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NATIONAL POVERTY ERADICATION PROGRAMME AND
POVERTY REDUCTION IN MAKURDI LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREA OF BENUE STATE

FACULTY: Social Science

DEGREE: Psychology (B.Sc)

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the impact of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and Poverty Reduction in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue

State. Specifically, the study examined the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents; investigated the relationship between income from NAPEP, enhancement of NAPEP on human development and skills acquisition, Examined the targeted goal by NAPEP and Urban development in Makurdi Local Government Area. In the course of achieving these objectives, the study employed questionnaires, interviews, observations on respondents comprising of job creation of NAPEP. A total of 140 respondents were involved in the study. The study found that in spite of the problems of poor implementation and financial management practices, inadequate provision of fund by government, inadequate infrastructural facilities, financial constraint and problems of market failure of NAPEP programmes; determine result to the failure of NAPEP in Makurdi Local Government Area. It was recommended that there is need for infrastructure and government funding of NAPEP programmes and ensure proper implementation of this programmes to reduce poverty in Makurdi Local Government. Government has to take quick action to improve facilities such as roads and work conditions because these infrastructures are also central to NAPEP operations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Tackling poverty which is endemic in most developing countries including Nigeria represents a major development challenge for national, sub-national and local government authorities. Events and official statistics have continued to confirm the rising incidence of poverty. Consequently, poverty reduction has received increased focus in development planning among policymakers and is now one of the yardsticks for the measurement of success of development policy (Aigbokhan, 2008). In Nigeria, like most developing countries, poverty is pervasive. Official statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics in 2007 indicates that the incidence of poverty increased sharply between 1980 and 2006 (from 28.1 per cent to 54.4 per cent), 2011 indicates that the incidence of poverty increased sharply between 1980 and 2008 (from 28.1 per cent to 61.0% per cent). More worrisome, is the accompanying increase in the absolute number of the poor in Nigeria since the last decades.

Poverty in Nigeria is not borne out of lack of resources but that of mismanagement of resources (Onwuemele, 2010). Nigerian poverty scenario is unique in the sense that it has geographic, socio-economic and demographic dimensions. The incidence of poverty rose sharply from 1980-85 and declined from 1985- 1992 and increased again sharply from 1992-1996 and decrease again in 2004. Geographically, over a 24-year period, the incidence of poverty was higher in the rural than urban areas. Similarly, the incidence of poverty was generally higher in the northern States than the southern part of the country over the period.

Successive governments in Nigeria have enunciated plethora of poverty reduction programmes aimed at checking the rising trends in poverty levels. According to Oyeyomi (2003), no Nigerian government, be it military or civilian, has come without introducing and leaving behind one form of poverty alleviation or reduction programme meant to reduce the level of poverty, give hope and succor to the poor and, or move towards some sort of wealth creation. Paradoxically, poverty growth rate in Nigeria seems to outpace the rate of governmental activities with respect to poverty reduction. The continuous increase in the incidence of poverty in Nigeria is not a serious problem but also only an indication of the failure and decay of the existing framework for poverty reduction and therefore, requires a total overhauling. Poverty in Nigeria is manifested by poor access to social services such as good roads, potable water supply, stable electricity, quality healthcare, education, among other social services. The absence of these basic social services debilitates the productive capacity and potential of the people plunging them into deeper abject poverty. The core function of governments' at all levels (Federal, State, Local government) is to provide social services. Effective access to functioning and well-equipped social services is a prerequisite to improving the quality of life and for poverty reduction. According to Narayan (2000), poor people maintained that water, education, healthcare and personal security are among their highest priorities and expanding inclusive social service delivery in these areas is critical to poverty reduction. The delivery of basic social services has the potential to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and increase economic opportunity. Therefore, social service delivery interventions can provide an entry point and trigger for longer-term pro-poor social, political and economic change in Nigeria. Education, for instance can be a powerful intergenerational change agent by giving those who are exposed to it a greater understanding of issues, as well as confidence to participate in political discussion,

policy formulation and implementation. Women's literacy also has the potential to be a powerful tool for social and political change if approached in the right way. Similarly, healthier and better-educated individuals are more likely to be able to build their livelihood opportunities, contribute to long-term economic growth, and protect themselves from economic shocks (Berry, Forder, Sultan and Moreno-Torres, 2004).

