

POVERTY AND GOVERNANCE: ASSESSING THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN ALLEVIATING POVERTY IN NIGERIA

Philips O. OKOLO & Zideke KASIKORO
Political Science, Faculty of the Social Sciences
Delta University Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
.philips@gmail.com or philips.okolo@ndu.edu.ng

Abstract

Poverty is known to be a threat to world peace, security, prosperity and sustainability of development efforts. The paper anchored its argument on effective service delivery as a sine-qua non for poverty alleviation. Hence, the study seeks to address this question: Do corruption hinders the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes towards effective service delivery? The study is theoretical in nature, and the research design used is descriptive design. The study made use of secondary data in its analysis. It examines the relationship between poverty and corruption. One of the key findings of this study is that the incidence of poverty remains increasing and spiking due to lack of accountability and transparency at the implementation levels. Thus, the programmes serve as a means of empowering friends and relatives who are closer to the corridors of power. Against this background, the study recommends among others that improvement of service delivery will help to alleviate poverty and ultimately the sustainable development efforts in Nigeria.

Keywords: alleviating, development, assessing, governance, poverty

Introduction

Poverty is known to be a threat to world peace, security and prosperity in Nigeria (Anyebe, 2015). Hence the World Bank; World Development Report (1990) captured poverty as one of the most pressing issue confronting the developing communities; i.e, how to reduce poverty (Orunbon& Adeleke, 2024). In Nigeria, development literature on poverty rightly captured the incidence of poverty from 1960, that only 15% of the population were enveloped with poverty and in 1980, it rose to 28% which by 1985, the poverty level was 46% and then falls slightly to 43% at 1992; and further rose to 65.6% in 1996 and again, declined to 54.4% in 2004 (Eleagu, 2013; Kpelai, 2013; Okonkwo, 2015)

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2013) cited in Okonkwon (2015), asserted that 112.519 million Nigerians, which is 69% of Nigerians Population live in poverty at 2010, moreover, at 2011, the level of poverty has increased to 71.5% of the country's population that was living in abject poverty. The current 2024 poverty level is projected to increase to 38.8% (Nyekachi&Chukwuemake, 2024). The above showed that majority of Nigerian's live on less than one US\$ per day. Ajegi (2002) contended that the poverty condition in Nigeria has taken a crisis dimension. Although, poverty is a rural phenomenon in Nigeria where about 70% of the Nigeria population live (Oyinbo, &Rekwot, 2014). However, the incidence of poverty has ravaged the various geo-political zones in Nigeria as aptly captured in 2008, it shows that the South-South has 35.1%; South East 26.7%; South West 43.0%. While the North Central has 67.0%; North East with 71.2% and North West 71.2% (Adekoya, et al, 2021). From this analysis, the phenomenon of poverty in Nigeria is more noticeable in the Northern region.

However, the poverty situation in Nigeria is a paradox, poverty is on the rise in the midst of plenty and rising in the period of economic growth (Danaan, 2018). This contradicts the abundance human and mineral resources and further contradicts its huge budgetary allocation from the centrally collected funds, though, a greater amount of her population is deep soaked in poverty due to unequal distribution and allocation and wealth (Lipton,1980; Alesina&Perotei, 1996; Okonkwo, 2015). Also,

some other scholars believed that poverty is driven by poor leadership, economic growth and market imperfections, fantastic corruption, low productivity, unemployment, debt- burden and conflicts, globalization, high rate of population growth, ineffectiveness and inefficiency in managing poverty alleviation programmes (Chimobi, 2010; Akinmulegun, 2014; Umar, 2014; Taiwo, &. Agwu, 2016; Singh, 2020).

However, the subject of poverty and governance have been discussed severally by scholars, despite this scholarly discourse poverty have been in the increase. Hence, this study is predicated on review of previous literature and fill in the gap in literature by adding to the literature on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The paper relied on qualitative data that are sourced from textbooks, journals, government official documents that are related to the study. The paper is organized into the following five parts; part one which is the introductory part, part two analyzes poverty and its crisis, part three conceptualized Governance and the values of good governance, while part four dwell on the Role of the State in alleviating poverty and part five deals with the Manifestation of Corruption, Conclusion and Recommendations.

