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TOWARDS A NEW MODEL FOR POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA**DR. AHMAD SANUSI****LECTURER****DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION****USMANU DAN FODIO UNIVERSITY****SOKOTO****DR. AHMAD MARTADHA MOHAMED****ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR****COLLEGE OF LAW****GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES****UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA****SINTOK****ABUBAKAR SAMBO JUNaidu****RESEARCH SCHOLAR****GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT****UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA****MALAYSIA****ABSTRACT**

One of the major impediments to sustainable community development in Nigeria is the issue of poverty which has eaten deeply into the fabrics of Nigerian societies. Previous governments and non-governmental organisations within and outside the country have adopted different poverty reduction strategies but still their dream is yet to become a reality. Also, huge financial and technical assistance were given to agencies in charge of poverty reduction but all ended in fiasco without any fruitful outcome. The main objective of this paper is to critically examine how different poverty reduction strategies adopted in Nigeria impacted either positively or negatively on sustainable community development. Secondary source of data was used to get the much needed information in this critical appraisal. Finally, despite government bulk financial allocations to poverty reduction it is obvious that nearly all the strategies adopted failed at the stage of implementation. The paper recommended for adoption of community-based poverty reduction and green economy strategies so as bring poverty level to its lowest ebb.

KEYWORDS

Poverty, Community Development, Strategies and Policies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty has also been defined as the inability to attain a minimum standard of living (World Development Report, 1990). Ravallion and Bidani (1994) refer to poverty as a lack of command over basic consumption needs, that is, a situation of inadequate level of consumption; giving rise to insufficient food, clothing and shelter. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with over 150 Million people consisting of about 521 ethnic nationalities spread across its shores. It is the sixth largest exporter of crude oil and one of the twentieth poverty stricken nations in the world. More than sixty percent of its population lived in rural areas without the basic necessities of life (Abdullahi, 2010). Tokumbo (2007) argues that poverty is multidimensional characterized by lack of purchasing power, exposure to the risk malnutrition, high mortality rate, low life expectancy, insufficient access to social and economic services and few opportunities for income generation. Amotayo (1999) asserted that poverty is beyond lack of means or income deprivation. It is also the denial of freedoms and opportunities to command the necessary "entitlements" and capabilities to be able to lead a long creative and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to be able to have freedom, dignity and self-respect. This conceptualization also forms the basis for the human poverty index induced by the United Nations Development Programme.

Thus the poor are those who are unable to obtain an adequate income, find a stable job, own property or maintain healthy conditions. They also lack an adequate level of education and cannot satisfy their basic needs (Sancho, 1999). Again the poor are often illiterate, and have a very short life span. (World Bank 1995) They have no or limited access to basic necessities of life such as food, clothing and decent shelter. They are unable to meet social and economic obligations. They lack skills and gainful employments have few if any economic assets and some times lack of self esteem (Olayemi, 20002). Poverty has also been conceptualized in both the relative and absolute sense. This is generally based on whether relative or absolute standards are adopted in determining the minimum income required to meet basic life's necessities. However, the relative conceptualization of poverty is largely income based on ultimately so. What is most important to deduce from these definition is that poverty must be conceived defined and measured in absolute quantitative ways that are relevant and valid for analysis and policy making in that given time and space.

In Nigeria, the prevalence of both relative and absolute poverty is duly recognized and even mentioned in various National Development Plans of 1975 and 1980. However, concern for poverty scourge received a further boost during the 1975 annual conference of the Nigerian Economic Society (NES) and during the 1997 annual conference of the same NES. The 1976 NES Conference was devoted entirely sensitizing the nation to the poverty menace viewed that poverty existed when incomes or disposable resources were inadequate to support a minimum standard of decent living. While the 1997 Annual Conference was devoted to impact of structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) on poverty in Nigeria and different method of alleviating poverty in Nigeria (Tokumbo 2003).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

