

**POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY
ALLEVIATION/ERADICATION PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA (1999 -
2004):
AN APPRAISAL**

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Abstract

This study critically evaluated poverty incidence and unemployment rate in Nigeria from 1999 to 2004; and the extent the poverty alleviation/eradication programmes affected the lives of the poor in Nigeria. The major objective of the poverty alleviation programme is to reduce absolute poverty amongst Nigerians. Content analysis method was used to generate data for this study. The structural functional analysis was used to establish the basic functions fulfilled by the political system, by what structure and under what conditions. The structural functional analysis exposed the defects of the structures and their zero-capacity to eradicate poverty and unemployment in Nigeria. The poverty alleviation programme has failed woefully to provide job opportunities for the teeming army of unemployed graduates; potable water; inadequate electricity, broad based development in education sector; poor healthcare delivery services and poor and faulty policies on agricultural development due to inconsistencies in her policies which are influenced mainly by political factors that serve the interest of the politicians. The benefits of the poverty alleviation programmes missed the target population. The major problems of Nigeria are inconsistencies in policies, lack of continuity of developmental projects, lack of vision and focus in policy formulation and execution, which have often led to serious contradictions. The government should review its policies to have functional education, agriculture, healthcare delivery services, transport system, employment opportunities and economy of the nation to move the country forward.

Introduction

Poverty in Nigeria as a social menace could be traced as a fundamental issue of legacy inherent from the British colonial administration. The incident of poverty has widened its gap from the rich and developed countries to unprecedented dimension following the economic restructuring programme in the country, which is on a dependency framework. Anugwom (2001) argues that poverty is a crucial

matter in Africa since its inhabitants not only began their independence from an extremely low level of economic and social development, but are the only people whose situation is expected to worsen in the coming years. Ugwuh (1988) observes that the Nigerian vicious circle of poverty has its origin from the colonial domination and control of all the means of wealth creation. He argues further that virtually all aspects of economic activity were reserved for the colonial masters, while the people of Nigeria had clear restricted roles to play in wealth creation. According to Ugwuh (1988), Nigerians were dehumanised, exploited and impoverished to the extent that no Nigerian was allowed to have direct access in exporting local agricultural produce to the foreign customers without going through middlemen in London, appointed by colonial administration in Nigeria. It was a practice that no native farmer got more money beyond the pre-set limits, just to cover the individual's immediate needs. Njoku (2001) argues that the economic forces that motivated the colonial masters in Nigeria were of two major purposes. According to him, as a colony, Nigeria was expected to serve as a source of cheap raw agricultural and mineral resources for British industries. Secondly, Nigeria was perceived as an assured and protected market for British manufacturers. Agricultural produce such as palm oil and kernels, cocoa, groundnuts, forest produce such as timber and minerals were direly needed by the British industries. The colonial agricultural policy was therefore centred squarely on production for export. To perpetuate poverty amongst the natives, Ugwuh (1988) argues that the colonial lords fixed prices of goods produced locally and determined whom the raw materials would be sold to, and determined also how much their finished goods (with our raw materials) would be sold to Nigerians. Nzimiro (1985) argues that the colonial regime defined for the country the path of development Nigeria should tow and also determined the goals and direction of changes; the rate of change; the source of change; how changes should occur, by whom and for whom changes were effected.

Nigeria, a country in bondage, struggling to free herself from the firm grip of poverty, had made several attempts by post-independence successive governments to ameliorate the harsh and inhuman conditions the poor are subjected to by design of colonialism. Since independence, the most critical issue facing the poor in Nigeria is the quality of governance. Corrupt regimes cannot combat the legacy of colonialism, which is poverty, corruption, mismanagement of resources and absolute break-down of service delivery to the masses. Adequate provision of primary health care service, access to universal basic education, provision of pipe-borne water, rural electrification and provision of feeder roads are some of the indices of good governance. These features should be seen as major contributory factors to eliminate poverty and promote sustainable development in the country. Nzimiro (1985) argues

that Nigeria has the inherent problems of underdevelopment due to the colonisation trauma the country went through. Colonialism never had in its blueprint any plan to develop Nigeria as a politically and economically sovereign nation. Fundamentally, there was no effort to groom the indigenous political activists on development strategies basically on how to harness the abundant human and material resources available for the development of the country. Colonialism imbued the characteristics of exploitation and dependency syndrome into the hands of native politicians who took over governance of the nation on securing political independence.

The need to develop rural areas in Nigeria has forced different regimes in the country to set up various poverty alleviation programmes to give both the rural people and the city-ghetto dwellers purposeful living standard and a new look. The objective of this study therefore is to establish the effect of the poverty alleviation/eradication projects on the lives of the rural populace.