Poverty and Its Crisis

All over the world, the question of poverty has continued to draw attention of scholars, policy makers and international development partners. Indeed, poverty is one of the Mother Vessels of problems facing the world, which affects both developing and under-developed nations. Thus, the United Nations (UN) rightly captured as one of its cardinal objectives of its Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by year 2015. Despite this and other global objectives targeted in the past, the degree of poverty in Nigeria is alarming (World Bank, 2021).

Extant literature captured both quantitative and qualitative measurements of high incidence of poverty in Nigeria (Federal Office of Statistics FOS, 1996; Okunmadewa, et al, 2005). This situation has been termed by most authorities as a paradox in Nigeria due to its vast human, natural and financial resources, while most of her citizens are extremely poor (Ogunleye, 2010; Adeleke, 2012; Nnadi, et al, 2013; Oyekale, & Oyekale, 2013; Abgaeze, & Onwuka, 2014;). Generally, poverty could be seen as a condition where a person cannot take care of his or her basic needs of life: such as food, clothing or shelter; more so cannot meet the social and economic obligations, lacks gainful employment, skill, assets, and self-esteem, and has limited access to socio-economic infrastructure such as education, health, water and sanitation and chances of advancing his or her welfare (Central Bank of Nigeria-CBN, 1999).

Ajegi, (2002) contended that poverty is a situation that has subjected people to economic, political, social and environmental depreciation, it carries along all forms of resentment and quite often; such resentment might be volatile and destructive. The above can be used to gain an understanding of the high rate of crime in Nigeria, as this is evidenced in the high surge of crimes in all parts of Nigeria today. Poverty conditions economic growth of a nation as it generally affects both performance and productivity arbitrary. The poor cannot partake positively to economic growth since they lack the required skill to do so. The moral of the poor is always damp so they find it difficult to commit themselves to the socio- economic growth since the gain of doing so is neither self-evident nor guaranteed, which can even result to violence (Okolo, et al, 2023).

Poverty manifest negatively on the individuals and the larger society. It gives rise to social exclusion, isolation fear, distress and deprivation (Orokpo, et al, 2018). Poverty has made the poor to be powerless and voiceless; they live in sub-standard milieu with low incomes, inadequate social

amenities and opportunities for improved well-being. Poverty might lead to loss of self-confidence, self-actualization, self-fulfillment, lack of good orientation and abandonment of cultural values and heritage such that people are ashamed of their cultural and racial identity (Porter & Washington, 1979; Jencks, 1992; Commins, 2004; Shah, 2016).

It also manifests itself in ethics and morality where shallow intellectualism prevails, and people do everything possible to achieve their selfish goals (Abimuku, 2006). It makes people lack the capability to function and enjoy the core values of development and sustenance. For Quinney (1980) crime is a direct product of poverty; it is a by-product of the political economy. Poverty as observed by Nigerian Human Development Report (NHDR, 1996), manifest itself in prostitution, exposure to risks, corruption, robbery, street life, increased unemployment, living in squalor, shanties shackles, high infant mortality, acute malnutrition, short life expectancy, human degradation, living in over crowd and often poor ventilation homes etc. Whereas, the circle of poverty can be broken by empowering the youths to be self-sufficient and self-reliance through vocational skill acquisition programmes targeted at the poor youths (Osunde, 2003; Nwagwu, 2005). Poverty can also be eradicated by reducing the expenditure of the people, through the provision of basic social amenities viz-a- vis, portable water, education and medical facilities, shelter, individuals to return income, and thus promote aggregate demand and productivity, which enhance wealth creation and reduce poverty. It implies therefore that the more people have access to the basic necessities of life, the lower the population of the poor (Ibaba, & Ebiede, 2008).

Governance

The term Governance is not a new terminology; it is known to be an age long concept since human civilization. Kim et al (2005) sees Governance as the process of policy making through active and cohesive discussion among policy range of networks, policy makers that are interconnected through on broad range networks. Hyden (1992) contend that governance is the conscious management of regime structures with a view of enhancing the legitimacy of the public realm. Norwegian Agency for Development, (NORAD, 2010), in a Study of Good Governance in Nigeria captured Governance to those rules that regulate the public realm. It can also be seen as policy outputs (decisions and policies made) i.e. the economic, institutional, and social programmes pursued and implemented. Governance can be viewed as a set of values, policies and institutions by which the society manages the economic, political as well as social processes at various levels, on the basis of interaction among the government, civil society and private sector (Adejuwon, ND). He stressed further that in the act of Governance, the concerned authority if any, exercise power, exerts influence and manages the country's social as well as economic resources leading to better development. Thus, in the same way, the World Bank (WB, 1992) see's Governance in such a manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country economic and social resource of development. The World Bank made three distinct and unique categorization of the concept of governance, such as; Political regime; the economic and social resources and the capacity of governments to design, formulate and implement policies and in general, to discharge government functions.