For Aigbokhan (2000) poverty is as a result of economic depression of this country. He argued that with the severe economic shocks that weakened the Nigerian economy during the early 1980s came real and perceived increases in the level of poverty in the country. Among the factors contributing to the shocks was the fluctuation of oil price, which is the country's main export and rises in real international interest rates that major underlying reason however was domestic policy mistakes. Economic reforms were introduced by the gov. of Nigeria by mid 1986 in a structural adjustment programme that include exchange rate devaluation, trade and financial reforms and budgets and monetary contraction, which further increased poverty level in Nigeria. The United Nations (2012) revealed that the causes of poverty in third world countries had variously been traced to among other factors like corruption, bad governance, debt overhang, unemployment, low productivity, burgeoning population growth, globalisation, unfocused government policies and lack of effective skills training.

Obayunwana (2005) believed that poverty is the product of greed on the part of some members of the society exercised to the detriment of others. He maintained that excessive greed on the part of a handful exercised to the detriment of the vast majority over an extended period of time explains the pervasive degrading conditions under which the vast majority of Nigerian people barely survived. Government is therefore the "missing link" between the anti poverty efforts and poverty reduction (Brown, 1999). In alleviating poverty Dudley (1975) sees poverty largely in the light of the need for personal growth in Nigeria, to him, the basic which any society should provide to its members, should include such things like food, clothing, shelter, education health, work and mobility. Dudley further provided some basic indicators of the state basic services especially in relation to the poor in Nigeria. Most of the discussion was at a national aggregate level other than showing the general adverse situation in the rural and urban areas, inequality potable water supply good nutrition and the host of others.

Steward (2008) opined that there is substantial under reporting in basic indicators especially in child-mortality, disease and morbidity. She also states that there is positive urban basic in government. Expenditure for basic services significantly inadequate income to meet basic food needs let alone basic services. Ogwumike (1991) and Odubogun (1999) studies termed poverty in Nigeria to be the inability of a house hold to provide sufficient income to satisfy its need for food, shelter, education clothing and transportation. Minimum standards for food are based on nutritional requirement in terms of salaries and protein consumption habit and customs are also allowed for in the selection of the food items to give the required national stock.

According to Ogwumike (2006) evidences in Nigeria showed that the number of those in poverty has continued to increase. For instance in 1980 the number had increased from 27% to 46%. In 1985, it then decline slightly to 42% in 1992 and witnessed a sharp increase to 67% in 1996. However, by 1999 when the civilian Government took over the mantle of leadership estimates had it that more than 70% of Nigerians lived in poverty. He further argued that, that was why the then government declared in November 1999, that N470 billion budgets for the year 2000 were to relieve poverty in the country.

In another related examination to show the trend of poverty in Nigeria Aigbokhan (2002:5) using the head-count index found that an increasing number of Nigerians were living in absolute poverty over the study period; 38% 1985, 43% in 1998 and 47% in 1999. Poverty is higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Thus the corresponding numbers are 32% 35% and 37% in urban areas, and 41% 49% and 51% in rural areas respectively. He further argued that the regional distribution of poverty is profiled at two major levels that are state and regional levels. Poverty tends to be lower in the Southern zone than in the Northern zone of the country but recent statistics showed that the reverse is the case. The incidence of poverty actually improved in the north particularly in the rural areas. Even so, the incidence of poverty is not uniform within the zones. The Prevailing development pattern whereby development projects leads to concentrate in urban communities to the neglect of the rural communities. The urban poor typically have wider opportunities both for skill acquisition and for income generation than their rural counterparts.

3. POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA: AN OVERVIEW

It is now widely recognized that poverty is a worldwide problem that affects billions of people across the world. In fact of the nearly six billion people on earth. 1.3 Billion make less than \$370 a year (i.e. about \$1 a day or about N250 a day) (CBN, 2003) most of the poor live in the developing world of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In Africa, over 200 million are within the poverty bracket (HDR, 2003).

