to date. The work shall explain some concepts like developments policy, development, corruption, and poverty, among others. The causes of the failure of these well-intended policies shall be looked into and solutions shall be proffered. The work is divided into six sections:

Section one is the introduction.

Section two looks at the Theoretical Framework.

Section three delves into the clarification of concepts.

Section four enumerates the various development policies and programmes.

Section five discusses the reasons for the failures of the policies.

Section six focuses on the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

**Human Capital Theory:** Human Capital can be defined as the stock of knowledge, skills and other personal characteristics, embodied in the people that help them to be productive. The theory states that the knowledge, experience and skills of employees are developed through education, training, development and job changes (Tharenou, 1997).

They are called human capital because people cannot be separated from their skills, knowledge, health or values in the way they can be separated from their financial or physical assets.

The theory was propounded by Theodore Schultz (1961), Gary Becker (1962) and Jacob Mincer (1985). They proposed that individuals can gain skills (human capital) that will make them more productive. The theory is apt because most developed nations today rely on skilled manpower. Germany does not have any enormous deposit of natural resources, but they are one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world. All thanks to their skilled workforce. China may not be a developed nation yet, but the enormity of the skilled workforce is evident in the quantity and quality of tools they churn out.

### **Concept of Development**

Development means different things to different people. For example, the development needs of a starving population must be different from those where there is sufficient nutrition (Matowanyka, 1991).

Development is not the same thing as economic growth. Economic growth is measured by the computation of annual increase in per capita income or gross national product, regardless of its distributive and the degree of people's participation of these figures in the lives of the citizens. For Dudley Seers (1972), development means the condition for realization of the personality. Its evaluation must therefore take into account three linked criteria: reduction in poverty, unemployment and inequality.

According to Pearson (1992), development involves "An improvement in quality and quantity, or both in the use of available resources". Pearson (1992) also asserts that development does not refer to a particular perspective on social, political and economic betterment. For him, it is a combination of a hybrid term for a gamut of strategies adopted for economic and environment transformation, from current state to the desired one. Adams (2009) says that it is a process rather than an outcome. World Bank (2020) defined development as the process of bringing about social change that allows people to achieve their human potentials.

For Tadora (1989), three important aspects of development are:

1. Raising people's living standard or level, i.e. their incomes, consumption levels of food, medical services and education through relevant economic growth processes.
2. Creating conditions conducive to growth of people's self-esteem through the establishment of social, political and economic systems and institutions which promote human dignity and respect.
3. Increasing people's freedom to choose, by enlarging the range of their choices' variables; e.g. increasing varieties of consumer goods and services.

In 2021, Nigeria had a projected population of 213,401,323, an increase of 2.44% from that of 2020.

In 2022, it was 218,541,212, an increase of 2.41% from that of 2021.

In 2023, it was 223,804,632, an increase of 2.41% from that of 2022.

In 2024, it is now 229,152,217, an increase of 2.39% from that of 2023.

(U.N World Population Prospects, 2024).

Nigeria is ranked 163 out of 191 countries with a Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.535 (UNDP, 2022).

### **Effective Policy Implementation**

According to Collins English Dictionary, Policy is a set of ideas or plans that is used as a basis for making decisions, especially in politics, economics, or business. Wikipedia defines it as a statement of intent and is implemented as a procedure or protocol. It can also be referred to as a set of ideas or plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed to, officially by a group of people, a business organization, a government, or a political party. In the view of the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Policy is a law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive, or voluntary practice of governments and other institutions. Effiong (2013), states that effective policy implementation denotes achieving desired results. It therefore entails implementing a policy in such a way as to realize the objectives of the policy.

### **Poverty**

How poverty is defined and measured varies across the world. The national poverty line for a country is typically a monetary threshold below which a person's minimum basic needs cannot be met, taking into account the country's economic and social circumstances. To aggregate and compare poverty rates across countries; poverty threshold that reflect the same real standard of living in each country are used. The World

Bank uses the lines of a group of the poorest countries to define the international extreme poverty line of \$ 1.90 per day (World Bank, 2015).