Okolo and Agidi (2018) contend that governance simply is the exercise of political power to manage public affairs that borders on such issues as the rule of law, accountability and transparency, development oriented leadership, freedom of expression and association, responsiveness, responsibility, representativeness, efficiency and effectiveness. Moreso, they stressed further that governance inherently constitutes a tripod legs that encompasses aspects of economic, political and administrative spheres. Hence, the economic aspect of governance embraces decision making process that affects a country's economic activities, which has implication or bearing on equity probity,

poverty quality of life. The political aspects anchored on the process of decision making that has to do with the formulation of policy while the administrative aspects of governance focus its attention on policy implementation.

Whereas, the United Nation Human Development Report (2004) argued that governance has two ingredients; first, the leadership must have responsibilities derived from the tenets of effective governmental organizations. Secondly, the governed, that is the general public that is responsible for making fundamental inputs to the socio-economic and political affairs of the state. This implies the efficiency management of governmental institutions. Chiazor and Egharevba (2013) conceived governance from the Lasswell classical traditional viewpoint of politics, i. e, who get what, when and how and perhaps how much. Hence, governance has to do with the authoritative allocation of values. In a concise manner we can deduce that governance is the way those in position of authority make use of their office to deliver public goods.

Governance can be seen from positive and negative dimension, i.e., Good governance and poor or bad governance. For a better understanding of good governance, Downer (2000) in Adejuwon (ND) portrayed good governance to mean a process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights. Accordingly, Babawale (2007) contend that good governance is the exercise of political power to promote the public good and the welfare of the people. He stressed further that good governance is the absence of lack of accountability in government, corruption, and political repression, suffocation of civil society and denial of fundamental human rights. He characterized good governance to include the following: accountability, transparency in government dealings, high expectation of rational decision, predictability in government behaviour, openness in government transactions, free flow of information, respect for the rule of law and protection of civil liberties, and press freedom (see Aghemelo and Osumah,2009; Flinder,2001; Okolo, &. Inokoba,2014).

However, Kasikoro (2012) identified some features of bad governance in Nigeria, these are: Failure to make clear separation between what is public and what is private, hence the tendency to divert public resources for private gain; Failure to establish a predictable framework for law and government behaviour in a manner that is conducive to development, or arbitrariness in the application of the rule of law; Excessive rules, regulations, licensing requirement, e.t.c, which impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent seeking; Priorities that are inconsistent with development, hence, resulting in a misallocation of resources and excessively narrow base for, or non-transparent in decision making.

Governance embraces decision making and implementation by its agents and so, the focus of it is on formal as well as informal actors involved in decision making and decision implementation. In this regard, Government is a principal actor in governance, other actors included in the act of governance are Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), research institutions, financial institution, media, educational providers, lobbyists, multinational corporations, associations of peasants, co-operatives, e.t.c (Kasikoro, (2012). In all, it stands to reason that good governance is a reality all Nigerians must embrace in order to achieve justice, peace and development. Hence, the leadership and followership must uphold and respect the rule of law at any given time. The leadership must be accountable for their stewardship. On this regard, we can say good governance is the efficient and effective utilization of state resources to achieve the desire development objective of the people.

Values of Good Governance

The importance of good governance can be found in the amount of attention it has received from both policy and academic domain. Hence, Okolo and Agidi (2018) captured the following in their study as the values or advantages of good governance.

11. Good governance helps to eliminate tensions, in other words, it brings peace in the society.
12. It helps to remove or solve problems as they evolve in the society. It is a truism that no society can boast of being problem free, but with a society that anchors on good governance tends to have lesser problems.
13. It helps to promote cohesion in the society; good governance helps to harmonized diverse interest groups in the society together for the common good of all of them.
14. It enables the policy makers to taken the right decision at the right time. In other words, good governance foster national decision making.
15. It enables the ruler in the society to gain legitimacy and support of their citizenry. When the people are happy with the government of the day, they will not withhold their support and legitimacy for their leaders.
16. Good governance brings overall development in the society. Development can only thrive in a place where the people are happy to a minimal level.
17. Peace and tranquility becomes noticeable where there is good governance. All disagreement is always amicably resolved.
18. It enhances equitable distribution of resources to every concerned groups, geographical areas, states and local government. In good governance, standardize and acceptable method of distributing resources to every sector, sections and segment are well specified.