Definition of Terms

According to Amaka for Kids (2007), there is no conceptual clarity as to the definition of who is poor and meaning of poverty; there is a nuance understanding of poverty particularly from the perspectives of people living in poverty. She defines a poor person as one who is in need or in want and has less than is necessary for survival and development. Such a person lives a substandard life, often miserable and hapless owing to uncertainties about procuring basic needs for survival or existence on this planet earth. Due to insufficiency of means of providing livelihood, is hardship for such a person described as poor. A state of poverty is characterised by food insecurity, lack of potable water, inadequate access to modern health facilities, inadequate access to education, feeder roads etc. The United Nations Development Programme (1994) defines poverty as that income level below which minimum nutritionally adequate diet together with essential non-food requirements are not affordable. Olaitan (2000) defines poverty as the scarcity of human basic needs, or the inability of an individual or society to acquire human basic needs for existence. Poverty should therefore be seen as the inability of a person or group of individuals to obtain the minimum level of income necessarily needed to purchase the basic necessities of life. If an individual does not possess sufficient materials needed for normal existence, that person is considered poor. Dogo (2001) observes that the features of poverty are lack of basic social amenities, malnutrition, diseases and ignorance. He further argues that the set-back resulting from the problems of policy inconsistencies, disharmonies, lack of focus and contradictions inherent in the rural development programmes in the country were as a result of political instability. According to the Poverty Reduction and the World Bank Report (1997), there is no

successful poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria; and the so-called poverty alleviation programmes were inefficiently managed to the detriment of the intended beneficiaries. The report also observes that federally sponsored programmes on the poverty alleviation have not been successful because they have failed to include the intended beneficiaries in the design and execution of the programmes. Dogo (2001) lends credence to the report as he agrees that the major problem with Nigeria is that her policies are influenced mainly by political factors, most often, not in the interest of the down-trodden the government portrayed to be representing. Therefore, it can be deduced that the characteristics of high rate of turnover in governance of the state, inconsistencies in policies and lack of continuity of programmes, lack of vision and focus in policy formulation and execution have led to contradictions.

According to Dogo (2001), successive governments in Nigeria abandon projects at will and set aside laudable programmes initiated by their predecessors and embark on politically motivated self-serving policies and programmes. This is a true reflection of the extent to which the machinery of planning, formulation and implementation of public policies has been divorced from the people. Development programmes and their objectives are being designed and possibly executed by people who are ignorant of the rural environment as well as problems facing the rural people. Dogo (2001) is of the view that government agents do not consider it necessary to consult the rural people on their aspirations, needs and priorities, and take advantage of the human and material resources or the constraints of the rural communities and involve the population in the design and implementation of the development projects. Palmer and Parsons (1983) observe that rural development programmes in Africa in general have tended to perpetuate rather than alleviate poverty. Dogo (2001) argues that the fundamental problem that tends to characterise rural development is that of contradictory policies, emphasis, aims and objectives of the programmes which have tended to negate and contradict certain development issues generally, and rural development issues in particular.

Therefore, there have been many failures than successes in the project designs and implementation of the poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria generally, and rural areas in particular. The crux of the rural problem is the issue of rural poverty.

Types of Poverty

The United Nations Development Programme (1997) classified poverty into three categories, namely, absolute poverty, relative poverty and material poverty. Similarly, Okeke (2001) identified three types of poverty as cyclical poverty, collective poverty and generalised collective poverty. These categories of poverty are briefly discussed hereunder.

Absolute Poverty

The absolute nature of poverty is defined as the inability to provide such physical subsistence like food, shelter, clothing, potable water health services, basic education, sanitation, employment, public transportation, etc., to the extent of being unable to protect human dignity. This stage depicts that people's income is meager and the capability to make savings are zero.

Relative Poverty

This means insufficient income to enhance active participation in the normal societal life, which limits the realisation of one's potentials in life.

Material Poverty

This means deprivation of ownership of physical assets like land, animal husbandry, natural minerals, cash crops, etc. (UNDP, 1997).

Cyclical Poverty

This refers to poverty that may be widespread throughout a population of a defined territory of political entity. Its characteristics are that the occurrence itself is of limited duration. This is specifically so in non-industrial societies where inability to provide for one's basic needs rest upon the temporary food shortage caused by natural phenomena or fundamentally poor agricultural planning.

Collective Poverty

This means a relative permanent insufficiency of means to secure basic needs of life. This condition describes the average level of life in a society or that which may be concentrated in relatively large groups in a prosperous society.

Generalised Collective Poverty

This usually relate to economic underdevelopment of a society. Implicitly, the total resources of many nations are insufficient to support the population adequately, even if they were equally divided among all the citizens (Okeke, 2001).