Poverty is multidimensional, and affects many aspects of human developments. The conventional concept of poverty depicts it as a condition in which people live below a specific minimum income level and are unable to provide the basic necessities of life needed for an acceptable standard of living (World Bank, 1990). Aderonmu (2010) sees Poverty as lack of command over basic consumption needs.

A very simplistic and down-to-earth definition of poverty is to see it as hunger; lack of shelter. It is being sick and not able to see a doctor. Poverty is not being able to go to school (even in an area where schools are available), and not knowing how to read and write. Poverty is not having a job; it is living one day at a time. It is not having what to eat; and not knowing where and when the next meal will come. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. It is to watch your child die in your hands (of treatable diseases) because you cannot do anything to assist her. Poverty is ignorance, poor living condition, lack of portable water, polluted environment... (Gonee, 2023). Ideally, nobody wants to be in such a condition. Sadly, as the Poverty Capital of the World, the majority of the people in Nigeria find themselves in that dark alley.

The World Bank says that poverty rate in Nigeria has increased to 46% in 2023, representing 104 million poor Nigerians. This was disclosed in World Bank's Nigeria development update, titled, "Turning the Corner: From Reforms and Renewed Hope to Results"(The Cable,2023).

## Development Policy

Van den Ban and Hawking (1996) see Policy as a course that indicates clearly what an organization or individual aims to achieve. A development policy is a major economic stabilization weapon that involves measures taken to regulate and control the volume, cost and availability as well as direction of money in an economy to achieve specified macro-economic policy objectives and to counteract undesirable trends in the establishment, business or government. Amongst the numerous aims of development policy, are the eradication of poverty, reduction in inequality and the achievement of sustainable development. It is also aimed at successfully empowering people to exercise choices, to have say on the life they would like to maintain.

According to United Nations (2007), it includes creating an economic, political, social development; eradicating absolute poverty in the world through decisive national actions and international cooperation. Development policy therefore, is a set of rules and regulations that enables an organization or individual to maximize control over the use of resources for the purpose of fostering a good life.

## Development Plans from 1980 – Date

Going by the periodization of the work; we will start with the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) National Development Plan.

**Third National Development (1975 – 1980):** The Plan emphasized the need to minimize regional disparities in order to promote national unity through the adoption of integrated rural development. According to Omitusa (1985:32), the plan was announced on March 29, 1995. The objectives of the Third National Development plan were similar to that of the Second National Development Plan, but there was need to increase the annual rate of public expenditure over the previous year. There was a declaration in the plan that: "There will be no savings and foreign exchange constraint during the third plan period and beyond" (Localhost Data, 1991). The plan expanded agriculture, industry, transport, housing, water supply, health facilities, education, rural electrification, with community and State programmes, gulping a whopping Thirty-two billion (N32bn) naira (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005). The plan gave birth to the Green

Revolution.

**Fourth National Development Plan (1981 – 1985):** The plan emphasized inter-alia the development of the various sectors of the economy. There was a decline in the implementation of the Green Revolution and other key projects due to a fall in oil revenue. The decline weakened the ability of the government to import machines for construction and for the mechanized farming (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005). To show the government's commitment, funds were disbursed to affected projects.

1. About Nine hundred and twenty-four million (#924m) Naira was given to eleven River Basin Development Authorities.
2. Federal and State Governments were allocated six hundred and forty-five million (N645m), and seven hundred million, four hundred thousand (N700.4m) naira respectively for electrification.
3. Rural water supply schemes got two million, eight hundred and five thousand (N2,805m) naira (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005).

The establishment of Directorate for Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) in 1985 by Gen. Ibrahim Babangida was to tackle the issues of rural development and transportation with the aim of rehabilitating various roads in the country, especially for rural development. (Trans Campus Organization, 2008). Overall, about four hundred and thirty-three million (N433m) naira was allocated to the Directorate in 1986 for the purpose of implementing its programmes. Unfortunately, only three hundred million (N300m) naira was actually disbursed (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005).