Thus, poverty growth rate in Nigeria seems to outpace the rate of governmental activities with respect to poverty reduction. Nigeria has a population of over 150 million, the largest in sub-Saharan African countries. Although not a large country in the general context of Africa, Nigeria's 923,769 km² is quite endowed with abundant natural and human resources. It has huge agricultural resource base. The agriculture sector employs about two-thirds of the country's total labour force and provides a livelihood for about 90 per cent of the rural population (IFAD, 2009). Nigeria is currently the world's largest producer of cassava, yam and cowpea – all staple foods in sub-Saharan Africa. It is also a major producer of fish (IFAD, 2007). The country is also blessed with large deposits of crude oil and gas. It also has a sizeable educated and skilled workforce.

Despite Nigeria's plethora of human, agricultural resources and oil wealth, poverty is still a challenge in the country. According to Oyemomi (2003) Nigeria is ranked among the 25 poorest countries in the world. At independence in 1960, the poverty level was barely 15% and is today struggling to bring it down from about 61% of its current teeming population of over 150 million (Oyemomi, 2003). Of the number of the poverty stricken people, about 73% is concentrated in the rural areas where social services such as potable water, health facilities, access road and electricity infrastructures are either unavailable or ill-managed (Oyemomi, 2003). Even in areas where these facilities are available, it constitutes a town of political

settlement for what they (government in power) term "as a harvest of your support".

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s 2002 Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.461 summarily demonstrate the intensity of poverty in Nigeria. Nigeria's poverty has been described as a paradox from two main perspectives. Firstly, the poverty level appears as a contradiction considering the country's immense wealth. Secondly, poverty situation has worsened despite the huge human and material resources that have been devoted to poverty reduction by successive governments in Nigeria with no substantial success achieved from such efforts (Oyeranti and Olayiwola, 2005). Poverty incidence in Nigeria is highly correlated with size of household. In other words, as the size of households increases, the level of poverty increases in similar direction. Poverty incidence also increased consistently with the age of the head of the household, reaching a peak and then dropping slightly for the higher ages. The peak was 55-64 age bracket for the years 1980, 1985 and 1992 but 45-54 years age group for 1996 (NBS, 2009). Poverty far from being a condition in which a person or people cannot afford the basic material necessities, without which life becomes virtually unlivable, is a multidimensional and multifaceted phenomenon. Politically, it goes back beyond income inequality as it includes rights, power relations and access to and distribution of resources. Socially, it involves the question of human dignity, social relationships and opportunities. Thus poverty has become a social reality and a global affliction which virtually seems to have defied a permanent solution. This is why Onah (2006:314) emphasized that: The issue of poverty has provoked concerns and debates among scholars and organizations in the world. It has become an issue of global interest. It is a socio-economic epidemic affecting majority of the people in the world, including Nigeria.

Poverty as the Central Bank of Nigeria (2004) and World Bank (1991) stressed is one of the symptoms and manifestations of underdevelopment. Nigeria's poverty rate over the years has continued to grow unabated. According to the United Nations Reports (1999-2001) Nigeria's Human Poverty Index (HPI) was 41.6% which places the country among the 25 poorest nations in the world. The HPI for some other African countries as indicated in the reports indicated that Zimbabwe, Botswana, Kenya Burkina Faso and Niger has 17.3%, 22.9%, 26.1%, 58.3% and 66.0% respectively. Additional data from the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS, 1999) cited in Nwatu, (2006:295) further indicated that the life expectancy for Nigeria was 51 years, literacy rate was 51% and 70% of the rural population do not have access to potable water, healthcare facilities and electricity. The adult illiteracy rate for Nigeria is also increasing at a galloping rate while the infant mortality rates for Nigeria were 82 and 191 by 1995 Soludo (2004:12).

Although, poverty in Nigeria has colonial inducement but there are still no holistic policy approach to tackle the problem in the post-colonial era. Despite of the above, the Nigerian state through her government has expressed determination and effort at uplifting the living conditions of Nigerians, especially the poor. All of Nigeria's National development plans since 1970, have emphasized poverty eradication as a key area of every government in power. Since 1970, Nigerian governments-military and civilian rules have created virtually tantalizing array of policies, plans, programmes and projects to eliminate poverty. These include, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN); Green Revolution (GR), Directorate for Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI); National Directorate for Employment (NDE); Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP); Go Bank to Land Programme (GBLP); Better Life for Rural Women Programme (BLRWP); Federal Urban Mass Transit Authority (FUMTA), Nigerian Agricultural Corporative and Rural Development Bank (NAPCRDB); National Poverty Eradication Programme

(NAPEP), Community Based Poverty Reduction (CBPR), and others which billions of naira and dollars have been invested in by both governmental and non-governmental agencies especially the donor agencies such as World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations Children's Fund, International Development Association, among others.