A society cannot be considered to be developed without the concrete indices of development at the rural areas as a manifestation. Naturally, a man that cannot feed his family or a country that cannot feed its citizenry cannot be said in any form to be economically viable. Development implies creativity, great freedom, increase skill and capacity. According to Rodney (1972), a developed society enjoys

economic independence, political stability, social development and sound cultural background. He observes that development is not catching up with the advanced countries or the procurement of artifacts, since under certain conditions the artifacts looked upon as development, in fact, emanated from development process, not development itself. Development can be seen to have occurred only when the artifacts are the end product of the efforts of the people to apply their creative energy to the transformation of the local, physical, biological and socio-cultural environments. The experience acquired in the process is passed on to the future generations, which would enable them to improve their capacities to make for further valuable changes in their inter-human relations and their ability to transform nature.

Appraisal of Poverty Alleviation Programmes

Poverty alleviation programmes are the initiatives of the federal government to alleviate the suffering of the masses. These are the economic measures designed by the government to improve the living conditions of the poor; and to provide social amenities, infrastructures necessary for good life, create job opportunities for the army of unemployed graduates roaming along the urban cities in the country. Aliyu (2001) observes that the Nigerian government claims that its developmental programmes are geared towards providing infrastructures and creating enabling environment for the benefit of all citizens. It also claims that to have recognised the size and character of the population of the youths and their inestimable importance to national development illustrates that the government has focus on how to empower the unemployed youths meaningfully and resourcefully. It also stresses that such recognition was manifested in the articulation of the national youth policy, national employment policy, creation of national poverty eradication programme (NAPEP) and the streamlining of the poverty alleviation agencies

These initiatives together with the on-going macro-economic policy reforms of the government over the years show no substantial improvement in the overall economic development situation in the country; unemployment rate and poverty incidence are on the increase since 1980 - 2004 as illustrated in the tables below.

Fig. 1: Poverty Incidence By States, Including Federal Capital Territory (1980 2004)

STATE	1980(%)	1985(%)	1992(%)	1996(%)	2004 (%)
Abia	14.4	33.1	49.9	56.2	22.27
Adamawa	33.4	47.2	44.1	65.5	71.73
Akwa Ibom	10.2	41.9	45.5	66.9	34.82
Anambra	12.8	37.7	32.3	51.0	20.11
Bauchi	46.0	68.9	68.8	83.5	86.29
Bayelsa	7.2	44.4	43.4	44.3	19.98
Benue	23.6	42.9	40.8	64.3	55.33
Borno	26.4	50.1	49.7	66.9	53.63
Cross River	10.2	41.9	45.5	66.9	41.61
Delta	19.8	52.4	33.9	56.0	45.35
Ebonyi	12.8	37.7	32.3	51.0	43.33
Edo	19.8	52.4	33.9	56.1	33.09
Ekiti	24.9	47.3	46.6	71.6	42.27
Enugu	12.8	37.7	46.6	71.6	31.12
Gombe	46.0	68.9	68.8	83.5	77.01
Imo	14.4	33.1	49.9	56.2	27.39
Jigawa	37.5	54.0	38.7	71.0	95.07
Kaduna	44.7	58.5	32.0	67.7	50.24
Kano	37.5	55.0	38.7	71.0	61.29
Katsina	44.7	58.7	32.0	67.7	71.06
Kebbi	25.4	45.8	37.9	83.6	89.65
Kogi	33.3	39.3	60.8	75.5	88.55
Kwara	33.3	39.3	60.8	75.5	85.22
Lagos	26.4	42.6	48.1	53.0	63.58
Nasarawa	49.5	49.5	50.2	62.7	61.59
Niger	34.0	61.4	29.9	52.9	63.90
Ogun	20.0	56.0	36.3	69.9	31.73
Ondo	24.9	47.3	46.6	71.6	42.14
Osun	7.8	28.3	40.7	58.7	32.35
Oyo	7.8	28.3	40.7	58.7	24.08
Plateau	49.5	64.2	50.2	62.7	60.37
Rivers	7.2	44.4	43.4	77.3	29.09
Sokoto	25.4	45.8	37.9	83.6	76.81
Taraba	33.4	47.2	44.1	65.5	62.15
Yobe	26.4	50.1	49.7	66.9	83.25
Zamfara	33.4	45.8	37.9	83.6	80.93
F.C.T.	-	-	27.6	53.0	43.32
All Nigeria	28.1	46.3	42.7	65.6	54.04

Source: The National Bureau of Statistics (2007).

