

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL POVERTY ERADICATION PROGRAMME
(NAPEP) IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF BAYELSA STATE**

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Abstract

Generally, poverty has become a major developmental challenge in Nigeria, right from the statehood of the Nation. Nigeria is a nation endowed with enormous mineral resources yet over 95 million Nigerians are still living in object poverty, which makes the poverty situation of Nigeria very paradoxical. Given this backdrop, this paper assesses the National Poverty Eradication Programmes (NAPEP), with reference to Bayelsa State. It employs the structural functional theory and adopted qualitative research with specific reference to relevant journal articles, text books, internet and other archives. Thus, content analysis was utilized to unravel the nexus between NAPEP and poverty in Bayelsa state, and Nigeria at large. The paper found that though NAPEP made a little impact in the lives of beneficiaries during its operation its objective of poverty eradication was not achieved. It therefore recommended among others that there should be a competent and unbiased monitoring team put in place by the Bayelsa State Government to ensure the proper implementation and success of subsequent poverty eradication programmes.

Keywords: *assessment, Bayelsa, NAPEP, Nigeria, poverty*

Introduction

It is factual that the major developmental challenge our nation is facing today is poverty. It has become a very difficult nut to crack. Nigeria is blessed with so much natural resources such as oil and gas in addition to numerous other resources such as conventional materials, wildlife, numerous timber and natural resources, such as sources of food, spices, condiments and medical herbs (see NDES phase I report) cited in (Okolo, 2016). Coal, bitumen, iron ore, gypsum, gold, talc, lead and zink are other mineral resources found in Nigeria. Despite this endowment, poverty is still very prevalent in Nigeria. Sule and Adamu (2019), describe the poverty situation in Nigeria as ironical-despite the enormous wealth in the country, poverty is still the identity of the majority of its citizens. Scholars such as Eleagu (2018), Sule, et al (2019), and Taiwo and Agwu (2016), posit that between 2005 and 2019, the Nigerian Human Development Index (HDI), has increased from 0.467 to 0.539, categorizing the country as backward in human development and placing her at 161 positions among 189 countries in the universe.

The United Nations Development Programme (2019), also reveals that between 1990 and 2019, survival at birth increased by 8.8 years and average years of schooling has now risen to 6.7 years. Gross National Income (GNI) has risen to 58.0%. The UNDP (2019) also posits that, about 51.4% of the Nigerian population was poor and that 16.8% are poverty stricken in all ramifications of life, which includes unavailability of food, shelter, job among others. This implies that a larger number of the Nigerian citizenry is living in abject poverty which is below the US \$1.90 poverty line, as prescribed by the World Bank.

The World Bank, UNDP, HDI and other institutions for measuring poverty used the most glaring poverty indicators such as hunger and malnutrition, Lack of shelter, poor health, illiteracy level, unemployment, lack of access to pipe borne water, vulnerability to diseases, political marginalization among others. Obadan (2001, Pp. 59–188) and Bello et al (2009: 283-299), attributed the causes of poverty to lack of adequate job opportunities for the masses to make a livelihood, inadequate ability to own assets such as land and capital, to help earn a living and unavailability of credit facilities such as bank loan, by the poor. The poverty situation of Nigeria has drawn both national and international attention over times, as successive administrations right from the Statehood of Nigeria in 1960, have all given it different levels of attention by initiating various antipoverty Programmes, to ameliorate it scourge in the country, yet result has been elusive as more Nigerians got caught in the web of poverty (Olayinka, 2019 and Bakare and Edozie, 2015)

In the year 2000, all the member countries of the United Nations Nigeria inclusive, in a bid to ameliorating the scourge of poverty in each of those countries, came into a consensus to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MSGs), which had the broad objective of eliminating poverty in all its characteristic features by the year 2015. This culminated in the initiation and implementation of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). NEEDS as a government policy had the primary responsibility of eradicating poverty in Nigeria. This was expected to culminate in sustainable development which was supposed to be achieved through the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), an anti-poverty Programme initiated to eliminate poverty in Nigeria, which is the focus of this study (Yisau 2017, Chukwuemeka 2009 Abur el al 2013, & Barnes 2010).

