

POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA: IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The rising poverty incidence and its implication on achieving the goal of sustainable economic development has been a major issue of discourse among economists and policy makers. In Nigeria despite recording an impressive growth(averaging around 6.5 percent) over the past decade, the growth could not be translated into a sustainable welfare and wellbeing of the majority citizens of the nation. The menace of poverty has become so worrisome to the Government having identified poverty with most of the developmental challenges such as insecurity, crimes and other social vices that retard economic progress. Various Governments over the years came up with poverty alleviation programmes to reduce the menace. This paper reviews these programmes and policies adopted by different administrations and evaluate their successes or failures. Most of the programmes/Policies failed to achieve their desired objective due to lack of commitment on the part of the government, corruption and bureaucratic bottlenecks. Suggestive measures are that Government should refocus their policies on poverty alleviations to directly address poverty at the rural areas by creating job opportunities.

Keywords: *alleviation strategy, growth, Nigeria, poverty*

INTRODUCTION

Poverty in whatever ways is looked upon refers to a physical, mental or psychological deprivation. It is multidimensional phenomena that existed with the existence of human race(Ogunjobi, 2004). Regardless of the multidimensional conceptualization of poverty, the poor have been described as those who could not obtain adequate income, find stable job, own property or maintain healthy conditions (Obadan 1997). That makes it a global developmental challenge faced by all nations. But poverty in its absolute terms is more pronounced and endemic in developing nations like Nigeria (see Umo 2012, muktar 2007). The Millennium Development Goals assessment report 2015 put it that the number of Africans(excluding North Africans) living below the poverty line rose from 290 Million in 1990 to 376 million in 1999 and 414 million in 2010. Four countries accounted for around 52 percent of the poor in the continent; Nigeria (25.89%), Democratic Republic of Congo (13.6%), Tanzania (6.8%), and Ethiopia (5.2%).

Over the past decade Nigeria recorded an impressive growth averaging about 6.5% but this growth rate goes with an increasing poverty incidence. It is estimated that more than two-third of Nigerians are poor despite living in a country endowed with vast potential wealth. In 1980, an estimated 27 percent of Nigerians lived in poverty. By 1990, 70 percent of the population had

income of less than US\$1.0 a day, and the figure has risen since then (Olubadan 2013). Recent world Bank assessment ranked Nigeria third among the world's ten countries with extreme poor citizens (World Bank 2014). Report from the National Bureau Of Statistics (NBS) shows that the number of Nigerians living below the poverty line of US\$1.0 rose from 68.7million to 112.5Million (63.7% rise in poverty incidence) during the period 2004 to 2010, while the population rose from 139.2m to 158.6m (13.6% rise in population) over the same period (Adeoti 2012). In 2010, the NBS also reported that 66m Nigerians or 40.63% of the population did not have access to 3000 calories of food per day. About 99m or 60.5% of Nigerians are absolutely poor living below humanly acceptable level of food intakes, had no decent clothing and no access to standard healthcare and shelter. 112m Nigerians are also relatively poor and 99.5m lives on less than a dollar per day. This corresponds with the period Nigeria recorded a high growth rate averaging 6.6% annually.

Although poverty has become an international concept, poverty in Nigeria is traceable to mismanagement of the Nigerian Economy by successive governments of both military and civilian. Frequent changes in Government have led to sharp changes in economic and social population and have worsened income distribution.

Eradicating poverty is regarded the most important goal of human development. Indeed it is now widely believed that at its core, development must be about improvement of human well-being, removal of hunger, disease, and promotion of productive employment for all.

Manning (2007) observed that rapid and sustained poverty reduction requires growth that is "pro-poor", meaning the pace and pattern of growth that enhances the ability of poor women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth.

The recently rebased Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reveals much less concentration of growth in agriculture and Telecommunications since 2011 compared to the previous year's estimates. The slow growth trend in agriculture in the new GDP estimates is consistent with what appears to be slow progress in poverty reduction and welfare improvements in rural areas in Nigeria.

The high and increasing poverty incidence in Nigeria has made poverty alleviation programmes and strategies a major focus in policy formulation by different governments. Poverty alleviation strategies are usually measures put in place by government with the sole aim of raising the welfare or well being of the poor. It aimed at enabling the poor to create wealth. Since the Mid-1980s when the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was adopted in managing the economy, poverty alleviation programmes (PAPs) have multiplied. As at 2014, over 30 different PAPs have been experimented with. This number does not include the several initiatives at the state and local government levels (Umo, 2012).

This paper aimed at appraising the performance of various poverty alleviation programmes undertaken by different administrations in Nigeria.