The table illustrates the level of poverty in Nigeria as at the period (1980 2004). The era witnessed increase in poverty rate amongst Nigerians, although 2004 experienced decrease of 54.04 in poverty rate. The trend of poverty within the period had also been summarised in table two below:

Fig. II: Nigeria Trend In Poverty Level (1980 2004) (in %)

Year	Poverty Level (%)	Estimated Total Population	Poverty Population
1980	28.1	65 million	17.7 million
1985	46.3	75 million	34.7 million
1992	42.7	91.5 million	39.2 million
1996	65.6	102.3 million	67.1 million
2004	54.7	126.3 million	69.09 million

Source: The National Bureau of Statistics (2007).

As at 1996, the poverty level in Nigeria was 65.6 percent while poverty population stood at 67.1 million. This reveals the extent of poverty incidence in the country. The Nigeria poverty assessment of 2007 notes that there have been five national poverty surveys between 1980 and 2004, as we can see from the figure II, while poverty, incidence has reduced from 65.6 percent in 1996 to between 51.6 and 54.7 in 2004, the number of poor people has increased significantly from about 67 million to about 70 million people, using the absolute poverty index. The survey illustrates that the latest (2004) figure reveal a 20 percent point gap between the poverty incidence of the urban and rural households. While 43.1 percent of urban household are poor, 63.8 of the rural households are poor. This is a reflection of the disparities in the access to opportunities and infrastructures among the different households, as shown in the table below.

Fig. iii: Relative Poverty By Sector (urban And Rural)

Year	Urban	Rural
1980	16.2	28.3
1985	37.8	51.4
1992	37.5	46.0
1996	58.2	69.3
2004	43.1	63.8

Source: The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2007)

World Bank Report (1999) also reveals that Nigeria's human development index (HDI) was only 0.416 percent, which placed the country among the 25 poorest nations in the world. The report also placed Nigeria's life expectancy at birth at 51.7

years, while under 5 mortality rates is 184 per 1,000 live births. There is no record of maternal mortality in that report but national statistics show that maternal deaths represent approximately 23 percent of all deaths to women age 15-49 years. However, the data from the same survey estimating the maternal mortality ratio to be 289 per 100,000 live births is doubtful. Therefore, the generally accepted ratio is 600 per 100,000 live births; literacy rate at 44 per cent; while 70 per cent of the rural population do not have access to potable water, healthcare facilities, electricity, transportation, etc. The report stresses that no country can secure sustainable economic growth capable of reducing poverty incidence without healthy, well-nourished and well-educated people. In terms of income poverty, Nigeria ranked 58 out of 88 developing countries. About 70.2 percent of the Nigerian population, according to that report, lives on an income of \$1 (one US dollar) a day that is below the poverty line and the Human Development Index Ranking places Nigeria in 148 position out of 173 countries of the world rank in its 2000 report (Amaka for Kids, 2007). To buttress this point further, unemployment rate in the country from 1984 to 2004 is illustrated in the tables below.

Fig. IV: Registered Unemployed and Vacancies Declared (Lower Grade Workers) 1984-2004

Year	Old Registration	Fresh Registration	Re-Registration	Total	Vacancies Declared	Placement
1984	30,670	50,108	40,167	120,945	14,612	3,865
1985	27,926	36,039	32,615	96,580	11,156	2,139
1986	27,210	31,273	26,675	85,158	13,050	2,378
1987	33,967	79,718	31,399	145,084	16,502	4,988
1988	66,625	30,003	19,534	116,162	14,154	2,506
1989	52,737	26,128	7,190	96,055	14,052	3,474
1990	55,043	20,355	14,354	89,752	7,637	1,917
1991	77,769	19,896	12,848	110,513	14,529	2,924
1992	66,812	3,449	4,882	75,143	3,864	985
1993	69,463	2,492	3,432	75,387	3,735	1,251
1994	68,930	2,052	1,295	72,277	3,786	859
1995	76,658	3,085	1,990	81,730	4,182	1,119
1996	79,897	3,580	1,964	85,441	7,873	2,020
1997	81,546	3,099	1,187	85,832	7,831	2,134
1998	82,094	1,804	829	84,727	6,895	1,352
1999	82,313	2,584	1,127	86,024	7,313	1,611
2000	82,959	1,662	747	85,368	6,583	923
2001	83,388	2,006	527	85,921	6,264	1,856
2002	83,167	1,844	637	85,648	7,010	1,389
2003	112,968	18,871	11,645	143,484	2,889	2,005
2004	252,362	22,784	15,532	290,678	2,841	12,113

Source: Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity (2006).