NAPEP came on board in the year 2001, by President Olusegun Obasanjo administration (Eleagu 2018, Taiwo and Agwu 2016, Sule and Adamu 2019, & Sylvester and Ekpenyong 2014, cited in Eleagu 2018). NAPEP was accompanied with a Policy making body, known as the National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC). In order to effectively carry out the poverty eradication agenda of government in Nigeria, NAPEP was arranged into four categories. These include the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Social Welfare service Scheme (SOWESS), Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme (RIDS), and Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS). NAPEP was implemented in each of the 36 states that made up the federation-with the

inclusion of the Federal Capital Territory (Bello & Abdul 2010). Bayelsa State was one of the 36 states that had NAPEP implementation, along side other poverty eradication Programmes of government, yet poverty is still very prevalent in the state (Egbe, 2018). Empirical data derived from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2019), reveals that 57% of the Bayelsa population is poor, which represent about 1,200,000 people that are abjectly poor-living on less than US\$1:90 daily. Studies have provided a lot of hindsight on the impact of NAPEP, its youth Empowerment Scheme, Capacity acquisition Programme, Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme and the others. On this note, this study was initiated to add to the body of knowledge on NAPEP.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Structural Functionalism is the theoretical framework chosen for this study. Structural Functionalism started with the writings of Aristotle in the ancient Greeks (Succer, 1992). Historically, Structural functionalism can be traced to Social and biological sciences. The origin of Structural Functionalism theory in political science, can be credited to Talcott Parson, Gabriel Almond and Bungham Powell, were the early frontiers (Parson, 1991, Almond & Powell 1978). Gabriel and Almond argued that for one to fully grasp the understanding of a political system, it becomes imperative not to only appreciate its institutions, but also, the individuals roles they play and that for these institutions to be understood correctly in the society, they must be placed in a clear and useful historical perspective (Almond & Powell 1978).

Functionalism became expedient when Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution began to lay emphasis on the behavioural aspect of human beings. Darwin was of the opinion that only functional and operational institutions are meant to survive. Each function was pertinent to the sustenance of an entire system. Systems that are unable to contribute their quota to the sustenance of the entire system, ceases to exist. Other Scholars of human behaviour have also integrated these ideas to Social affairs. Structural Functionalism sees the society as a whole structure with interrelated part performing its own function, so that, when a system fails in performing its functions, other system within the society are affected, which may result in structural dysfunctionality, chaos, poverty, disorderliness and anarchy in the system.

Thus, NAPEP is the structure under consideration here, which suppose to have carried out some distributive functions, targeted at eradicating poverty in Nigeria (system). Therefore, it is expedient that Government put proper monitoring measures in place, so that Programmes and policies of government initiated can work harmoniously, for the betterment of the country at large. Methodologically, the paper is anchored on qualitative research, which explore mainly the secondary sources of data with specific reference to relevant journal articles, text books, internet and other archives. Thus, content analysis was

utilized to analyze the data to unravel the nexus between NAPEP and poverty in Bayelsa state, and Nigeria at large.

Literature Review

This section of the paper addresses relevant literatures including journal articles, text books, internet and other archives, aimed at unravelling the nexus between NAPEP and poverty in Bayelsa state, and Nigeria at large.

The Concept of Poverty.

Poverty has been defined by scholars looking at the concept from different points of view. This is because of the expansive nature of its scope. Eze (2009, p. 446) cited in Yisau (2017), argue that there is a profusion of scholars who have written extensively on the concept of poverty. On this note Maxwell (1999, p. 2) asked myriads of questions looking at poverty from the perspective of the various scholars who have written extensively on it – can poverty be defined based on amount of money known as income, earned by an individual or a family? Can it be defined based on the absence of the basic needs of life, which includes food, shelter, raiment among others? Does it have to do with the inability to be politically, culturally, socially, and economically relevant in society? It is in this vain that the study shall view poverty through the lens of different scholars who have written extensively on it.

Aderomu (2010), defines poverty as a circumstance of life characterized with the absence of basic things that makes for a meaningful lifestyle which includes nutrition, raiment, shelter, education and medical facilities. The world Bank (1999), in a similar vein sees poverty as a deprivation of all sort such as health care services, sustainable educational system, housing, hunger, inadequate access to employment and credit opportunities, not being able to speak properly, uncertainty of the unknown future, infant mortality caused by unhealthy water, absence of a political might, and lack of equality and fairness. What interest us the most in this definition, is the debilitating influence of poverty on the individual. When an individual is affected with some or all of the above, life becomes burdensome to live. There is actually no doubt that, poverty can reduce an individual to the background.