**Fifth National Development Plan (1988 – 1992):** The key point in this plan was the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The target of SAP was to devalue the naira, remove import licenses, reduce tariffs, open the economy to foreign trade, promote non-oil exports through incentives and achieve national sufficiency. The SAP was a Breton Wood-oriented programme. According to Ejue (1988), the programme died a natural death. In 1987 and 1988, five hundred million (N500m) and one billion (N1bn) naira were allocated to the DIFRRI respectively (Olayiwola and Adeleye, 2005).

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was established on November 22, 1986 based on recommendation. The initial core programmes were formally launched on January 30, 1987.

The schemes include:

1. National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP)
2. National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS)
3. Small Scale Industries and Graduate Employment Scheme (SSIGES)
4. Special Works Programme (SWP)
5. Agricultural Programme. (Gbosi, 2005)

The NDE may not be doing great, but it has been kept afloat by successive regimes.

**Better Life Programme (BLP) for Rural Women:** Mrs. Mariam Babangida introduced the BLP in September, 1987 in response to calls by the World Bank on the employment of women, especially the ones in the rural areas. The programme's aim was inter-alia to reduce maternal and child mortality rate, by providing basic healthcare facilities for rural women, provide cottage industries and to integrate rural women into National Development Plans.

**People's Bank of Nigeria (PB):** The Bank was established by the promulgation of Decree No. 22 of 1990; with Mr. Augustus Taiwo Solarin as the pioneer Chairman, and an initial budget of thirty million naira (N30m). The bank was to meet the credit needs of small borrowers who could not satisfy the stringent

conditional ties of commercial banks (Lecup Com, 2016).

**Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPDEC):** It was established in July, 1992 by Decree No. 23, with Mr. Albert Horsfall as the pioneer Chairman. OMPADEC was established with the twin purpose of rehabilitating and developing the oil-bearing States, which had been subjected to devastating effects of ecological devastation and environmental pollution (Gabriel, 1999).

**Family Support Programme (FSP):** The programme was established by Miriam Abacha in 1994 as a direct response to the UN declaration of 1994 as International Year of the Family. Its main constituency was rural areas. It supported poor rural families with healthcare, child welfare and youth development schemes.

**Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP):** It was established in 1997 to grant credit facilities to support the established cottage industries with the view to creating employment for the rural poor.

**Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC):** The Niger Delta Development Commission is a federal government Interventionist Agency, established on June 5, 2000 by President Olusegun Obasanjo; with the sole mandate of developing the Niger Delta region. It was to provide even and sustainable development in the region that is commercially prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful (nddc.gov.ng; 2018)

**National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP):** The programme was established in 2001, and its focus was on the provision of strategies for the eradication of absolute poverty in Nigeria (FRN, 2001). NAPEP is complemented by the National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC), which is a coordinating body for poverty related activities of various industries, parastatals and agencies. The schemes under the programme include:

1. Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES)
2. Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS)
3. National Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS)
4. Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS)

**National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS):** NEEDS was launched in November, 2003. The objective was to make poverty a history in Nigeria by 2008, through development strategies like the provision of infrastructures; healthcare facilities and quality education. NEEDS was designed with the view to empowering the poor (National Planning Commission, 2004). It was to focus on wealth creation, employment, poverty reduction and national re-orientation (Iheanacho, 2014).

**Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA):** The ministry was established by the Yar'Adua Administration on September 10, 2008 to coordinate policies for the development of peace and security of the Niger Delta region. In December 2008, Yar'Adua appointed Obong Ufut Ekaette as the Pioneer Minister and Godsdai Orubebe as Minister of State.

**Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP):** It is a medium term (2017-2020) development initiative focused on restoring growth, investment in people and building a competitive economy. It was launched by the Buhari administration in 2016, to stimulate and accelerate development and restore the economy in the medium term (kyaram and Ogwuche, 2017).