Fig. V: REGISTERED UNEMPLOYED AND VACANCIES DECLARED (Professionals and Executives) 1984 2004

Year	Old Registration	Fresh Registration	Re- Registration	Total	Vacancies Declared	Placement
1984	706	1,324	484	2,514	657	26
1985	1,234	2,038	992	4,165	748	145
1986	2,295	2,329	1,499	6,123	606	148
1987	2,116	10,917	2,067	15,100	444	175
1988	9,031	3,646	3,616	16,293	591	281
1989	10,287	2,545	1,449	14,281	3,091	678
1990	6,436	2,853	893	10,182	3,695	986
1991	10,253	2,073	298	12,624	3,989	164
1992	21,324	744	138	22,206	3,088	10
1993	100,234	688	1,039	108,153	12,605	79
1994	27,191	657	275	28,123	3,307	8
1995	31,202	1,259	482	32,942	3,708	49
1996	66,235	673	344	67,252	250	91
1997	65,864	588	9	66,461	83	2
1998	99,133	243	-	99,376	38	15
1999	60,117	3,550	2	63,669	138	75
2000	194,588	372	-	104,960	115	110
2001	63,821	227	3	64,051	34	3
2002	93,471	1,167	25	94,663	121	102
2003	56,858	3,479	1,624	61,961	917	657
2004	79,686	6,383	1,662	84,731	617	510

Source: Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity (2006)

Unemployment is a perennial problem facing Nigeria right from colonial era. The above tables III and IV demonstrate the seriousness of this menace and the poverty level in the country. For the purpose of this study, inferences would be drawn from 1999 to 2004 to analyse the data generated. Table III illustrates that lower grade applicants who registered with the Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity in 1999 were 86,024; vacancies declared the same period were 7,313, while placement was 1,611. This figure represented 1.873 percent of the total registered applicants in 1999. This, in effect, indicates that 5,702 vacancies were

unfilled. Therefore, the number of unemployed registered applicants under this category within the year 1999 reduced to 84,413.

In 2000, unemployed registered applicants in the same category of lower grade workers were 85,368; vacancies declared were 6,583, while placements recorded were 923 and this represented 1.081 percent of the number in this category. This also reveals that 5,660 vacancies were unfilled and this figure pushed up the total registered unemployed in 2000 to 84,445. By 2001, the registered unemployed applicants under lower grade workers category were 85,921; vacancies declared for the period were 6,264, while 1,856 candidates were employed, and this represented 2.160 percent of applicants under this category.

In effect, the grand total of registered unemployed lower grade workers category from 1990 to 2001 was 257,313 jobless people; vacancies declared for the period stood at 20,160 out of which 4,390 placements were made and 15,770 vacancies existed unfilled. This figure represented 78.224 percent of the total vacancies declared for the period, while 21.776 percent of the total vacancies declared for the period were filled. This reveals that 252,923 applicants were thrown back into the labour market. The government failed grossly to provide/create jobs for the people.

As one can observed in table iv, the registered unemployed professionals and executives from 1999 to 2001 stood at 232,680 candidates and vacancies declared during the period were 287, while placements made within the period were 188, leaving 99 vacancies unfilled. The 188 applicants recruited out of 232,492 candidates represented 0.080 percent. 232,680 candidates were thrown back into the labour market. The poverty alleviation programme has failed woefully to create jobs for jobless Nigerians.

To redress the situation, the Nigerian government launched Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) with initial release of twenty billion naira (N20 billion) out of which N10 billion was released to the Federal Ministry of Works for creation of 200,000 job opportunities in the first instance. Besides, specific measures were employed to address the problems of low economic growth and high poverty incidence which included the provision of menial jobs aimed at engaging the poor into somewhat meaningful means of livelihood to cushion the effect of the harsh economic condition in the country. Each state Co-ordinator was mandated by executive fiat to engage the poor on menial jobs in their respective states. The table below illustrates the number of participants in each state.

Fig. VI: Poverty Alleviation Programme (Menial Jobs)

State	Participants Attached to Menial Jobs
Abia	5,016
Adamawa	5,800
Akwa Ibikom	5,006
Anambra	5,050
Bauchi	5,075
Bayelsa	6,025
Benue	6,025
Borno	6,900
Cross River	5,025
Delta	5,750
Ebonyi	5,350
Edo	5,040
Ekiti	7,050
Enugu	6,550
FCT	5,250
Gombe	5,025
Imo	5,050
Jigawa	5,050
Kaduna	6,202
Kano	11,100
Katsina	5,800
Kebbi	6,025
Kogi	5,050
Kwara	5,925
Lagos	10,025
Nasarawa	5,000
Niger	5,050
Ogun	7,000
Ondo	7,854
Osun	7,767
Oyo	6,050
Plateau	5,550
Rivers	7,025
Sokoto	-
Taraba	5,020
Yobe	5,025
Zamfara	5,050
Total	216,555