In the same vein, Central Bank of Nigeria (1999, p. 1), define poverty as a situation where a person cannot fend for his or herself, cater enough to provide for everything that makes for a meaningful life, which includes basic nutrition, raiment, and shelter, inability to be responsible Socially and economically, inadequate job opportunities, business acumen, lack of access to land and capital, absence of self-worth and has little or no access to social and economic amenities which includes education, health, portable water, sanitation which results in the inability of a person to advance his course in life

Scholars like Agu and Taiwo (2016), Hussain (2014), Alfa et al (2014) and Ravallion (1992), hold the same view and see poverty as a challenge of the individual that affects the community by

extension. It is actually a circumstances where a group of persons or an individuals or a community is incapacitated in the ability to provide for basic materials needs that defines a comfortable life, which includes among others things different scholars have mentioned, inability to be actively involved in the prevailing social standard of living, integrity and inability to explore opportunities.

What is quite different about this definition is the inclusion of the community. Meaning that poverty is not just an individual or a household challenge, it is as well, the challenge of the community (local, state and federal government) to which the individual belongs. In the Nigeria context, poverty is the challenge of the entire nation.

Ukwu (2002), seems to be holding the same view with the above scholars by defining poverty into different categories.

- i. poverty is a situation with the characteristics of being poor.
- ii. a circumstance of having insufficient wealth or material possession, despondency and impoverishment.
- iii. lack of adequate quality lifestyle.
- iv. a situation of leanness ineffableness resulting from improper diet.
- v. poverty is a very serious phenomenon when relating it to human beings. It has to do with an unbearable economic, social, political and cultural challenges. Poverty can be an individual, group, community, State and an entire country`s challenge.

For instance, in the Nigerian situation where the standard of living is very high- there is a continuous escalation in the prices of commodities. The citizens can barely make a living as a result of the incessant increase in the prices of things.

Still contributing to this debate, Ravallion (2015), classified poverty into two categories. They are absolute and relative poverty. According to his submission, absolute and relative poverty are as well referred to as primary and secondary level of poverty. Absolute poverty has to do with an inadequate income level that is not sufficient for a maximum standard of living, which results in low level of nutrition, lack of shelter and the absence of modern Infrastructures. While absolute poverty is concerned with income inequality within a society, relative poverty is an indication of inferiority complex, dependence and exploitation (Ravallion, 2020). It is expedient to note here, that relative poverty has a psychological effect on its victims. It secludes people, making them feel unimportant or valueless before their mates.

Lame and Yusoff, (2015) cited in Umar et al (2015), classified poverty into five categories. They called the first category absolute or poverty at the extreme, where it is almost impossible to have a means of livelihood. This is common in circumstances where a person barely survive in a situation of total denial of everything that makes for a decent life which have to do with nutrition, sound health, tap born water, shelter, literacy and access to relevant information. The second, category in their

argument is relative poverty, which has to do with the condition of a households or individual when compared to the standard of living obtainable in the developed societies. The yardstick for measurement here is the comparison of the income of families, whether they are low or unstable. The third is the structural/chronic poverty. They see this as an elongated poverty, the reason being that the causes are not temporal but perpetual. This category of poverty is perpetual in nature, in that, it has the capability to continue for an endless time due essentially to factors which includes inadequate skills necessary for qualification for employment, lack of material resources for production purposes, vocational deficiencies, wide spread cultural and socio-political circumstances. The fourth is speculative transition. In their argument, this means that poverty is temporal or provisional, which is to say that the occurrence of poverty is very brief and it is induced by the activities of human beings or occurrences caused by nature which includes floods, droughts war, earthquakes, among others. The last is geographical poverty. Here, the individual or household is prone to poverty because of the geographical area they find themselves (Lame &Yussof, 2015)

What interests us in the last category of poverty as submitted above, is that poverty can be as a result of the geographical location in which the individual find themselves. Meaning that a relocation of such geographical area that is prone to poverty can as essentially, change the individual status of poverty, thereby providing exposure for a maximum standard of living. Perhaps, this is the reason many Nigerians are relocating from Nigeria to other countries for greener pastures. We shall thus focus attention on the incidence of poverty in Nigeria in the next section.

Incidence/ Trends of Poverty in Nigeria

The magnitude at which poverty is escalating in Nigeria is becoming a major challenge. According to a study on poverty eradication done by Sule, et el (2019), the incidence of poverty in Nigeria had escalated from 28% in 1980 to about 70% in 2003. It declined to 54.4% in 2004. According to their study, this decline was due essentially to the laudable poverty eradication measures put up by the government. This decline in the level of poverty in Nigeria was brought about when the National Poverty Eradication Programme was very operational in Nigeria. Then in 2007, the rate of poverty increased to 70% and 72% in 2018 respectively.