Apparently, these policies, plans, programmes and projects initiated by the government as its efforts to reduce poverty have explicitly failed to in their objectives to reduce poverty as it is more evident that poverty is still a chronic national problem. It is against this background that the researcher wish to assess the effects of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) on poverty reduction in Makurdi metropolis. Makurdi Local Government Area is geographically located at the North-Western part of Benue State. It is bounded by Guma Local Government Area to the North, by Gwer-East Local Government Area to the South, and Gwer-West Local Government Area to the West.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Poverty has indeed become a pandemic national disease with symptomatic effects of high unemployment rates, poor health care, poor accessibility to water, food, housing, low human development, low per capita income, and poor infrastructural development. This has no doubt made poverty alleviation programme a recurring decimal in Nigeria's public policy either in the military or the civilian rule as no administration has come to power without initiating a poverty alleviation package. In contrast, there is no empirical evidence or justifications to show for the enormous resources put into these programmes, as the rate of poverty has been progressively on the increase with each new poverty alleviation programme being implemented. Many people particularly in the rural areas are not aware of various government programmes on poverty alleviation.

Those that are aware also hardly benefit from such poverty alleviation programmes due to some problems which one could describe as poor implementation and evaluation of programmes. The truth is that the beneficiaries of these poverty alleviation programmes are mainly people far above the poverty line or the rich (Onah, 2005:67). This situation has always present these programmes as illusive and deceit on the view of poor population (Nwatu, 2006). The failure of previous anti-poverty programmes is partly because of lack of involvement or participation of the people and politicization of the programmes. As carefully demonstrated by some scholars like (Nwatu, 2006:295; Onah, 2005:67 and Ukwedeh, 2003:245), this is true of such national initiatives on poverty alleviation Former Poverty Alleviation Programme and now National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). As a matter of fact, the initiation of these programmes as Abdullahi (2006:2) has strongly argued do not take into consideration, the environmental impact analysis (EIA) and social impact analysis (SIA) to give the problem a holistic approach. Apparently, poverty alleviation programmes fail to achieve their objectives in the face of high incidence of corruption and lack of accountability of the implementing agencies. In most cases, at the implementing stage, the resources and funds allocated for the poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria are diverted to private purse leaving the objectives of the programmes totally unachievable. In other words, programmes monitoring and evaluation are given less attention. In this condition, it becomes difficult to clearly ascertain who actually benefits from the programme, and the targeted population groups are not in most the true beneficiaries. Poor programme monitoring and evaluation hinders the progress and success of poverty alleviation programmes. Therefore, it is against this lacuna that the researcher tends to investigate on the effect of poverty reduction strategies on poverty reduction in Makurdi metropolis using the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP).

1.3 Research Question

The research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the poverty profile of Makurdi local government area of Benue state?
2. What is the socio-economic characteristics of beneficiary of NAPEP in Makurdi local government area of Benue state?
3. How has NAPEP reduced poverty in Makurdi local government area of Benue state?

1.4 Objective of the Study

The major objectives of this study is to assess the effects of National poverty eradication Programme (NAPEP) activities in poverty reduction in Makurdi local government area of Benue state. The specific objectives of the study will be to:

1. Ascertain the poverty profile of Makurdi Local Government Area in particular.
2. Examine the socio-economic characteristics of the beneficiaries of NAPEP in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue state.
3. Assess the extent to which NAPEP has reduced poverty in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue state.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

H₀: National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) has no significant effect on poverty reduction in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study can be of great importance to the public, policy makers and other researchers.

To the public, this research work intends to publicize the activities and programmes of NAPEP and how it has affected the well-being of Nigerians. As the study appraises the performance and success, it will be useful to government.

To policy makers it will help in formulation of policies that can help alleviate poverty in Nigeria.

The study will also serve as a basis of further research in the area.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study covers the impact of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) on poverty reduction in Makurdi local government area of Benue state. The variables of interest are NAPEP and beneficiaries of NAPEP.

1.8 Plan of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters; chapter one is introduction which deals with the background to the study, statement of problem, research question, objective of the study, research hypothesis, scope of the study, significance of the study and plan of the study. Chapter two focuses on literature on conceptual, theoretical review and empirical literature while chapter three contains Methodology of the study. Chapter four is Data presentation and analysis of results. Finally, Chapter five includes summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

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