Source: National Poverty Eradication Council

According to Abdulasalami (2003), Rev. John Longhor, the Deputy Chairman of the House of Representative's Committee on National Poverty Eradication Programme, argues that the ₦20 billion released for the programme was diverted to individual pockets. He observes that the programme was an emergency scheme introduced by the government to alleviate the people's suffering. The implication of this assertion is that the objective of the programme was not clearly defined. There was no articulated and coordinated research to establish the needs of communities, and how best the money could be channeled to attain such needs. It was a total aberration. The first two years of the programme was a disaster, it was characterised by misappropriation of public funds meant for the scheme. Abdulasalami (2003) argues that the ₦10 billion initial released could not be accounted for till date. In contrast, Aliyu (2001) states that the scheme had provided jobs to about 214,367 people, who were being paid monthly stipend of ₦3,500. Isa (2003) argues that the scheme missed the target population (the poor masses) who are in dire need of that ₦3,500. He states that most of the beneficiaries of the programme were the children, relations, in-laws, friends and loyalists of the Coordinators of the programme in each state, and party stalwarts also benefited. Besides, he states that most of the names listed for the scheme were fictitious.

As the menial jobs creation failed completely, the Federal Government initiated a new scheme, i.e., the Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP), Mandatory Acquisition Programme (MAP) and Community Development Programme (CDP) to permeate into the rural areas, under the National Poverty Eradication Commission (NAPEC). Resources of all NAPEC agencies were pooled into a common coffer Poverty Eradication Fund and the sum was allocated to all state's Coordinators as illustrated below.

Fig. VII: 2001 Fund Allocations to the States for CAP, MAP and CDP

State	Projected Population 2001 (NPC)	Allocation for CAP N	Allocation for MAP N	Allocation for CDP N	Total
Abia	2,511,225	78,819,412	78,818,412	78,819,412	218,358,235
Adamawa	2,758,076	75,992,390	75,992,390	75,992,390	227,977,171
Akwa Ibom	3,161,229	81,174,453	81,174,453	81,174,453	243,523,359
Anambra	3,669,218	87,704,057	87,704,057	87,704,057	263,112,171
Bauchi	3,755,044	88,807,253	88,807,253	88,807,253	266,421,759
Bayelsa	1,471,758	59,458,280	59,458,280	59,458,280	178,374,841
Benue	3,599,155	86,803,481	86,803,481	86,803,481	260,410,444
Borno	3,327,456	83,311,107	83,311,107	83,311,107	249,933,321
Cross River	2,508,180	72,780,267	72,780,267	72,780,267	218,340,802
Delta	3,398,949	84,230,066	84,230,066	84,230,066	252,690,197
Ebonyi	1,907,619	65,060,763	65,060,763	65,060,763	195,182,288
Edo	2,849,859	77,172,155	77,172,155	77,172,155	231,516,465
Ekiti	2,015,090	66,442,169	66,442,169	66,442,169	199,326,508
Enugu	2,788,273	76,380,546	76,380,546	76,380,546	229,141,638
Gombe	1,953,854	65,655,064	65,655,546	65,655,546	196,965,191
Imo	3,261,369	82,461,633	82,461,633	82,461,633	247,384,899
Jigawa	3,772,938	89,037,263	89,037,263	89,037,263	267,111,788
Kaduna	5,163,872	106,916,097	106,916,097	106,916,097	320,748,291
Kano	7,623,840	138,536,123	138,536,123	138,536,123	415,608,370
Katsina	4,924,436	103,838,425	103,838,425	103,838,425	311,515,274
Kebbi	2,714,938	75,426,339	75,426,339	75,426,339	226,279,016
Kogi	2,818,644	76,770,928	76,770,928	76,770,928	230,312,785
Kwara	2,031,651	66,655,044	66,655,044	66,655,044	199,965,131
Lagos	7,511,848	137,096,599	137,096,599	137,096,599	411,289,796
Nanarawa	1,532,355	60,237,173	60,237,173	60,237,173	180,711,518
Niger	3,177,324	80,381,340	80,381,340	80,381,340	244,144,027
Ogun	3,062,043	79,899,534	79,899,534	79,899,534	239,698,603
Ondo	2,951,733	78,481,631	78,481,631	78,481,631	235,444,893
Osun	2,831,671	76,938,367	76,938,367	78,938,367	230,815,102
Oyo	4,530,269	98,771,872	98,771,872	98,771,872	296,315,617
Plateau	2,761,334	76,034,267	76,034,267	76,034,267	228,102,801
Rivers	4,182,754	94,304,968	94,304,968	94,304,968	282,914,903
Sokoto	3,145,072	80,966,773	80,966,773	80,966,773	242,900,320
Taraba	1,984,089	66,043,692	66,043,692	66,043,692	198,131,075
Yobe	1,836,511	64,146,745	64,146,745	64,146,745	192,440,235
Zamfara	2,716,250	75,454,774	75,454,774	75,454,774	226,364,321
F.C.T.	487,668	46,808,951	46,808,951	46,808,951	140,426,853
Grand Total	116,696,691	3,000,000,000	3,000,000,000	3,000,000,000	9,000,000,000