Taking a deep analysis of the above report shows that if more effort were put into the NAPEP in terms of proper implementation, financial resources and continuation of the programme (NAPEP), the decline in the rate of poverty would have probably continued to the barest minimum in Nigeria. But probably, because of improper implementation of anti-poverty Programmes, transition of government and inability to continue with the activities of NAPEP, the rate of poverty after a brief declined re-escalated.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2019), in reporting about the disturbing situation of poverty in Nigeria, contends that 40% of the Nigerian population falls short of the annual poverty line

of ₦137,430 (US\$381.75). Apparently this represents about 82.9 million Nigerians who are extremely poor and are not able to beat the annual poverty line. This obviously calls for concern in that, despite the vast mineral resources with which Nigeria is blessed, about half of her population still wallows in poverty. This report does not include the number of people falling in and out of poverty annually.

The Cable News Network (CNN, 2018) reports that the level of poverty in Nigeria is far more than that of India, in that Nigeria has the highest number of her citizens living in abject poverty with about 87 million Nigerians living on less than US\$1.90 daily. India’s population was 1.38 billion people, which represents 17.7% of the world’s population (World Bank Report 2020). While Nigeria’s population was estimated to be 206 million in 2020 which represents only 2.64% of the population of the world.

The population of Nigeria with the endowment of enormous mineral resources is no match with that of India, yet 87 million Nigerians live in abject poverty while only 73 million people live in poverty in India. The Poverty World Clock (2020), confirms this stake by classifying Nigeria as the poverty capital of the world.

The Human Development Index (HDI, 2018), also reports that Nigeria is occupying 158th position out of 189 countries in human development index.

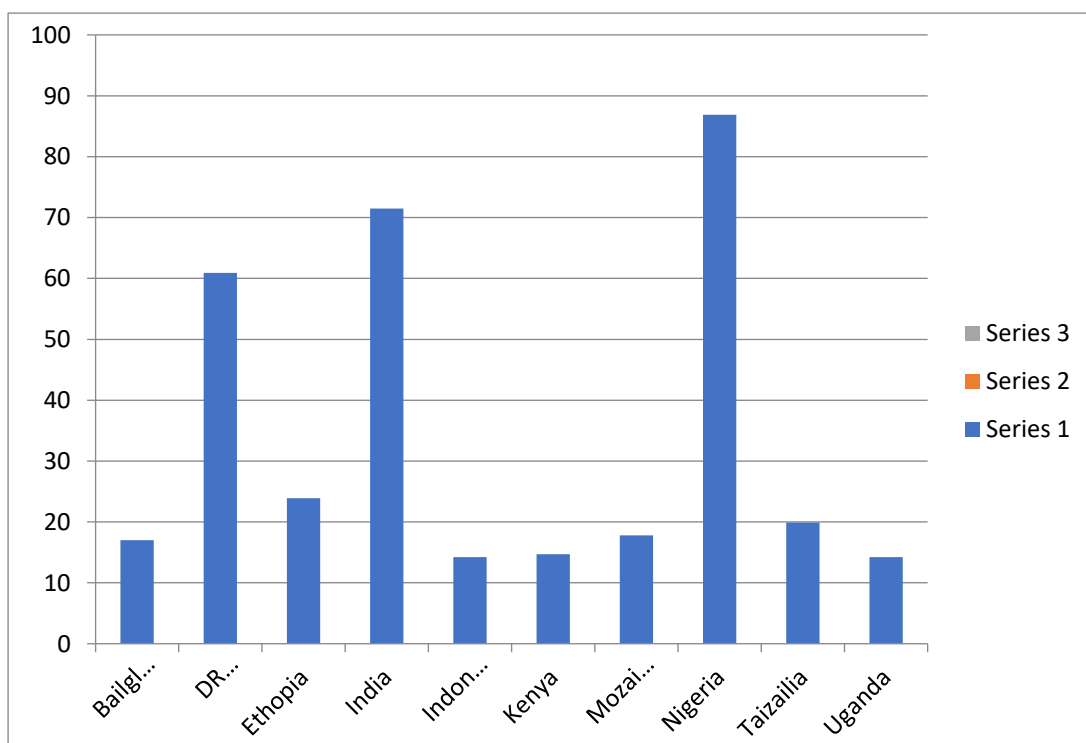


Figure 2.1: Top 10 countries of the world with citizens living in abject poverty (2018)

Source: Adapted from World Poverty Clock (2019)

The bar graph above projected by the world poverty clock 2019, shows the top 10 countries of the world, who have the largest percentage of their population abjectly poor in 2018. Among the listed countries above, Nigeria is taking the lead. She has the largest percentage of her population who are abjectly poor in 2018. India is the second in the list of countries with a highest percentage of her population who are abjectly poor, but India population is about five times Nigeria population. India population as at 2020, according to the world poverty Clock was 1.38 billion while that of Nigeria was 206 million people. Apparently, Nigeria and India have no basis for comparison considering the number of people living in abject poverty.