Based on the above indices, it could be argued that poverty is mostly found in the developing world and this could be linked to heir status or position in the international division of labour. To say this is to believe that the conspiracy theories are not good ways to explaining events. For the maintenance of this circle the capitalist, through their agents, formulate policies that are amplified to be meant for the poor, while in reality they are formulated to enrich the very few and continue to nurture the majority into the poverty web. To strengthen the poor to accept these policies, they pump in money in form of aid and assistance to implement the policies and programmes of which poverty alleviation is inclusive.

Even though there was sufficiency in terms of food production as early as 1960 yet the country's per-capital income and social service are inadequate and that resulted to the severity of poverty of the vast majority of Nigerians (CBN 1998). However, the emergence of the oil boom, from the 1970s seems to have affected economic and social organizations, huge amounts of revenue were generated from the sales of oil at the international market. Its impact was felt in the areas of infrastructural development; improved social services increase in real wages and take home packages (Bandera, 1960). The non agricultural sector, thus, received considerable attention as a result of the boom. Consequently, the agricultural sector was adversely affected by neglect to the extent that its contribution to Gross Domestic product (GDP) decline sharply from 60 percent to 31 percent (CBN 1998). Because of this decline, farm workers began to migrate to cities in search of jobs and ever since Nigeria become a net importer of food.

This situation was further compounded when oil prices began to fall in 1982 poverty increased sharply between 1980 and 1986 average per capital income dropped from US \$370 to US \$260 (CBN 1998, 2003). This resulted in three major policy changes: The devaluation of the exchange rate, abolition of import licenses and the dissolution of the Agricultural Marketing Boards.

These changes in policy, however, benefited only a few individuals and groups, while the generality of the people continue to suffer from poverty, indeed, adverse effects were felt in the rise in prices of consume goods, poor employment generation as well as in the area of infrastructural development. Ever since then too, poverty has engaged the attention of successive administrations in Nigeria who have employed various poverty alleviation strategies to address poverty and unemployment. A brief examination of these programmes is as follows:

3.1 NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF EMPLOYMENT (NDE)

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was created in November 1986 to cushion specifically the effect of unemployment in the country following the global economic recession. The goals of the agency were the creation of employment through self-reliant strategy. The Directorate gave loans, trained unemployed and assisted small-scale- entrepreneurs in various ways. The directorate also articulated policies aimed at developing work programme with labour intensive potentials.

Ogwumike (1998) observed that poverty manifest itself in form of unemployment and underemployment, and therefore, the National Directorate of Employment programmes could be said to have poverty alleviation focus. He further demonstrated that the Directorate has four main programmes that not only created jobs, but also enhances productivity and income earning potentials of the youth and other beneficiaries. These programmes include: The Vocational Skills Development programmes (VSD), The Special Public Works Programme (SPW), The Small Scale Enterprises Programme (SSE), and the Agricultural Employment Programme (AEP).

Available data has shown that the directorate has achieved remarkable success in respect of the various programme nationwide some of which include the training of over seven hundred and sixty, seven hundred and eighty-three (776, 753) person (including the disabled) in the National open Apprenticeship scheme, one hundred and six, eight hundred and fifty four (106, 854) persons benefited from he resettlement scheme, the skill acquisition scheme had engaged fifteen thousand, three hundred and seventeen (15, 317) unemployment youths, the special public works programme has created jobs for over one hundred and fifty four thousand, nine hundred and ten (154, 910) persons (see Central Bank Annual reports, 1992, 1996, 1998, 2000).

Despite the above achievements, the directorate failed to realize its major objective of combating the menace of unemployment due to inadequate quality staff and food management of resources. Lack of commitment and inadequate funding from the stakeholders, among others, has also made it impossible or the directorate to cop with the demand of the beneficiaries.

3.2 DIRECTORATE OF FOODS, ROADS AND RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE (DFRRI)

The Directorate was established in 1986 with the aim of not only opening the rural areas, but also of improving the conditions of the poor. Rural areas therefore became the target of the directorate. It was meant to provide feeder roads, rural electrification, and potable water with toilet facilities for the rural dwellers. The programme which reportedly cost over N1.9 billion from 1986 to 1993 completed over two hundred and seventy eight, five hundred and twenty six kilometers (278-526) km of roads while about five thousand rural communities benefited from rural electrification programme (see CBN Annual reports 1992-1993).