Good governance has the capacity to reduce corruption in the society and therefore the potentialities of the entronement of sustainability of development efforts. Although, this has been elusive in Nigeria due to absence of transparency, accountability, subversion of the democratic process, political apathy of the citizens and pervasive and domineering and escalating corruption culture in the country.

Role of the State in Alleviating Poverty

The Nigeria state is a British creation, that gained her independence from her colonial lords in 1960 and later became a republic in 1963. This implies that Nigeria is a sovereign state. Hence, the well-being of the citizenry of the state is significance for its existence. Thus, the state plays a pivotal role in addressing the issue of poverty through various poverty alleviation programmes established by successive administrations in Nigeria by providing budgetary provisions and carrying out interventionists programmes. However, past administrative efforts to eradicate the menace of poverty in Nigeria could be pre- dated to the colonial era. During this era, the colonial government came out with policies programmes and strategies centered around National development plans. These plans were only an economic growth strategies designed to raise the GDP level of the country by increasing the growth capacity of every sector. These development plans primarily are often centered on health care, education, agriculture and other infrastructural related projects that will at the end improve on the quality of life of the people (Umar, 2014).

Most of these developmental plans were sometime coordinated by the Federal Government or in conjunction with international development partners, such as the World Bank (WB) and the African Development Bank (ADB). Some of the programmes embarked within these period are; the River Basin Development Authority (RBDA), Rural Electrification Scheme (RES), the Agricultural Credit

Guarantee Scheme (ACGS), the Rural Banking Scheme (RBS) and the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPS), etc (Beghebo .&. Emmanuel, 2015).

Although, there were some levels of success recorded by these programmes. For instance, Akindoju (2018) captured that some of the ADPs were successful in agricultural production but could not transform the quality of life of the people in terms of social and economic development. Hence, most of these programmes were not able to continue and as such faded away due to poor maintenance, lack of monitoring and supervisory inadequacies, policies inconsistencies by successive governments, the developmental policy programmes lost her original focus and subsequently wither away (Umar, 2014)

Again, Beghebo and Emmanuel (2015) acknowledged that the Rural Banking and the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme in most cases failed to deliver the needed credit facilities for agricultural and rural transportation due to the fact that a lot of savings were mobilized for the rural areas only to be diverted by those powerful elites in the urban areas in form of credit/ investments. These National Development Plans focus were merely on the growth of the nation's GDP through Agriculture and so they were not designed to eradicate poverty and income distribution but the plans have positive effects on poverty alleviation.

To this end, since the plans were not targeted at poverty alleviation, poverty could not be arrested as much, hence it was in progress. Before the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) in Nigeria, successive administration has initiated different poverty alleviation programmes to alleviate poverty, these include: Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), in 1977, Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE) in 1977, Green Revolution in 1980, and the Low Cost Housing Scheme. The OFN and Green Revolution were established to boost agricultural production and improve on the general performance of the agricultural industry. Although, these programmes made some impacts by promoting the standard of living of most Nigerians. Though, the programmes were not sustained due to lack of political will and commitment, policy instability and insufficient involvement of the citizen's in these programmes (Beghebo .&. Emmanuel, 2015).

The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) Era

In 1985, General I.B. Babangida took over the affairs of the nation as a Military Head of State and by 1986; his regime adopted the International Monetary Fund (IMF) sanctioned Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) policy to revamp the economy. The World Bank (WB) supported the policy and injected over US\$450 million to support international trade (Anumudu, et al, 2013). However, with the adoption and subsequent implementation of the SAP policy, the living condition of majority of Nigerians became eroded and dysfunctional, these called for quick reaction by the regime to address the crisis. The regime came out with a plan of action for poverty alleviation in continuance of the previous development plans.

The blueprint of the regime's rural development and poverty alleviation policy centered on encouraging the role of women, eradicating of rural illiteracy, supporting rural markets, rural construction of infrastructures, establishment of rural credit system that would be grass root oriented and so on. To attained these objectives, the regime created several agencies including, Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Better Life for Rural Women, National Directorate of Employment (NDE) were created, but yet not much meaningful development was recorded (Akindoju, 2018). Although, DFRRI was able to complete several roads, and over 5,000 rural communities benefited from its rural electrification projects (Umar, 2014).