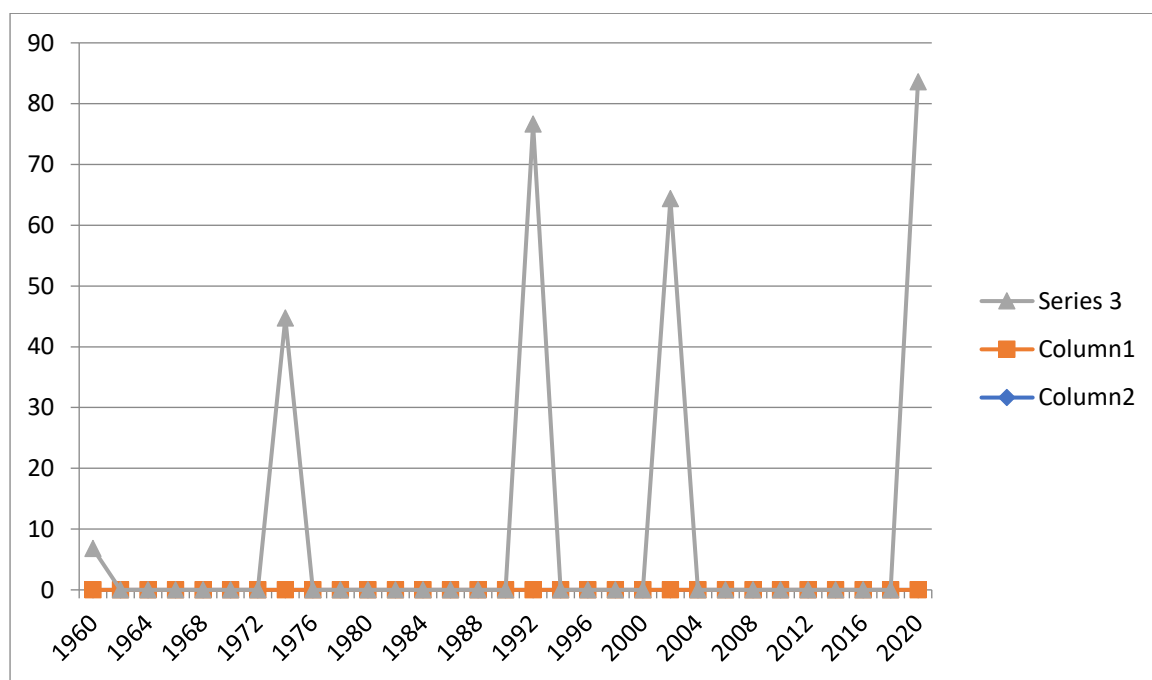


Figure 2.2: A Bar Graph Showing the Variation in Incidence of Poverty in Nigeria from 1960-2020

Source: Adapted from Afri Heritage Policy Brief (2019) 32.

The above bar graph shows Nigeria’s level of poverty, at the statehood of the country in 1960, which was 60.78%. It decreased to 44.7% in 1972-1976. This decrease was probably due to the oil boom in the 1970’s in Nigeria. It started rising again in 1980 to 1984 at 70.0%. It declined in 1990-1992 to 60.1%. Then in 1996, it rose to 79.60% and declined 52.60 in 2000-2004. This decline is attributed to laudable poverty eradication measures put in place by the government, such as NAPEP. It rose again in 2014 to the 83.60% in 2020.

Table 2.1: Incidence of Poverty in Nigeria, by State in 2019. From the Highest to the Longest Percentage.

SOKOTO	87.73%
TARABA	87.72%
JIGAWA	87.02%
EBONYI	79.76%
ADAMAWA	75.41%
ZAMFARA	73.78%
YOBE	72.34%
NIGER	66..11%
GOMBE	62.31%
BAUCHI	61.53%
ENUGU	58.13%
NASARAWA	57.3 %
KATSINA	56.42%
KANO	55.1%
PLATEAU	55.1%
KEBI	50.2%
KADUNA	43.5%
FCT, ABUJA	38.7%

Source: Adapted from Statistics, 2019.