The directorate similarly provided infrastructural facilities for the growth of agro-allied small scale enterprises in some rural areas. It has also contributed to the development and growth of agricultural production in rural areas (DFRRI 1997). However, it is noticeable that the directorate could not sustain the tempo with

which it started. Towards 1993 it was faced with so many constraints which include poor coordination due to variations in terms of needs and interest of various states and local government areas, rising cost of programme funding an inability of funding to keep with cost increase inefficiency of implementing agencies and limited organizational and other capacities for development activities at the grassroots level (CBN 1998).

3.3 BETTER LIFE PROGRAMMES (BLP) AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMME (FSP)

To complement DFFRI and NDE in curbing the menace of poverty particularly in relation to women to folk who lack the required educational skills, capital technology and managerial know-how to improve their productivity and income. Better life for rural women (BLP) and the family support programme (FSP) were essentially introduced to serve as poverty alleviation strategies that would stimulate economic activities and raise the level of productivity and economic power of the women the goals of the BLP include harnessing the potentials of the rural women in order to boost their economic activities and improving their income (CBN 1998) under the Family support Programme, soft-loans are provided to the rural populace for the establishment of cottage development projects in the areas of farming processing machine and tools fabrication in all parts of the country. In addition the two programmes organized cooperative societies for women to increase their access to credit, enhance their productivity and income earning opportunities. (Ogwumike, 1991)

Similarly, Community Based Organizations (CBO's) have also complemented the efforts of these programmes through the establishment of self-help projects. Regrettably the programmes were faced with series of problems which included hijacking of the programme by self seeking individuals likewise resources meant for the programme were also used for personal enrichment rather than the set objective.

3.4 PEOPLES AND COMMUNITY BANKS

Government, in its bid to fight poverty deem it necessary to create banks that would have a direct bearing to the generality of the citizens, in ways that would provide support services that are not provided by the conventional banks. For instance, the peoples Bank has established to provide access to credit for the poor who hitherto, were unable to obtain loans from the conventional banks engage in trading activities. The bank gives out loans to petty traders, food sellers and tailors, weavers, electricians and cobblers etc. indeed the target of the bank is the rural poor who constitute the largest segment of Nigerian population and as well provide over 70% of the revenue to both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors of the economy(Ogwumike, 2006).

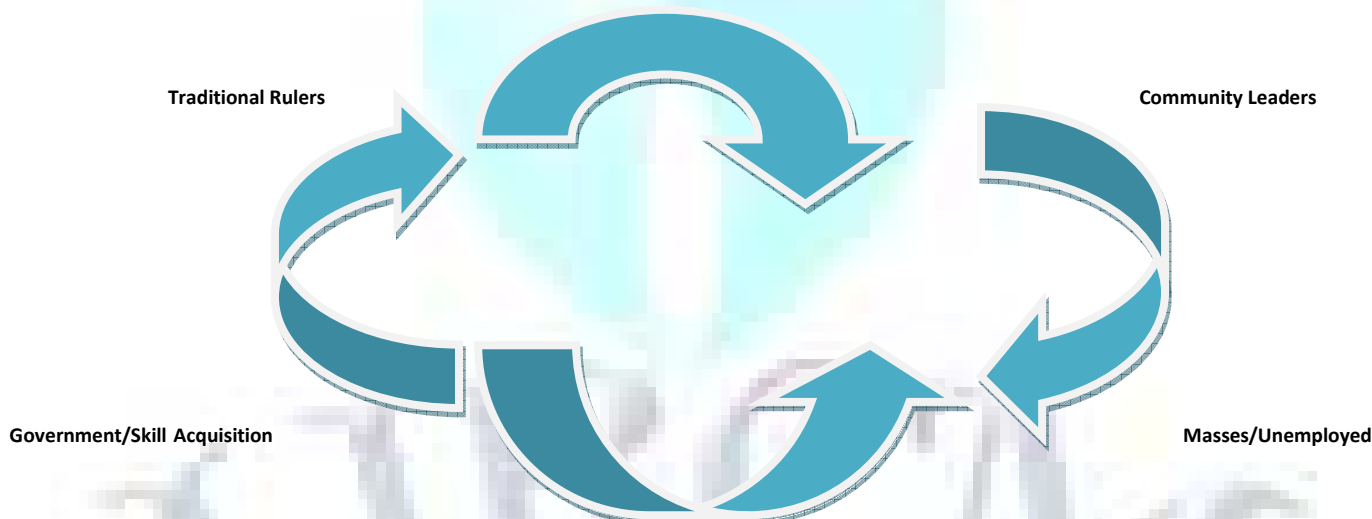
On the other hand, community Banks were established to address needs that are peculiar to a particular community. The banks provide credit and saving needs to small-scale producers who the conventional banks often neglect. The banks over the years, provides and promotes the activities of the rural poor particularly in areas such as Agriculture, commerce, arts crafts, agro and mineral based cottage and small scale industries, vocational and trade skills, transportation and other rural economic activities (CBN 1998). But in practical terms the essence of establishing such gigantic projects was defeated because the money meant for alleviating poverty was rechanneled towards primitive accumulation by privilege few.