Theoretical Conceptualization

Concept Of Poverty

There are diverse definitions of poverty given by different scholars. Amartya Sen, a 1998 Economics Nobel Laureate defines poverty as capacity deprivation. According to Sen, a person is considered poor when he/she lacks the means of functioning in terms of what he/she wants to do. Sen persists poverty as not being a natural phenomena within a larger frame of inequality problems, rather it can be eliminated if people are enabled to become autonomous from needs. Ajakaiye and Adeyeye(2000) conceptualize poverty as a function of education, health, child mortality and other demographic variables. In whatever way poverty is viewed, it connotes a situation in an economy where there is inadequate level of income and consumption resulting in insufficient basic necessities of life such as healthcare, housing, adequate nutrition, adequate clothing etc.

Types Of Poverty

Poverty incidence has been classified into different types using different criteria. Absolute Poverty measures the extremity of poverty and it refers to lack of minimum physical requirement for existence. It is a situation where an individual cannot afford basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, clothing, basic education etc. The International absolute poverty has been estimated at two levels; \$1.0 a day and \$2.0 a day(World Bank, 2010). Relative poverty seeks to compare the extent to which one's income falls less than what the custom of the country considers needful for a reasonably descent life. Here one is often considered poor relative to another person. Capability poverty connotes capability failure or lack of means for functioning in terms of what one wants to do. Examples include lack of empowerment, lack of nutritional food or exclusion to participate in community affairs. Rural poverty is characterized by poor material condition, low level of education, lack of infrastructures, poor health condition, underemployment, low investment and high out migration. Urban poverty on the other hand is characterized by environmental degradation, overcrowded accommodation, low per capita income and other problems associated with urban areas such as slums, ghettos and shanties.

Causes and Effects Of Poverty

Poverty may not be traced to a single cause. Chances are high that each single incidence of poverty is traceable to many causes and that what appears as a cause may be an effect and what is an effect may be a cause. From a general perspectives, the below factors are identified as the causal factors of poverty in Nigeria.

-Inequality in income and opportunities: Inequality implies a concentration of a distribution, whether one is considering income, consumption or some other welfare indicators or attributes. Oluwatoyin, 2008 asserts that there was an increase in income disparity after the economic growth which Nigeria experienced between 1965-1975, and this income inequality has increased the dimension of poverty in the country.

The Income inequality between the people in rural and urban areas in Nigeria is remarkably high, as those who live on the rural areas base all their income on agriculture which is today not a thriving sector in Nigeria as oil has taken over the economy. They do not invest their money to acquire skills as people in the urban areas would and this makes them more vulnerable to poverty and leads to some social and economic problems such as violence, corruption and so on(Oluwatoyin 2008).

-Corruption: Corruption has been widely accepted as the single most powerful setback to development. Transparency International defines Corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. Corruption in Nigeria has been endemic and systemic thereby negatively affecting all developmental initiatives to address poverty.

-Adverse Demographic Factors: Factors such as population size and growth rate, as well as urbanization affects country’s development. Nigeria’s development is known to have been constrained by several aspects of its demographic features.

-Unemployment: Unemployment has been identified as a major factor contributing to poverty in Nigeria (see Akpan 2012). When people are unemployed, their source of livelihood depletes overtime. The cost of living becomes high and the standard of living goes down. Many graduates in Nigeria wander the streets without anything reasonable to do for a living. The government is capable but unwilling to provide jobs for them. Employment in Nigeria is usually not based on merit but depends on how connected you are with people that have power. This leaves many highly qualified people in poverty as seemingly no one cares to know what they are capable of achieving. Unemployment-induced poverty tends to increase the crime rate and violence in the country. Most Unemployed youths resort to crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, internet fraud and other forms of fraudulent activities.

-Low Per Capita Income: Per capita income is widely used standard for measuring development and by implication poverty or welfare. Nigeria is faced with a low per capita income which translates into low standard of living. Low per capita income translates into poverty because the level of income is incapable of enabling individuals to improve their livelihood.

-Limited Diversification of the economy: Nigerian economy remains a mono-cultural economy. A one-commodity economy is necessarily an economy which dangerously dependent on global forces of instability. Before 1970, the Nigerian economy was driven by agricultural sector. The oil sector which only constituted 1 percent of the country’s export revenue in 1958 rose to 97 percent in 1984(Ojo 1998). The implication of this high commodity concentration for poverty is; that the economy imports virtually everything it can produce domestically. Every act of import implies an act of job export, hence the increasing joblessness and poverty. Secondly, single commodity concentration means neglect in the development of sectors of the economy which can address employment and poverty issues. Nigeria’s once vibrant agriculture with its high employment potentials has for instance suffered neglect and disinvestment because of over concentration on oil exports.