It is significant to note that DFRRRI could not achieve most of its objectives, as a result of many reasons given: over ambitious in scope, steeped in corruption, lack of standards for project harmonization and effective mechanisms for coordination among the tiers of government (Anumudu, et al, 2013). The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was introduced in 1987 to address the issue of unemployment and poverty ravaging the nation especially among young school leavers and graduates of tertiary institutions. The objectives of the Directorate include; to design and implement programmes to combat mass unemployment; to articulate policies aimed at developing work programmes with labour intensive potentials and obtain and maintain a data bank on vacancies and employment opportunities in the country with other government agencies (Okolo &Ledogo, 2023).

Consequently, the philosophy of the Directorate focuses on self- enterprise, with emphases on self-employment and self – reliance in preference to wage labour. The philosophy is targeted to be achieved through policy planning and well- articulated programmes of Rural Employment Promotion (REP), Vocational Skills Development Programme (VSD), Special Public Work Programme (SPW) and Small Scale Enterprises (SSCE) Programme, National Youth Employment Programme, and Agricultural Sector Employment Programme (Akintolu, &. Oyewole, 2017). However, the Directorate has trained over two million unemployed and provided business training for about 400,000 and above Nigerians though, the NDE could not pass the litmus test of implementation and it has been poorly funded (Anumudu, et al, 2013).

Better Life Programme (BLP)

The Better Life Programme was founded in 1986.by the then first Lady of Nigeria Dr. (Mrs) Maryam Babangida. The programme was sponsored by the Federal Government. It was designed to promote the living condition of the rural women through creating awareness in women and encouraging them to realize, utilize and develop their potentials for a more fulfilling life (Anumudu,Umar., & Madu,2013).The programme affected on the life of most women through the distribution of various inputs, granting of easy credits, and the establishment of various educational /enlightenment programmes. This can be inferred by Umar (2014), that the BLP has made the following noticeable achievement; formation of 11, 373 women cooperative in 1993; it established 3,613 processing mills as well as distributed farm inputs such as fertilizer to women who ordinarily would not be opportune to have such inputs though they involved in large scale agricultural production.

Though, the success of the programme faded away with the handing over of power to an interim government by Mrs Babangida husband. The programme was controlled by the urban woman and the resources injected into it by the Government were diverted for personal gain (Umar, 2014).

Family Support Programme (FSP) and Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP)

Both programmes were initiated by the General Sani Abacha Military regime. The FSP was designed to render services like health care delivery, child welfare, youth development and improved nutritional status to families in rural areas. likewise, the family Economic Advancement programme (FEAP) was created to grant credit for agricultural production and in order to establish and boost local industries through cooperative societies in rural and urban areas. It is pertinent to note, that the programmewere further captured in its scope to generate employment opportunities at the ward levels, encourage the design and manufacturing of plants, machineries and equipment as well as provide opportunities for the training village - based business operators (Anumudu, et al, 2013; Okolo &Ledogo, 2023).

In all, these programmes were instituted to enhance the betterment of the people in the rural areas. To this end, the FSP made some noticeable achievements in the area of creation of nursery and primary schools, construction of many public toilets and the setting up of some vocational schools. Some of these projects were poorly executed, hence could not continue and also, most poor people in the communities were excluded from benefiting from the projects while they lasted (Umar, 2014).

Review of Strategy Poverty Alleviation Programmes from 1999 – 2015

As the nation adopts Democratic governance in 1999, It was observed to be amongst the poorest nations in the world by the World Bank in 2000 (Ewaranwon, 2012). In response to this, the Government of President Obasanjo came up with an interim anti – poverty measure known as the Poverty Alleviation Programme (Mustapha, 2014).

Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP)

The PAP was created in 2000 to tackle the scourge of unemployment and criminality among the Youths in Nigeria (Beghebo, & Emmanuel, 2015). In spite of this measure put in place to execute policy, poverty continue to be on the raise due to inadequate funding, lack of proper coordination commitments, poor design, monitoring and evaluation. Sequel to this, the government came out with the National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP) to replace the PAP (Anumudu, Umar, & Madu, 2013). Although, the PAP has been noted for providing 82,000 jobs to various citizens across nation (Beghebo, & Emmanuel, 2015).