**Trader Moni (TM):** Trader money is a social interventionist programme designed to aid petty traders and artisans across Nigeria. It was launched in May, 2016 by the Buhari administration and executed by the Bank of Industry (BOI).

**N-Power:** The Federal Government established the N-Power Scheme on June 8, 2016 to address youth

unemployment issues and help increase social development. The scheme was created as a component of government's National Social Investment Programme.

**House Hold Uplifting Programme (HUP), also known as Conditional Cash Transfer:** It is one of the social safety nets programmes anchored by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The programme commenced in September, 2016 and was headed by the office of the Vice President. Its primary target was to build human capacity and capital investment among the vulnerable poor. There was also the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), also under the office of the Vice President.

### The Visions

**Vision 2010:** It was General Sani Abacha's vision for Nigeria. It was inaugurated on November 27, 1996, and headed by Ernest Shonekan. The committee's mandate set out in a 14-item Terms of Reference, is required to develop a blueprint that will transform the country and place it firmly on the route to becoming a developed nation by the year 2010 (Egbunike, 2010).

**Vision 2015: Millennium Development Goals (Nigeria):** The MDGS were created by the United Nations. The goals are a commitment by the UN to establish peace and healthy global economy by focusing on major issues like poverty, children's health, empowerment of women and girls, sustainable environment, disease and development.

**Vision 20: 2020:** Vision 20, 2020 was to position Nigeria to become one of the top 20 economies in the world by the year 2020. The vision commenced by January 2010 and the pioneer Chairman of the Business Support Group was Alhaji Umaru Muttalab, CON (Ahmed, 2009). Muttalab was of the opinion that for the vision to be realistic; civil servants must be carried along. Our natural resources comprising oil and gas, as well as solid minerals were enough to make us attain Vision 20:2020. Unfortunately, we are perpetual underachievers.

### Objectives:

1. Stimulate Nigeria's economic growth and launch the country onto a path of sustained and rapid socio-economic development.
2. Place Nigeria in the group of top 20 economies of the world by 2020, with growth target of not less than Nine hundred billion (\$ 900bn) dollars in GDP and per capita of not less than Four thousand (\$ 4000) dollars per annum.

**National Development Plan (NDP) 2021 – 2025 Volume I:** The plan is a medium term blue print designed to unlock the country's potentials in all sectors of the economy for sustainable, holistic and inclusive national development. The plan is a successor to the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (EGRP) 2017 – 2020, which elapsed in December, 2020. The vision of the NDP, 2021- 2025 is consistent with the pursuit of socio-economic transformation of our country as envisioned in the long-term aspiration of Nigeria, encapsulated in the Nigeria Agenda 2050. By 2025, the effective implementation of the plan is expected to achieve average economic growth of 4.6 percent. Cumulatively, it would have lifted 35 million people out of poverty and created 21 full time jobs. It would have raised revenue to GDP ratio of 15 percent as well as improve health and education of the population – culled from the forward of the National Development Plan 2021 -2025.

**Causes of Development Policies and Programmes failure:** Governments, especially in the developed countries are known for reliable, efficient and effective policy implementation. However, in Nigeria and other underdeveloped countries; the reverse is the case. Policy implementation is fraught with challenges. Interference by Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs), corruption and personal (often selfish) interest most

times vitiate implementation, culminating in failures. Okoli and Onah (2002); Makinde, (2005); Nweke, (2006) and Effiong (2013) posit that Nigeria, like most developing countries; score very low on the policy performance table. Among the myriad of reasons, we have decided to look at these few:

1. **Lack of Stakeholders' Engagement:** The refusal to carry the poor along in policy formulation and implementation of policies and the propensity to boycott the rural people during execution of projects. The failure to engage critical partners to know the real needs of the beneficiaries of the projects is another reason for failures.
2. **Duplication of Policies:** For example, DFFRI and BLP covered almost every sector, thereby resulting in conflict among the implementing agencies. Another example is NEEDS, SEEDS and LEEDS.
3. **Undue Political Interference:** Though it is the duty of government to make policies, there is need to give the implementing agencies or individuals a relatively free hand to execute the policies. This prompted Ugo and Ukpere (2011) to note that public policies in Nigeria are marred by political interest.
4. **Corruption:** In the view of Salisu (2000), the simplest definition of corruption is that it is the misplacement of public resources for personal use. Okojie and Momoh (2015) see it as an anti-social behavior. It is also the abuse of entrusted power. Corroborating the position of Salisu (2000); Chimobi (2010) explains that corruption has eaten deep into the fabrics of government officials and their cronies such that it has become an acceptable way of life. Chimobi (2010) believes that this has led to bad governance and its concomitant vices. He lists them to include but not limited to lack of accountability and transparency on the part of government officials; wrong policies choice, adaptation and implementation. These he said has increased poverty and inequality in the land. They also serve as a conduit pipe for draining the resources of the nation.
5. **Lack of Continuity:** Lack of stability in government results in frequent political changes which leads to inconsistency in policy implementation. Ajakaiye (2003) states that frequent changes in government from incessant coupes in the past contributed in no small measures in obstructing policy implementation.
6. **Poor Budgetary Allocation:** Paucity of funds, lack of proper supervision, crass ignorance or incompetency on the part of the supervising ministries and departments accounts for a significant number of policy failures. Inability of government to put their mouth where there money is could also cause failure of policy implementation
7. **Poor Planning:** Poor feasibility studies and implementation have collapsed many laudable plans by the government. Nigerian economy suffers because our leaders lack the ability to transform her planned policies to real action (Akome, 2009).
8. **Wrong Policies:** Nigerian leaders are keen on adopting the wrong policies because of pecuniary benefits.
9. **Insecurity:** Cases of terrorism, kidnapping for ransom, cattle rustling, banditry, ritual killings, militancy, Fulani herds men, religious killing etc., are on the increase. No meaningful development can take place in such an environment.
10. **Lack of Political Will:** Ene (2016) says that most policies in Nigeria are wonderful, but failure or abandonment await them due to lack of political will to transform from paper to site.
11. **Uncertain Business Climate:** Apart from the lack of political will to implement these well intended policies, slow economic growth, mismanagement, devaluation of the naira, rising unemployment, exchange rate depreciation and fluctuation, inflation, fluctuation in the price of crude oil etc.; also help to sustain poverty situation in the country (CBN 1999:68)

### Strides in Policy Implementation

It is not all as gloomy as it the picture painted here portrays. There have been success stories in the



implementation of some policies.

**Open Apprenticeship Scheme:** Take the case of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE); the programme has survived, or should I say has been sustained by successive administrations since its establishment. It has trained thousands of youth on various vocations. For example: Mrs. Saadatu Musa, a native of Kano was trained in 2011 under the Women Employment Branch of the Open Apprenticeship Scheme (OAS) of the NDE. Today, she is the owner of Diamond Global Cleaners with scores of people in her employ.

Evans Okpara who also is a graduate of OAS of the NDE was trained in 2011 and today owns Evans Photos and Computers (NDE, 2019). The success stories are endless.

**Primary Healthcare Delivery:** Another good example is the Primary Health Care Delivery project. The programme has addressed (though not completely) the inadequate availability and accessibility of quality healthcare services in the rural areas. The government's resolve to strengthen primary healthcare infrastructure, training of healthcare professionals and equipment of hospitals has produced appreciable results. There is still room for improvement; but giant strides have been made in that direction.