Table 2.1 Continued

CROSS RIVER	36.3%
BENUE	32.9%
ABIA	30.7%
IMO	28.9%
KOGI	28.5%
EKITI	28.1%
AKWA-IBOM	26.8%
RIVERS	23.9%
BAYELSA	22.6%
KWARA	20.4%
ANAMBARA	14.8%
ONDO	12.5%
EDO	12%
OYO	9.8%
OGUN	9.3%
OSUN	8.5%
DELTA	6 %
LAGOS	4.5 %

Source: Adapted from Statistics, 2019.

Table 2.1 above reveals the percentage of poverty in Nigeria by state: it shows the states with the largest percentage of poverty in Nigeria to the lowest in 2019. Sokoto and Taraba had the largest on the list. They have the largest of their population who are down trodden and are abjectly poor in 2019. Delta and Lagos states had the lowest percentage of people who are extremely poor in 2019.

It is worthy of note to say that poverty is increasing astronomically in Nigeria, as shown in the table above amidst enormous mineral and human resources and amidst laudable poverty eradication measures of government such as NAPEP. The work shall therefore proceed to causes of poverty in Nigeria.

2.3 The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP).

In 1999, during President Olusegun Obasanjo administration, a World Bank report (1999), revealed that, the Human Development Index (HDI) of Nigeria was just 0.416 and that more than 70 per cent of the population, lived below the poverty line of US\$1 daily. This report warranted the administration to examine the existing poverty eradication institutions in the country, with the intent to harmonize them (Adamu et al 2019, Obadan (CBN Economic & Financial Review 39(4)). The federal government led by President Olusegun Obasanjo, inaugurated three presidential committees to look into the issues bordering on poverty, on ground. The first presidential committee was to rationalize and integrate all the Poverty Alleviation agencies in Nigeria, making them to work towards a common goal. The chairman was Alhaji Admed Joda. The second which was a Presidential Technical Committee, was to appraise or scrutinize all poverty alleviation Programmes in Nigeria with the aim of knowing whether they were in alliance with the original purpose of their initiation. This was chaired by Professor Ango Abdullahi. The last was the Committee scheme and the blue print for poverty eradication Programmes, chaired by A. B Aborishade. Consequently, NAPEP was set up based on the outcome of these reports. NAPEP came on board in the year 2001, by President Olusegun Obasanjo administration. It was a successor poverty eradication Programme, to the defunct poverty alleviation Programme (PAP).

NAPEP was meant to work with all the stakeholders who were responsible for poverty eradication in Nigeria. According to Eleagu, (2018), these include: the Federal, State and Local governments, civil society organizations, research institutions, the organized private sector, Women groups and concerned individuals. It was accompanied with a Policy making body known as the National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC). NAPEC was to make poverty eradication related policies while NAPEP was to implement these policies.

The broad objective of NAPEP was to ensure total eradication of poverty in Nigeria. To achieve this objective, NAPEP activities were classified into four schemes. They are:

- i. the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES).
- ii. the Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS).
- iii. social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS).
- iv. the National Resource Development and Conservative Scheme (NRDCS).

The Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) was saddled with the responsibility of training, skill acquisition, Empowerment opportunities and wealth creation. YES has sub-schemes like Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP), Mandatory Attachment Programme (MAP) and Credit Delivery

Programme (CDP). (Eleagu 2018, Adamu, et al 2019). Capacity Acquisition Programme was meant to expose Youths to skill acquisition to enable them establish business of their own. Participants of CAP were given a token of 3,500 Naira as monthly allowance aid through the duration of the Programme .

The MAP was given the responsibility of training graduates of tertiary institutions who had completed their NYSC. (b) Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS). This Scheme was saddled with the responsibility of providing portable and irrigable water, transport (rural and urban), rural energy and power supply. (c) Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS).

The responsibility of SOWESS was on general education, primary health care services, establishment of recreational centers, political awareness facilities, provision of mass transit and maintenance Culture. (d). National Resource Development and Conservative Scheme (NRDCS). This was known for responsibilities that border on environmental issues, land reclamation for agriculture, water, solid minerals resources and space (Eleagu 2018, Ebenehi et al 2012). There was also a sub-scheme known as the Multi Partner Micro Finance Scheme (MPMFS).

Gunman (2009), cited in Ebenehi et al (2012), contend that NAPEP collaborated with some Microfinance Bank under the aegis of the MPFS and gave micro credit loans to those who benefited from the Programme. This was aimed at increasing the capital base of NAPEP beneficiaries, culminating in the expansion of their businesses. It was under the aegis of the MPMFS, that Bayelsa State, the study area of this study, Oceanic Bank and the federal government went into partnership to fund NAPEP. Two Hundred Thousand Naira (200,000.00) was contributed by NAPEP national office, 1 Billion Naira was contributed by the Bayelsa State government and another 1 Billion Naira was contributed by Oceanic Bank, which made a total of ₦2.2 Billion.