3.5 THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (NEEDS)

This is a medium term plan for economic recovery, growth and development conceptualized by federal government in 2003 and it was launched in 2004. It was established in order to address some problems bordering on poverty, unemployment and general insecurity of life and property among others (IMF, 2007). It is an integrated and coordinated development approach anchored on empowering people and improving social delivery, enhance efficient and effectiveness of government as well as fostering public-private partnership for rapid growth and development of the nation. In order to achieve even development in our communities' states and local governments were encourage establishing complimentary organizations at their level. With these developments, State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS) were established in subsequent years. These initiatives failed to deliver the much needed dividend of democracy as most of the chief executives diverted the funds to other sectors where they will personally gain at the detriment of rural poor (Abdullahi, 2010).

4. NEW MODEL FOR POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA

FIGURE 1: MODEL FOR POVERTY REDUCTION



In the quest for reducing the poverty, the above model should serves as the cyclical path in which each and every group in the community became a stakeholder. The process start with the large army of unemployed youth and other vulnerable groups that were identified by the community leaders via the support of the traditional rulers, who in turn deal directly with the government and its representatives. This is so because in the previous programmes the target beneficiaries are completely neglected in favour of privileged members of the society. World Bank (2012) stated that poverty reduction strategies failed to achieved the desired result because the real beneficiaries are not properly identified and the funds set aside for that purpose were mismanage by agencies saddled with the responsibility of curbing penury and poverty especially in third world countries.

5. WAY FORWARD

On the way forward, adoption of green economy as workable solution in other countries with similar economic, social and political peculiarities with Nigeria seems to be a panacea to higher profile poverty in both urban and rural settings. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) defines a green economy as one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2006, a social protection and livelihood security scheme for the rural poor has invested heavily in the preservation and restoration of natural capital. It takes the form of a public work programme, guaranteeing at least 100 days of paid work per year to every household that wants to volunteer an adult member. Investment in 2010 amounted to over USD 8 billion, creating 3 billion workdays and benefitting 59 million households. Of these investments, 84 per cent was invested into water conservation, irrigation and land development, creating long-term livelihood opportunities for farmers (UNEP, 2012).

6. CONCLUSION

Despite concerted efforts made by the government, international donor and non governmental organizations no any tangible achievements can be seen in this direction. Poverty in our communities seems to have been more compounded as a result of frequent reversal of government policies and programmes. It is glaring to note that the above mentioned poverty alleviation strategies failed at the level of implementation due to selfish interest of those were assigned to spearhead such organizations. The propose model will serve as panacea toward sustainable poverty reduction in third world countries.

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