National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)

Following the Prof Ango Abdullahi committee report NAPEP was constituted in 2001 and it encompasses all key players in poverty eradication n Nigeria, these are; Federal government, state and local government, moreso, civil society, organizations, research institutions, the organized private sector, women groups and concerned individuals (Okolo & Ledogo, 2023). Elumilade, Asaolu and Adereti (2006) acknowledged that in other to eradicate poverty, the government has structured NAPEP into four distinct and unique schemes these are:

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

NAPEP plays the role of monitoring and that of evaluation of these agencies. Whereas, these agencies were created with the intention of eradicating poverty of which their policies were tailored towards restoration of hope to the voiceless in Nigeria, restoration of economic independence and confidence, and wealth creation (Ewarawon, 2012). It was observed that the programmewere able to provide training to about 130,000 youths and engages 216,000 persons, though many of the beneficiaries were non-poor prudence (Anumudu, et al, 2013).

The programme has been criticized for not centering on the poor, programme inconsistency, poor implementation or severe budgetary and governance problems, diversion of resources, conversion of public funds to personal usage, etc (Anumudu, et al, 2013). While Anyebe, (2015) has blamed NAPEP for failing to addressed the issue of poverty due to poor coordination, politicization and corruption.s

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)

The NEEDS Programme was established in 2004 by the Olusegun Obasanjo administration in Nigeria. The programme holds on to these basic elements of development strategies; poverty eradication, employment generation, wealth creation and value reorientation. It provided help to agriculture, industry, small and medium scale enterprises and oil and gas. The NEEDS Programme mapped out series of performance targets that the government intended to achieve by year 2007, these are, a 6 percent annual growth in agricultural GDP of US\$3 billion per year on agricultural exports and 95 percent self-sufficiency in food. NEEDS other to eradicate poverty provides farmers with improved irrigation, machinery and crop varieties which aids to boost agricultural productivity (Iwuchukwu & Igbokwe, 2012). NEEDS as a national policy, was replicated at the states and local government levels as State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (SEEDS), while at the Local government as Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (LEEDS) (Mustapha, 2014). At the implementation level, there is collaboration and coordinating efforts among the tiers of government, donor agencies, the private sector, civil society, NGOs and other stakeholders (Mustapha, 2014). NEEDS (2004) in Umar, (2014) highlighted several factors that impedes government efforts to tackle the scourge of poverty. They include poor coordination, absence of a comprehensive policy framework, excessive political interferences, ineffective targeting of the poor leading to leakage of benefits to unintended beneficiaries, the unwieldy scope of programme which caused resources to be thinly spread across most projects design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. However, it was recorded that NEEDS has not achieved the expected outcome hence, poverty alleviation has become a mirage in Nigeria.

Seven - Point Agenda

The late President Umar Musa Yar' Adua during his presidential campaign captured in his manifesto a seven- point agenda of development strategies he intends to execute when he gained political power. This agenda later became the corner stone of his policy thrust in his administration. The agenda accommodates improving the well - being of Nigerians and making the country become one of the largest economies in the world by the year 2020. The agenda covers critical infrastructures as the first main area of concern. These are power, transportation, national gas distribution and telecommunication. It secondly captured to address the existing issues in the Niger Delta. Food security was the third area of concerned. While the fourth area of concern is the human capital development, followed by the land tenure reform as the fifth cardinal area of concern. The sixth main area is national security and lastly, the seventh area centers on poverty alleviation and wealth creation. However, the seven – point agenda was seen to be too broad to address the different developmental challenges in Nigeria though, it has been blamed for it wide coverage of the programme that may not allow for effective monitoring and implementation. Moreso, resource constraints can hinder the ability of the government to address the wide coverage of the programme (Mustapha,2014). The seven – point agenda died with the demise of President Yar'Adua and could not achieve much as expected to alleviate poverty in Nigeria.

Subsidy Re- Investment and Empowerment Programme (SURE- P)

The Jonathan presidency initiated and inaugurated the SURE- P Programme Committee with the mandate to deliver service with integrity and restore people's confidence in the government. The SURE-P Programme was created to address the rising problem of unemployment in the country,

hence from its inception the Federal Government called for the support of the organized private sector in other to address the unemployment challenges in the country (Nwosu, & Ugwuera,2014).