-Poor Infrastructure: Nigeria's development has been seriously retarded by poor and inadequate infrastructure. The key problem areas in infrastructural provision include energy (electricity supply), Telecommunications including ICT, water supply, inadequate road and transportation network etc. Low investment in infrastructure has not only translated into low productivity for the entire economy but has also deprived the country of using infrastructure investment as a vehicle for directly addressing the poverty challenge.

On the consequences of poverty, Aku et al 1997 found that there is general loss of confidence in a society stricken by poverty and this renders government policies ineffective. Poverty also results in increasing the fragility and vulnerability of members of society to external influences. Poverty makes production remain largely subsistence due to lack of capital needed for expansion. Labour becomes intensive and marginal productivity remains low (Mukhtar 2011).

Approaches to Poverty Alleviation

Several approaches to poverty alleviation has been identified in the literature (see Mukhtar 2011, Umo 2012,). Some of these are:

- a. **Economic Growth Approach:** Given the low labour absorption capacity of the industrial sector, broad based economic growth should be encouraged. This should focus on capital formation as it relates to capital stock and human capital. Human capital formation has to do with education, health, nutrition and housing needs of labour. This is obvious from the fact that investment in these facets of human capital improves the quality of labour and thus its productivity. Thus to ensure growth that takes care of poverty, the share of human capital as a source of growth in output has to be accorded the rightful place.
- b. **Basic Needs Approach:** This call for the provision of basic needs such as food, shelter, water, sanitation, healthcare, basic education, transportation etc. Unless there is proper targeting, this approach may not directly impact on the poor because of their inherent disadvantage in terms of political power and the ability to influence the choice and location of government programmes and projects.
- c. **Rural Development Approach:** This approach sees rural sector as a unique sector in terms of poverty reduction. This is because majority of the poor in developing countries live in this sector. In addition, the level of paid employment in this sector is very low, which means that traditional measures of alleviating poverty may not easily work in the rural sector without radical changes in the assets ownership structure, credit structure etc. Emphasis in this approach to development has focused on the integrated approach to rural development. This approach recognizes that poverty is multi-dimensional and therefore requires a multi-pronged approach. The approach aims at the provision of basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, safe drinking water, education, healthcare, employment and income generating opportunities to the rural dwellers in general and the poor in particular. One basic problem with this approach to poverty reduction is that it is difficult to focus attention on the real poor given that poverty in the rural area is

pervasive. In other words, it makes targeting of poverty reduction programmes very difficult.

- d. Target Approach: This approach favors directing poverty alleviation programmes at specific groups within the country. It includes such programmes as social safety nets, micro credits and school meal programme.

Poverty Trend In Nigeria

The Poverty incidence in Nigeria appears moderated prior to the democratic transition in 1999. Available evidence shows that 27.2 percent of Nigerians were living below poverty line in 1980(Table 1.). The poverty incidence did not cross 50 percent mark until 1996 when it surged to 65.6 percent as a result of the near collapse of the Nigerian Economic system((Arogundade, 2011).

In 2010, base on the four majors of poverty NBS NHLSS survey used, it was estimated that 66million Nigerians or 40.63 percent of the population did not have access to 3000 calories of food per day. About 99million or 60.5 percent of Nigerians are absolutely poor living below humanly acceptable level of food intakes, had no descent clothing and no access to standard healthcare and shelter. 112million Nigerians are also relatively poor, and 99.5million lives on less than a dollar per day(NBS 2010) .

The official statistics from the national Bureau of statistics reveals that poverty incidence rose from 27.2 percent in 1980 to 69.0 percent in 2010(Table 1) showing over a 100 percent rise in poverty incidence over the years.

Table 1 Poverty Incidence In Nigeria(1980-2010)

Year	National Poverty Incidence(%)	Estimated Population(Millions)	Population in Poverty(Million)	Urban Poverty Incidence(%)	Rural Poverty Incidence(%)
1980	27.2	65	17.1	17.2	28.3
1985	46.3	75	34.7	37.8	51.4
1992	42.7	91.5	39.2	37.5	46.0
1996	65.6	102.3	67.1	58.2	69.3
2004	54.4	126.3	68.7	43.2	63.3
2007	64.4	142.0	91.5	na	na
2010	69.0	163	112.47	61.8	73.2

Source National Bureau of Statistics. HNLSS 2010

The poverty level decreased marginally between 1985 and 1992 falling from 46.3% to 42.7% in the respective years. It rose sharply again in 1996 to 65.6% and later fell to 54.4% in 2004. From 54.4 it rose again to 69.0% (Table 1). From the table it can be seen that urban poverty has been consistently lower than rural poverty, hence while 61.8 percent of urban residents were considered poor in 2010, more than 73 percent of rural dwellers fell into the same category.