**Trader Moni:** Suleiman Sanni 28yrs from Nasarawa, a basket seller got #10,000 to support his business. Aisha Umaru, a roadside trader in Kulikuli in Gusau Central Market was also a beneficiary of Trader Moni (Punch Newspaper, 2019). These are just a few of the success stories of some policies implemented.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

All the development policies chronicled in this article have poverty alleviation as their main thrust; yet poverty is still very much here with us. Since the Second Republic, both civilian and military governments have made efforts at eradicating poverty. As Ene (2011) puts it while quoting the then Minister of National Planning (Dagash, 2008), he confirmed that the circumstances are still so devastating for the vast majority of Nigerians, in spite of the Nation's endowment. The discomfiting paradox of penury amidst surplus in Nigeria calls for a concerted effort and unity of purpose in the pursuit of poverty alleviation policies and programmes. In pursuance of this, the Federal, States and Local Governments and donor agencies should harmonize their plans. There should also be a strong political will to implement the various policies reeled out.

The Federal Government seemed to have jettisoned the idea of development plans. Despite being under the era of visions; the hope of a successful programme is still eluding us. Little wonder, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has described as an illusion and self-deceit, the current effort being made by the Nigerian government to become one of the leading economies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, saying the indices showed that the government is only making efforts through statements and no much work (Osewa, 2005 – 2014). There is need for a change of approach in the development of the rural areas. Development of the rural areas has to be participatory. It is necessary to raise the consciousness of the rural populace as a way of social engineering. This bi-partisan approach will help transform our rural areas and consequently reduce poverty to the barest minimum.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In spite of the various development policies of past governments; poverty still persists. Poverty has become the proverbial cat with nine lives. The following recommendations will help stem the prevalence of policy failures and consequently lead to poverty reduction in the country.

- The World Bank in its 1996 Report suggested two strategies:

- I. Promotion of the productive use of the poor's most abundant asset-labour.
- II. Making basic social services available to the poor.

- **Continuity:** Governments should as a matter of necessity, and in the interest of the people, continue from where the previous one stopped in the execution of projects.
- **Indigenization of Development Policies:** Most of the development policies and reform programmes implemented in Nigeria are from the Breton Woods Institutions. Policies need to conform to the locality in order to make sense to the locals.  
Our leaders should endeavor to domesticate foreign projects and not to transplant them.
- **De-Politicization of Poverty Programmes:** Poverty reduction policies should be de-politicized. Poverty reduction is a critical issue and everyone, irrespective of party affiliation and leaning should be deeply concerned. Poverty knows no religion, colour, race, tribe, age or political party. It strikes whosoever that crosses its line.
- **Synergy between Policy Implementers and Beneficiaries:** Co-operation is the key to the success of policy implementation. All hands must be on deck to ensure the applicability and workability of projects cited in an area.
- **Setting the Right Priorities:** Sometimes, for want of ideas, greed or both, our leaders tend to muddle up policies. Setting the right priority is the key to the fight against poverty.
- **Disciplined Leadership:** There is need for leaders who are put in charge of implementing policies to be disciplined. Development programmes will not succeed unless there is a political will and commitment to do the right thing.
- **Change of Attitude towards Corruption:** Formal and conventional measures like sermonizing and moralizing efforts seems not to be yielding any result (Odekunle, 1979). We must all change our attitudes towards corruption.
- The National Human Development Report (NHDR, 1998) suggested that Nigeria should subscribe to and fully implement the 20:20 Compact on Human Development (cited in Aluko, 2003; 264). This spells out that the three tiers of government should commit at least 20% of their combined recurrent and capital expenditure specifically, on education, health and population control.
- **Changes in Revenue Allocation Formula:** The current revenue allocation formula should be reviewed in such a manner that States and local Governments will have fair share of the monthly allocation.
- **Inclusivity:** Refusal to carry all the parties along has caused the failures of most policies. To stem the ugly tide, NAPEC is mandated to ensure that the wide range of activities are centrally planned, coordinated and complement one another so that the objectives of policy continuity and sustainability are achieved" (FRN. 2001:5).
- **Strong Institutions:** The government should as a matter of priority, strengthen its institutions and not to strengthen individuals through bogus contracts and budget padding.

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