NAPEP received a huge financial support through the national budget, for that year NAPEP came into being and in subsequent years of NAPEP operation in Nigeria. According to Sule, et al, (2018), NAPEP received a total of ₦34 Billion. ₦11.8 Billion of his amount, was gotten through the budget, ₦4 Billion went into the purchase of Keke- NAPEP. ₦10 Billion was contributed by States. Commercial Banks were meant to go into multi- partnership Programme and ₦8.2 Billion was gotten from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Despite this huge financial input into NAPEP, NAPEP did not make a significant impact (Adamu et al 2019). Eleagu (2018) contend that NAPEP could not make a significant impact, despite the huge financial commitment put into it by all sundries. This was because of the absence of financial discipline, Corruption and inconsistent policies which had undermined past efforts still makes poverty eradication in Nigeria a paradox (Ebenehi et al 2012 Kasikoro, 2021). NAPEP had a Policy guideline that made it an all inclusive poverty eradication Programme. The guideline includes the following:

- i. the implementation and monitoring of the Programme follows the bottom-top mode of participation.
- ii. it provides a rational framework that promotes sustainable institutional arrangement.
- iii. its actions are directly channeled at women, Youths, farmers and the disabled.
- iv. the Programme encourages inter ministry relationship and inter agency collaboration .
- v. participation of the Programme is open to all interested Political parties and traditional institutions.
- vi. it ensures the local industries acquire technological knowledge to enhance agricultural development.
- vii. it ensures building of capabilities for skills that are functional and creating avenues for the training of NAPEP participants.
- viii. it ensures local farmers benefit from agricultural and industrial extension services.
- ix. it offers institutional progression to ensure that agricultural and industrial products are marketed and
- x. it encourages collaborative efforts of various schemes toward youth engagement, Infrastructural development, availability of social amenities and exploitation of natural resources (Kasikoro, 2021).

National Poverty Eradication Program and Poverty in Bayelsa State of Nigeria

Generally, poverty has become a very daunting challenge in Nigeria, as successive administrations have tried in no little way to ameliorate its scourge in Nigeria, yet the poverty situation seems irreversible, as the incidence of poverty continues to increase. Our country is endowed with huge mineral resources, enough to take care of the whole of west Africa, with enough reserve for foreign exchange (environmental watch I (1) April 1998) cited in (Okolo, 2016). Myriads of anti-poverty Programmes have been put in place and implemented in Nigeria, right from the Statehood of the nation, yet results have been elusive, as more Nigerians get trapped in the web of poverty by the day. Olayinka (2019) cited in Chimere and Urama, (2019) contend that though successive administrations have initiated and implemented myriads of poverty alleviation Programmes, geared towards ameliorating poverty in Nigeria yet, more than 93 million Nigerians are still ridiculously sliding into the web of poverty, with another three million falling in and out of poverty.

The National poverty eradication Programme (NAPEP), was one of such past efforts of government to fight the scourge of poverty in this country. In the history of Nigeria, NAPEP was the first multi-dimensional approach taken by government to combat poverty, in that, all the ministries, parastatals, agencies of government, non-government organizations among others, were all mobilized, to ensure an effective poverty eradication in the country. This can be attested to by the work of Ebenehi et al ,(2012, Pp. 27–34), Eleagu, (2018, p. 105), Hussein, (2014, Pp. 717–720), Yisau, (2005, Pp. 69–

77), Sule and Adamu, (2019, Pp. 230–247), Sylvester and Ekpenyong, (2014, p. 54), Taiwo and Agwu, (2016, Pp. 18–30), Obadan, (2001, Pp. 13 – 19).

Poverty has taken its toll on different parts of the country and Bayelsa State in particular, despite NAPEP implementation. The Poverty situation has culminated in various dimensions of criminality in different locations of the country and Bayelsa State in particular, such as Sagbama, Swali, Otueke, Akasa, Okordia, Odi, Yenagua, Amassoma among numerous others. There has been experiences of various degree of crimes in the State such as kidnapping, hostage taking, sea piracy, armed robbery, among very many others at different times (Egbe, 2018)

Some of these people Involved in such criminality may not really have the intention to do such but poverty propelled them to do so. After engaging in the above Social vices they get ransom to fend for themselves and their dependants. Eleagu, (2018, p. 41) rightly contends that while interrogating the criminals, they own up to the fact that poverty necessitated their engagement in these dastardly acts of criminality, that if there were jobs available, they would not be involved in such acts. These criminals also admitted that they got involved in such act to fend for their families and their aging parents who could not fend for themselves again because of old age, retirement and health challenges (Eleagu, 2018).