Poverty Alleviation In Nigeria

From independence in 1960 to date successive regimes have tried different policies and programmes aimed at reducing the poverty incidence in the country. This was done through various ways; first through the activities of its ministries/agencies, second by collaboration with International agencies, third and more importantly through the establishment of agencies equipped solely to fight rising poverty in Nigeria. All the programmes implemented have focus more on growth, basic needs and rural development approaches.

With the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986 Poverty Alleviation Programmes (PAPs) have multiplied. As at today more than 30 different PAPs have been experimented with (Umo 2012). This number does not include other initiatives at the state and local Governments levels.

For analytical purpose PAPs will be categorized into two groups namely, the Core Poverty Alleviation Programmes (CPAPs) and Non-Core Poverty Alleviation Programmes (NCPAPs). The latter category comprises PAPs that contribute indirectly to poverty alleviation by creating a supportive environment while the former is presumed to contribute directly to poverty alleviation.

The core poverty Alleviation Programmes (CPAPs):

i. Better Life Programme for Rural Dwellers (BLP): BLP was initiated and established in 1987 by the late wife of former President Babangida, Maryam. As the name implies, the programme directly targeted poverty alleviation in the rural areas. The specific target groups included widows, orphans, the disabled and old people. Cooperatives and cottage industries were promoted as a means of helping the rural women get out of poverty. The main objectives of the programme are;

- ▶ Mobilization of women for effective national development
- ▶ The need to bring women together for better understanding and resolution of the problems through collective actions
- ▶ The need to raise women's consciousness concerning their activities, rights, social, political and economic responsibilities.

ii. Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP): FEAP was the pet project of Maryam Abacha and it aimed at addressing women's poverty thereby uplifting the economic status of the family. FEAP existed for about two years (1998-2000) during which it received

funding to the tune of N7.0billion out of which about N3.3billion was disbursed as loans to about 21,000 cooperative societies nationwide that were production oriented (Mukta,2011). Such target projects included poultry production, garri making, Soap making and animal husbandry. FEAP disbursed various tranches of loans to both men and women cooperatives through some commercial banks. Though the programme has assisted in uplifting some families, most of the beneficiaries failed to repay the loans as evidenced in the books of most commercial banks that participated in the scheme. The programme terminated with the death of President Sani Abacha.

iii. Family Support Programme(FSP): Introduced in 1994, FSP becomes child of necessity borne out of the need to improve the life and lots of Nigerian masses, especially women in the rural areas. The programme was a shift of policy trust on the role of family in national development, particularly as it affects major social sectors such as health, education and economic empowerment among others. The policy objectives are;

- To improve and sustain family cohesion through the promotion of social and economic well being of the Nigerian family for its maximum contribution to national development.
- To promote policies and programmes that strengthens the observance and protection of human rights and the advancement of social justice and human dignity.
- To sensitize government on the need to provide adequate shelter for all Nigerians.

iv. Peoples Bank Of Nigeria (PBN): PBN was a creation of Babangida administration with the main objective of extending micro-credit to rural women and urban poor, who are the worse affected by the poverty incidence. Umo(2012) reported that about 603,200 people benefited from loan disbursement covering a period of ten years(1989-1999). The number of customers during the period was estimated at 87%. The bank's poorest of the poor loan delivery scheme constituted about 20% of the beneficiaries.

Peoples Bank was disbanded during the Banking reform of 2005.

v. The national Directorate of Employment(NDE): The NDE by its mandate was to design and implement programmes to combat mass unemployment and articulate policies aimed at developing work programmes with labour intensive potentials. The administration of General Babangida then saw unemployment as one of the key issues challenging the agenda of governmentsince it posed a potential danger to the socio-political and economic system of the nation. The administration view unemployment as the major factor behind mass poverty, thefederal Government established NDE in 1986 to generate employment particularly to the teeming youth. It has four core programmes under it;

- a) Vocational skills development programme(VSDP) which includes sub-programmes such as the national open apprenticeship scheme(NOAS), school on wheels(SOW) programme and waste to wealth(WTW) programme.
- b) Small Scale Enterprises(SSE) programme
- c) Rural Employment Promotion
- d) Special Public Works Programme

NDE has made concerted efforts to generate employment under the four programmes as well as other extended facilitating programmes such as graduate entrepreneurship development programme(EDP), NYSC graduate scheme and starting your business programmes.