Source: National Poverty Eradication Council

On the strength of the fund allocation to the state coordinators, unemployed youths amongst the secondary school leavers were recruited in each state to participate in the capacity acquisition programme to acquire new skills for self-employment; and the mandatory attachment programme was also organised for unemployed graduates to acquire experience through on-the-job training.

The training involves 132,605 youths (drawn from the secondary school leavers' population), and 12,273 registered centres were used in training the participants under the capacity acquisition programme. The mandatory attachment programme was purely designed to equip unemployed graduates for job challenges, and 35,235 graduates participated in the scheme, while 1,882 institutions were said to have been registered and used in training the participants. In spite of all these claims, it is obviously clear that the number of beneficiaries and the centres registered for the programme are all imaginary figures calculated to misappropriate public funds. Neither CAP nor MAP has offices in rural areas, and in cities where they supposedly exist, there are window dressing-like structures that work for the interest of the politicians. The scheme recorded no success in any part of the country because the situation on ground has worsened. The poverty rate in the country is obviously higher now than what the government inherited from past regimes, in spite of their false assertions.

The actual expenditure of Federal Government to the ministries and parastatals reveals that the total sum allocated to poverty eradication fund from 1999 to 2002 was ₦1021.868 billion, representing 61.042 percent of the total capital expenditure for the period. The Federal Ministry of Power and Steel and its parastatals received the highest allocation of ₦153.475 billion, followed by the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing that got ₦134.378 billion, which represented 21.543 percent. The Poverty Alleviation Programme and the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) received ₦17.000 billion which represented 2.725 percent of the total allocation for the period under study. Details of the entire allocations to ministries, parastatals, agencies, commissions etc. are illustrated in the table below:

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Fig. VIII: Actual Expenditure of Federal Government to Ministries and Parastatals (1999-2002)

S/No	Ministry/Parastatals	1999 Nb	2000 Nb	2001 Nb	2002 Nb	Total Nb	% of Total Expen diture
1	Power and Steel	6.698	49.785	70.927	26.065	153.475	24.605
2	Works and Housing	8.498	29.234	52.367	44.279	134.378	21.543
3	Water Resources	1.512	19.496	34.248	18.020	73.276	11.747
4	Education	6.240	29.541	22.556	6.814	59.151	9.483
5	Finance	2.740	41.595	1.972	1.999	48.306	7.744
6	Health	2.750	7.583	16.466	5.625	32.424	5.198
7	Agriculture and Rural Development	3.605	10.441	11.331	2.080	27.457	4.402
8	Sports and Social Development	0.895	0.688	13.074	10.256	24.913	3.994
9	Industry	2.146	5.142	10.068	3.407	20.763	3.329
10	Poverty Alleviation Programme and NAPEP	-	10.000	5.000	2.000	17.000	2.725
11	Women Affairs and Youth Development	1.017	0.116	0.436	9.091	10.710	1.717
12	National Planning Commission	0.119	0.920	1.284	4.435	6.758	1.083
13	Science and Technology	0.709	0.330	1.169	2.339	4.547	0.729
14	Solid Minerals Development	1.133	0.447	1.788	0.981	4.349	0.697
15	Culture and Tourism	0.680	0.128	1.135	0.010	1.953	0.313
16	Communication	0.569	0.740	0.239	-	1.548	0.248
17	Labour and Productivity	0.338	0.104	-	1.068	1.510	0.242
18	Environment	-	0.870	0.380	-	1.250	0.200
	Total Budgeted and Released	39.649	207.210	244.440	132.469	623.768	100.00
	Total Actual Fiscal Expenditure	109.685	249.049	413.352	249.782	1021.868	
	Percentage of Actual Release	36.148%	83.200%	59.136%	53.034%	61.0042%	

Source: Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (Federal Ministry of Finance)

These allocations, particularly the power and steel sector, works and housing and water resources have no corresponding reflection/impact on the lives of the masses. The scheme failed woefully to provide electricity due to incessant load shedding and frequent outages occasioned by low electricity generating capacity and accelerated rate of urbanisation which have increased the demand for electric power, pipe-borne water, shelter and good roads net-work. Agriculture and rural

development were somewhat neglected and relegated to the background. Greater percentage of the total allocation to the various ministries and parastatals was misappropriated by individuals through inflated contract awards to fictitious construction companies. Unemployment rate has increased astronomically, school fees and hardship have generally forced students out of school and the poverty alleviation and/or eradication programme is a total waste of scarce resources, an anti-people programme, a negative service to enrich the rich richer and impoverish the poor poorer and an aberration of a poverty alleviation programme.