Now, what becomes so worrisome is that NAPEP in Bayelsa State was a tripartite arrangement among the federal, state and non-governmental organizations such as Oceanic Bank. NAPEP in Bayelsa State was given ₦1 billion by the Bayelsa State government in conjunction with ₦1 billion from oceanic Bank plc and ₦200,000 from NAPEP National office in Abuja. The sum total of this amount is ₦2.2 billion in conjunction with the endowment of oil resources in the State. What impact did this gesture made in ameliorating the scourge of poverty in the State considering the fact that Bayelsa State is the smallest in terms of land mass and population?

Skills/business such as computer training and repairs, hair dressing, carpentry, tailoring, mechanic among others were acquired by participants of NAPEP, as part of the youth empowerment Scheme being the first NAPEP Scheme to be implemented in the State. Participants of NAPEP in Bayelsa state were also given start up loans for businesses and skills through a sub scheme known as the multi partner micro finance scheme. Oceanic Bank was fully involved in this partnership. Loans were given under the argis of cooperative society. This was to create room for self employment, thereby eradicating poverty. What happened to those skills/businesses acquired through NAPEP, poverty is still ravaging the State despite this huge finances invested into NAPEP in Bayelsa State. What are those factors that actually impeded NAPEP from achieving its aims and objectives of poverty eradication in Bayelsa State?

In order to fully grasp and appreciate the research problem, as it seeks to provide answers to the factors that impeded NAPEP from achieving its aims and objectives of poverty eradication in Bayelsa State.

We review relevant literature on the concept of poverty, incidence of poverty, causes of poverty, poverty and the

Some factors that impeded NAPEP from achieving its aims and objectives of poverty eradication in Bayelsa State include:

1. Lack of proper management of NAPEP activities in Bayelsa State.
2. Lack of proper supervision of the Programme by NAPEP staffs.
3. Lack of proper identification of the poor in the State.
4. Lack of timely payment of NAPEP staffs.
5. Some localities were left out of NAPEP activities and so NAPEP was not all encompassing.
6. Some of NAPEP poverty eradication schemes did not suit some of the localities considering the fact that most of the communities are in the riverine.
7. State coordinators were not active enough.

Although NAPEP made a level of impact in its attempt to eradicate poverty in the State but the impact wasn't significant enough as 57% representing 1,200,000 of Bayelsa State population are still living below the poverty line of US\$1:90, according to the world Bank standard (NBS, 2019).

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

Poverty is a daring challenge in Nigeria it has become an insurmountable mountain to successive administrations in Nigeria, as each of them have tried different measures to combat the scourge of poverty in Nigeria. However, the rate of poverty in Nigeria despite NAPEP, is unimaginably high as 5.14% of the Nigerian population are poor and an additional 16.8% are vulnerable to multi-dimensional poverty (UNDP, 2019). A numbers of factors as responsible for this seemly irreversible poverty situation of Nigeria such as unavailability of employment opportunities, deficiency in skilled man-power, market imperfection, mismanagement and discouragement of poverty alleviation programmes and inefficient leadership and government among other

It is therefore obvious that despite NAPEP and it's activities in Bayelsa State, poverty is still the identity of the state as there are very few surviving business skills acquired through NAPEP with which the poor should have made a living in all the three senatorial Districts in Bayelsa State. Although NAPEP made a little impact in the lives of beneficiaries during it operation but it is not commensurate will the expected result of poverty eradication in the state. It is thus, imperative to suggest that:

- i. the Bayelsa State government should properly partner with the federal government of subsequent poverty eradication programmes to make sure skills and business acquired through such programmes are sustained.
- ii. a competent and unbiased monitoring team should be put in place by the Bayelsa State government to make poverty eradication programmes are properly implement.

- iii. the poor should be properly identified in the implementation of sub-sequent poverty eradication programmes
- iv. poverty eradication schemes should suit the localities to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.
- v. fraudulent poverty eradication officials should be properly prosecuted to serve as a deterrent to other intending ones.
- vi. Bayelsa State government should provide adequate fund as start-up capital for participants of poverty eradication programmes to ensure sustainability.

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