Even though NDE stands as one of the few surviving PAPs in Nigeria, it still has a long way to go in addressing its core mandate. This may not be unconnected to the challenge on funding. Moreso, as Umo(2012) pointed out that the stand-alone institutional arrangement for fighting mass unemployment seems wrongheaded. No single stand alone institution is capable of fighting mass poverty. The NDE has been overstretched by spending its meager resources too thin across the entire country. It has offices in all the 36 states of the federation and the Federal capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. These offices attempt to pursue each of the core mandates with the limited resources available to it. Its impact on addressing (un)employment crises has been largely ineffective.

The Nigeria's unemployment crisis have over-whelmed NDE, considering the fact that over 4.5 million Nigerians enter the labour market annually from the school system enrolling about 40million students(Adeolu 2010). An optimistic evaluation shows that the nation's economy cannot generate jobs to absorb more than 10% of the new entrants into the labour market annually. Cumulative this over the last ten years and one is talking about over 40million Nigerians facing various degrees of unemployment, underemployment, low wage employment and social exclusion (Umo 2012).

Statistics from the NDE shows that the scheme has created 542,725 jobs under its core programmes from 2002 to 2006. This translates into about 108,545 beneficiaries per annum within the considered period. This signifies that after about 28 years of existence, NDE has not been able to create directly up to 3 million productive jobs for Nigeria.

vi The Poverty Alleviation Programme(PAP)

The PAP as a poverty reduction programme was introduced in 2000 with the sole aim of addressing the problems of rising unemployment and crime rates especially among the youth.

The Primary objectives of PAP are;

- i. Reduce the problem of unemployment and hence raise effective demand in the economy.
- ii. Increases the productiveness of the economy
- iii. Drastically reduce the embarrassing crime wave in the society.

The Targets/components of PAP as identified by Obadan(2001) include the followings;

- Provide jobs for 200,000 unemployed
- Create a credit delivery system from which farmers will have access to credit facilities
- Increase the adult literacy rate from 51% to 70% by 2003
- Shoot up health care delivery system from its present 40% to 70% by year 2003
- Increase the immunization of children from 40% to 100%
- Raise rural water supply from 30% to 60% and same for rural electrification
- Embark on training and attainment of atleast 60% of Tertiary institutions graduates and

- Development of simple processes and small scale industries.

Measures were put in place to achieve these objectives which includes; increase in the salary of public workers, rationalization of organization and methods within the system, particularly that of existing poverty alleviation institutions, encouraging and rewarding all deserving Nigerians for industry and enterprises and launching of UBE programme.

Despite its good objectives, PAP was hindered by poor implementation and was abandoned. The programme was defeated as credits given to finance micro enterprises were not utilized by the beneficiaries in such enterprises meaning that the target for employment generation was missed. PAP was also perceived as initiative of the ruling party's programme and therefore was not given much attention and, in some cases, resisted by chief executives of states controlled by the opposition parties (Obadan 1997, Muktar 2010). In spite of the problems encountered in the course of implementation of PAP, Oyiza (2003) noted that it has succeeded in providing 82,000 jobs to different kinds of people across the country.

Vii National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)

NAPEP was introduced in 2001 with the aim of addressing the most pressing manifestations of absolute poverty, and to eradicate it in the shortest possible time. NAPEP is a central coordination point for all anti-poverty efforts from the local government level to the national level. With a take off grant of N6 billion, NAPEP established structures at all levels nationwide. It was complemented by the National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC) charged with the responsibility of coordinating all poverty eradicating programmes of all government agencies and parastatals and the ministries with the aim of ensuring the central planning and coordination of all poverty reduction programmes in the country. This led to the classification of poverty eradication institutions under NAPEP into four namely;

- Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) which deals with capacity acquisition, mandatory attachment, productivity improvement, credit delivery, technology and development and enterprises promotion.
- Rural Infrastructure and Development Scheme (RIDS) dealing with the provision of portable and irrigation water, transport (rural and urban), rural energy and power support
- Social Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS) deals with special education, primary healthcare services, establishment and maintenance of recreational centres, public awareness facilities, youth and students hostel developments, environmental protection facilities, food security provisions, micro and macro credits delivery, rural telecommunications facilities, provision of mass transit, and maintenance culture.
- Natural Resources Development and Conservative Scheme (NRDCS) dealing with harnessing of Agricultural, water, solid mineral resources, conservation of land and space particularly for convenient and effective utilization by small scale operators and the immediate community.