Constraints to Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Nigeria

The poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria are ill-motivated. The people are alienated from the projects meant to serve their interest. The native populace are not consulted on their areas of need and prioritise the project design being executed to reflect the needs and aspirations of the people. Therefore, projects executed under the poverty alleviation programmes suffer serious setback in various aspects. The executors of the poverty alleviation projects in rural communities do not avail themselves of the abundant human and material resources available in the localities they are designated to operate. The government agencies would have been able to achieve the objectives of the government through adoption of participatory roles of the rural population, who would in turn prioritise their needs, aspirations and values.

Secondly, the poverty alleviation programmes have been experiencing serious constraints, ranging from misappropriation of funds meant for the project; inadequate funding as illustrated in figure ix above, the poverty alleviation programmes was allocated ₦17,000 billion from 1999 to 2002. This allocation represented 2.725 percent of actual Federal Government expenditure to ministries and parastatals; the programme has suffered setback through untrained personnel. Recruitments were made through ad-hoc arrangements. The employees did not receive formal training, rather appointments were made through (nepotism) handpicked Coordinators' relatives, friends and loyalists. The ultimate success of any mobilisation programme is the extent to which it succeeds in re-orientating and shaping the attitudes and behaviours of the target population in the direction of the objectives of the government. The scheme was launched against a background of largely illiterate population, who knew nothing about the programmes, as such, could not effectively be reached for consultations on their needs and participatory roles required of them. The entire concept of poverty alleviation programmes sounded to the illiterates as mere abstract ideas that cannot be actualised. Stark illiterate population, uninformed people in the rural communities, they cannot read nor write, and cannot, therefore, understand the government projects being talked about.

Another major constraint to the scheme is the problem of accessibility to rural areas. Some rural areas are not accessible due to their poor topography. Some

villages are not motorable, while others are too far away from the urban cities. The hand-picked employees of the National Poverty Eradication Programmes exhibited *laissez faire* attitudes towards the execution of the projects. The scheme experienced blunt rejection of assignment into such inaccessible areas, such as river-rine areas, mod-soil areas, cave-like villages, flood/erosion ridden areas, etc. Political instability, which is endemic and unpredictable disease in Nigeria, has frustrated consolidation and continuity of the programme. Similarly, irregular payment of staff salaries and allowances dissuades the work force from putting in their best. Some withdrew their services due to lack of incentives. Fear of change amongst the natives due to the fact that social change would threaten their social status in their communities. The persistence of certain traditions, cultural values, religion, attitudes and beliefs act as inhibitors to modern changes and developments. For instance, the immunisation of children against the six childhood-killer diseases, being executed by the government, was seriously resisted in some Northern Moslem states. This trend halts the benefits of the poverty alleviation programmes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Poverty, unemployment, increase in illiterate population, poor healthcare delivery system, poor governance, corruption, rural underdevelopment etc are the perennial problems threatening the fabrics of Nigeria as a nation. No regime has ever genuinely embarked on any poverty alleviation programme to ameliorate the sorry state of the poor. Nigeria is suffering from crisis of development which is predicated on corruption. A country like Nigeria living below acceptable standard of living is facing absolute poverty. Nigeria should firstly fight vigorously the war against corruption thereafter face the war against poverty and unemployment. Unless corruption is fought to stand-still and reduced to negligible proportion, no meaningful progress would be made in our march towards a developed nation. How can a country talk about poverty alleviation and/or eradication scheme, talk less about general development when budgetary allocations to ministries and parastatals are hardly released and the released ones are quickly misappropriated and/or mismanaged through fictitious contract awards, over costing of goods and services and total siphoning of the nation's treasure; a nation where the leadership is deeply involved in corrupt practices and has no regret in championing corruption. Nigeria, a nation besieged by corrupt elements, has not started its journey to the promised land.

The government should firstly fight seriously against corruption to kneel down for general development to take place in Nigeria. Poverty alleviation projects should be carried down to the rural communities in consultation with the people of the area. There is need for consistencies and continuity in policies and developmental projects. The government should wear human face in reviewing its policies to have functional education, agriculture, health-care delivery services, transport system, employment opportunities and economy of the nation, etc. to carry the people along in moving the nation forward.

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