The SURE –P Programme has two critical components that are key plans to the Government employment generation strategy. Those are the Graduate internship programme (GIP) and the Community service, Women and youth Employment (CSWYE). The Graduate internship programme (GIP) was design to provide opportunity for short-term employment to graduates that are temporarily attached to firms where they would work at lease for a year and gain relevant skills and experience. The GIP was initially designed to accommodate 50,000 persons though it widened it scope to accommodate 83,000 beneficiaries. The beneficiaries were paid a monthly allowance of #18,000 (Adegbenie, 2019).

In furtherance of the implementation of SURE-P was the Community Service, Women and Youth Employment (CSWYE) which intents was to provide employment to the unskilled youths in labour intensive public works areas of community development services. The scheme engages 10,000 youths in the various respective states of the Federation including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja (Adegbenie, 2019). From assessment, the scheme was elitist based hence poverty could not be reduced as much since it is a rural phenomenon. However, like every other poverty alleviation programmes, the scheme could be blamed from policy inconsistency, corruption, diversification of funds and official laxity (Adegbenie, 2019).

Manifestation of Corruption on Governance

Obviously, there is no fit for all definition of the concept of corruption. The definition of the concept of corruption varies among scholars. Ogodogun (2012) view corruption as a negative form of behavioural pattern in which an official entrusted with public office abuses the office through personal misconduct or moral lapses that borders on greed, avarice or selfish desire. Lipses and Lennz (2000) define corruption as the personalization of public interest or misusing public power for private gain.

Alatas, et al. (2006) defines corruption as a situation where by two individuals can act to increase their own pay – off at the expense of a third person. This doesn't mean that the act of corruption cannot be carry out by a single individual. Though, there is no doubt that it takes at least two persons to engaged in the act probably well planned by an individual. Corruption is an act facilitates by those in power to misappropriate state wealth for their own individual gain to the detriment of the masses. Corruption thrives in Nigeria in many forms and it has contributed greatly to the poverty and misery of a greater number of people in Nigeria. As evidently noted that 70% of the population of Nigeria lived below the poverty line in 2003 (Anyebe, 2013).

The paradox of this is that the degree of poverty contradicts the nation enormous wealth. Poverty looms as a result of government office holder's takes advantage of the weak nature of the state to amass public funds for their personal benefits. For instance, Imoukhuede (2016) acknowledged that Nigeria lost over #38 trillion due to mismanagement, embezzlement and money laundering under successive government since the present democratic era from 1999. However, if this money were not stolen and positively utilized to deliver public service, it will have help to alleviate poverty to a large extent. Unfortunately, managers of public offices (specifically poverty alleviation programmes) are all guilty for this malady.

Conclusion

No doubt, one of the chief objectives Nigeria state must pursue in this our democratic era is to alleviate poverty through efficient and effective service delivery. A country that cannot deliver public goods to its citizens may find it difficult to survive. Considering the recent global poverty indices revealed, that has placed the nation as the World poverty capital inspite of its numerous resources. Thus, one of the major findings of the study is that the incidence of poverty remains increasing and escalating due to the lack of accountability and transparency at the implementation levels. Thus, poverty alleviation programmes merely serves as a means of empowering friends and relatives who are closer to the corridors of power. One can only but conclude from exemplified by available literature and analysis that corruption has affected service delivery which has exerted poverty and therefore inhibits the sustainability of development efforts in Nigeria.

Recommendations

In the light of the above, the study makes the following recommendations for policy makers, academia's and indeed government.

1. The Government is admonished to step up the fight against corruption with all amount of seriousness through strengthen of the anti – graft agencies in the country. If this is done properly, it will help to alleviate poverty and the funds will be utilized rightly to provide public service to the people.
2. There should be transparency and accountability for efficient and effective service delivery. Thus, all players of poverty alleviation programmes should be engaged in the distribution, monitoring and evaluation of poverty alleviation programmes.
3. The Government should imbibe the culture of continuity, i.e, if an administration ends, the predecessor should learn to sustained and continue with whatsoever poverty alleviation programme(s) the previous administration initiated in other to achieve the set target objective of the programme(s).
4. There should be a data base for all the poor and it should be yearly updated. Thus, this will help policy makers to plan and also derive the target beneficiaries from the data base.
5. The various tiers of Government in Nigeria should focus on improving the quality of services in Education, Health care, Infrastructure etc.
6. Government at all levels should encourage and invest in Agricultural entrepreneurship training

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