In evaluating the success or otherwise of NAPEP, we realized that the programme was marred in bureaucratic bottlenecks and did not deliver its expected outcomes. Umo (2012) argued that the

actual operation of NAPEP has substantially deviated from its core mandate. The programme is faced with a lot of administrative issues. Uptill now, NAPEP remains as the main national institution for fighting poverty in Nigeria. After over a decade in its inception, the poverty situation has deteriorated rather than improved. As at 2009, poverty was 69% or 81 Million people. If the International poverty rate of 70% for \$1.0 a day benchmark is used, it means 106.5million Nigerians were in poverty. It was further argued that if the more realistic \$2.0 a day is applied to the estimated population of 160million as at 2011, not less than 154 million Nigerians are in poverty.

An assessment of the NAPEP's operation shows that it concentrated more on youth empowerment scheme(YES) neglecting the other mandates; even the YES itself focused more on the disbursement and administration of NAPEP tricycle called "KEKE NAPEP".

Mustapha(2010) observed that most of the poor people have not participated in NAPEP's programmes due to lack of access to social and economic infrastructures provided to improve human capital. Abdu(2005) also observed that the credit facilities and other infrastructures provided by NAPEP were enjoyed by members of the ruling party while those identified as opposition were denied access and did not benefit from the programme thereby remaining in poverty.

The Unfortunate situation is even where the ruling party loyalist were given the credit facilities, the funds were in many cases utilized for other purposes the result of which was that, in the long run the intended beneficiaries remained poor.

This scenario portrays NAPEP as institutionally and conceptually flawed, hence incapable of addressing Nigeria's mass poverty. Apart from the institutional weakness of NAPEP which probably can be addressed, the underlying concept of fighting mass poverty with a single institution seems wrongheaded.

Viii The Millennium development Goal (MDG)

The United Nations declaration of 2000 gave birth to the Millennium Development Goals and it has been adopted by Nigeria as a national official poverty fighting policy instrument. The MDG has eight set goals aimed to be achieved in the current year of 2015. The Goals are;

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve Universal Primary Education
- Promote Gender Equality and empower women
- Reduce Child mortality
- Improve Maternal Health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

The MDG programmes were expected to be funded annually with the \$1billion savings from 2006 external debt relief. The problem associated with the disbursement of the fund is that some of the projects it has pursued have either not been implemented or have been

abandoned(Muktar, 2010). The MDG programme failed to achieve the set goals due to some eminent problems affecting most programmes/projects implementation in Nigeria. Though the Nigeria Bureau Of Statistics (NBS) statistics has indicated a reduction of poverty incidence from 70% in 1999to 54% in 2005, Nigeria is still considered as one of the leading countries with high poverty rates.

Non Core Poverty Alleviation Programmes(NCPAPs)

The noncore poverty alleviation programmes are institutions set up for general development which would invariably address poverty concerns. Umo 2012 identified these NCPAPs;

- Agricultural Developemnt Projects(ADPs)
- NationalAgricultral Land Development Authority(NALDA)
- Strategic Grains Reserve
- River Basin Development Authorities(RBDAs)
- Community Banks Programme
- National Primary Health Care Developemnt Agency(NPHCDA)
- Expanded Programme on Immunization(EPI)
- The Normadic Education Programme(NEP)
- The Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative Bank(NACB)
- The Adult and Non Formal Education Programme(ANfEP)
- National Centre for Women Development(NCWD)
- Federal Mass Transit Agency(FMTA)
- Federal Agricultural Coordinating Unit(FACU)
- National Programme On Immunization(NPI)
- National Agricultural Insurance Cooperation(NAIC)
- Petroleum Trust Fund(PTF)
- Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission(OMPADEC)
- Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure(DFRRI)
- Niger Delta Development Commission(NDDC)
- National Economic Empowerment And Development Strategies(NEEDS)
- State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy(SEEDS)
- Local Government Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies(LEEDS)
- Seven Point Agenda(7-PA)
- Vision 20:2020

Most of these NCPAPs initiatives are moribund. The few surviving ones are ADPs, RBDA, NPHCDA, EPI, NEP, ANFEA, FACU, NDDC and Vision 20:2020. The indirect impact that these organizations would have had on poverty could not be rigorously assessed for lack of data. Nevertheless, it seems fair to infer that such impact may at least have been minimal in aggregate

terms given the observed growth in poverty over the last three decades. According to Ihimodu(2004), empirical records of many of these programmes and projects are not impressive enough to bring about the expected transformation on the livelihood of the targeted population. The Table below provides a summary of the various poverty alleviation programmes/strategies adopted by different Governments with the sole aim of lowering the growing poverty incidence in the country.

Table 2. Government Poverty Alleviation Programmes from 1972 to date

Programme	Year of establishment	Head of Government	Target Group	Nature of Intervention
National Accelerated Food Production Programme(NAFPP)	1972	Gen. Yakubu Gowon	Peasant Farmers	To Educate Farmers
Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank(NACB)	1972	Gen. Yakubu Gowon	Peasant Farmers	Agricultural Financing
Operation Feed The Nation	1979	Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo	Rural Dwellers	Increase food production
War Against Indiscipline(WAI)/Go back to Land	1983	General Muhammadu Buhari	The entire society	War Against Indiscipline
Directorate for Food, roads, and Rural Infrastructure(DFRRI)	1986	General Ibrahim Babangida	Rural dwellers	Feeder roads rehabilitation, Rural water supply and Rural electrification
National Directorate Of Employment(NDE)	1986	General Ibrahim Babangida	Unemployed Youth	Training, Financing and Guidance
Better Life Programme(BLP)	1987	General Ibrahim Babangida	Rural Women	Self help and rural development programme, skill acquisition and health care
Peoples Bank Of Nigeria(PBN)	1989	General Ibrahim Babangida	Under Priviledge in rural and urban areas	Securing loans and credit facilities
Community Banks(CB)	1990	General Ibrahim Babangida	Rural Residence and Micro enterprises in	Securing loans and credit facilities

			urban areas	
Family Support Programme(FSP)	1994	General Sani Abacha	Families in Rural Areas	Health Care and Child welfare Development
Family Economic Advancement Programme(FEAP)	1998	General sani Abacha	Rural dwellers	Credit facilities to support the establishment of cottage industries
National Health Insurance Scheme	2004	President Olusegun Obasanjo	The entire society	To provide easy access to health services
National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS)	2004	President Olusegun obasanjo	The poor in the society	Government reformation, growing private sectors, access to health, education, welfare, employment, empowerment, security and participatory governance.
The Seven-Point Agenda	2007	President Umaru Musa Yaradua	The entire economy	Value Reorientation through social and economic reforms
The Vision 2020	2009	President Umaru Musa Yaradua	The entire economy	Long Term plan for stimulating rapidEconomic growth
Transformation Agenda	2011	President Goodluck Jonathan	All Nigerians	Job creation, public expenditure management, foreign policy among others
Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme(SURE-P)	2012	President Goodluck Jonathan	All Nigerians	Investment in Critically-needed infrastructure to mitigate the impact of fuel subsidy removal

Poverty Alleviation Programme(PAP)	2000	President Olusegun Obasanjo	Youth and workers	Employment creation, increase salary of public servants, launching of the Universal Basic Education Programme
National Poverty Eradication Programme(NAPEP)	2001	President Olusegun Obasanjo	The poor and less privileged	Central planning and coordination of all poverty reduction programmes in the country

Source: Arogundade et al 2011 and author's compilation

We can assess the most recent ones to see their national impacts. These are the NEEDS, 7-PA and Transformation Agenda.

NEEDS 1 and 11

The NEEDS is a homegrown poverty reduction strategy launched in May 2003. It focuses on four key objectives; poverty reduction, wealth creation, employment generation and value reorientation. It aimed at restructuring the government to make it smaller, stronger, better, skilled and more efficient at delivering essential services. It is expected to be complimented with the SEEDS, LEEDS and FEEDS at the states, local Governments and Federal capital Territory levels respectively.

In 2008, the country embarked on the production of NEEDS 2 which was to cover 2008 to 2011 with a central objective of reducing poverty by 30% by 2011. It was designed as a continuation of the Vision, mission and strategies of NEEDS 1. The overarching goals were the same, poverty reduction, employment generation, wealth creation and value reorientation.

The Economic performance under NEEDS showed a mixed result. While there was improvement in real GDP growth rate, gross national savings and crude oil production, other areas such as infrastructure, power generation, unemployment, inequality worsened. For instance, the average growth rate of 6.5% did not translate into job creation, as the country registered 60% youth unemployment while aggregate unemployment rate averaged 12% (Adeola 2012). Manufacturing capacity utilization remains low (ranging from 35% to 45%) hence the absorptive capacity is low.

Poor project design, inadequate implementation, weak monitoring and absence of evaluation largely explains Nigeria's development failure as exemplified in the non-implementation of NEEDS 2 (Obadan 2010).

1.8 The Seven-Point Agenda(7-PA)

The Seven point agenda was an initiative of the late president YarAdua. The 7-PA(2007-2010) articulated the policy priorities that would strengthen the existing reforms and build the economy. The agenda aimed to achieve double digit growth rates and make Nigeria one of the 20 largest economies in the world by the year 2020 through focusing on seven priorities.

▶ **Power and Energy:** The infrastructural reform in this critical sector was to develop sufficient and adequate power supply that will ensure Nigeria's ability to develop as a modern economy and an industrial nation by the year 2015.

▶ **Food Security and Agriculture:** This reform is primarily agrarian based. The emphasis was on the development of modern technology, research, financial injection into research, production and development of agricultural inputs that will revolutionize the agricultural sector leading to a 5-10 fold increase in yield and production. This will result in massive domestic and commercial outputs and technological knowledge transfer to farmers.

▶ **Wealth Creation and Employment:** By virtue of its relevance on revenue from non-renewal oil, a resource that does not renew itself. To diversify the economy and enhance the revenue base, therefore increase employment opportunities for Nigerians and develop human capacity.

▶ **Transport Sector:** To develop an efficient transport system for goods and people. With a goal of a modernized industrialized Nigeria, it is mandatory that Nigeria develops its transport sector.

▶ **Land Reforms:** To amend the existing land law. To allow access for large private businesses and commercialized farming to boost the economy. The planned result is to ensure improvement and boosts to the production and wealth creation initiatives.

▶ **Security:** To enhance nationwide security especially in Niger Delta region in order to allow for internal and foreign investment and safeguard of life and properties.

▶ **Education:** To improve human resources capacity building, upgrading of facilities in the federal educational institutions and reforms to improve quality of and access to education.

The seven point agenda seem not to have made any meaningful impact on the resolution of the Nigeria's developmental challenges. Despite the seven point agenda, there is increasing level of poverty in the country. Some of the reasons for the low impact or total failure of these structures includes;

- Poor coordination of activities and absence of effective continuous policy formulation.
- Lack of sustainability of programme and projects
- Absence of achievable target setting
- Lack of impact assessment or monitoring and evaluation.
- Absence of effective coordination collaboration and complementation between the agencies and among the tiers of government.
- Duplication of functions with a resulting unnecessary rivalry among institutions.

The Vision 20:2020

The Nigerian Government launched an Economic Transformation Blueprint in 2009 tagged Vision 20:2020. It is a long term plan aimed at stimulating Nigeria's economic growth and launching the country into a path of sustained and rapid socio-economic development.

The Vision is that by 20;2020 Nigeria will have a large, strong, diversified, sustained and competitive economy that is one of the top 20 economies in the world. The three strategic pillars around which a number of strategic objectives have been developed are; guaranteeing productivity of the people and their well-being, ensuring that the key sources of economic growth are optimized and sustainable social and economic development.

Transformation Agenda

The Transformation Agenda 2011-2015 draws its inspiration from the vision 20:2020. Over the four year period, the first national implementation plan(NIP) aims to deepen the effects and provide a sense of direction for the administration. The Programme is targeted at the followings:

- Job Creation
- Public Expenditure management
- Foreign Policy and Economic Diplomacy
- Human capital Development policies, programmes and projects
- Infrastructure policies
- Enables for sustainable Growth and Development

1.10 Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme(SURE-P)

This programme is a 3-4 year programme and a subset of the transformation Agenda. It is designed to mitigate the immediate impact of the removal of fuel subsidy and accelerate economic growth through investments in critically needed infrastructure. Projects in works, power, agriculture and rural development, Education, Health, Aviation, FCT administration, Niger-Delta and water resources were given priority.

Through public works, youth and women employment component of the SURE-P, the Federal government of Nigeria established the Graduate Internship Scheme(GIS) which aims to provide the unemployed graduate youths with job apprenticeship opportunities that will expose them to skills and experiences relevant to the current labour market and enhance their employability.

However well intended these programmes were hijacked by the politicians as the philosophy behind the setting up of the programmes were politicized in most cases. For instance, beneficiaries of these programmes are usually party faithful, loyalists and family members instead of genuine members of the society.

Conclusion and suggestions

The issue of rising poverty incidence despite an impressive Economic growth in Nigeria is a challenge before policy makers and researchers at both national and international levels. Policy

measures were adopted by various administrations with the aim of reducing the poverty level. Most of the policies were either wrongly designed or had problem in the cause of implementation. Evidence has shown that despite the programmes and policies put in place, poverty incidence keep on increasing over the years. This work reviews various policies and strategies adopted and their success or failures.

Suggestive measures are a change in the policy design and implementation from the government and a focus on job creation particularly in the rural areas.

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