

Poverty Alleviation Programme and Rural Dwellers in Nigeria: Socio-Economic Implication

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Abstract

Poverty has been a global problem which is affecting over four billion people all over the world. Nigeria as a developing country is having her own share of the problem, which has attracted many researches both national and international. There have been argument about the effectiveness of poverty alleviation program put in place by government, hence this study looked at the impact of different poverty alleviation programme on rural dwellers in Nigeria. Survey research design method was adopted for the study. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire titled: poverty alleviation programme scale (PPAPC). It contained 18 items and was divided into two sessions. The population of the study contained three hundred people living in rural community of Uso in Owo Local Government. The findings from the data collected revealed that respondents agreed that poverty alleviation programme has significant effect on the poverty indices in the rural area such as access to health care facilities and loan. It is therefore recommended that government should continue to introduce poverty alleviation programme as well as encouraging individual philanthropists to assist in alleviating poverty in rural areas.

Key words: Poverty; Poverty alleviation; Rural dwellers; Poverty alleviation programme

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INTRODUCTION

World Bank defined Poverty as a pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty is widely addressed as a global problem; poverty affects over four billion people. It is important to know that most of the people living in the developing world of Africa, Asia and Latin America on the average 45-50 percent of the Sub-Saharan Africa live below the poverty line. In Nigeria about 43% of the population is living below the poverty line of N30s a year in 1985 prices, (World Bank, 1996). This figure has been purging upwards to over 60% in recent time. Poverty is indeed a global problem. To this effect, the United Nations declared 1996 the international year of eradication of poverty, in pursuance of this target, government in both developed and developing countries became increasingly aware of the poverty problem and several development efforts to alleviate poverty therefore have been embarked upon worldwide.

There is high incidence of poverty in Nigeria today especially; the incidence of poverty is very high among the unemployed, the uneducated women and rural dwellers (Ajakaiye and Adeyiye, 2011). Nigeria has one of the world's highest economic growth rates, averaging 7.4% according to the Nigeria economic report released in July 2019 by the world bank. Poverty still remains significant in African's biggest economy. 86.9 million now living in extreme poverty represents nearly 50% of its estimated 180 million population. It is projected that it will become the world's third largest country by 2050. Nigeria is one of the few countries that are well blessed with human and as well as natural resources. The problem lies with the fact that these resources are not evenly distributed. The most important things of life are often neglected in the distribution of resources. Nigeria has no much money which goes to sectors that are not

as important as others. The money goes to the national defense, jumbo salaries of lawmakers, and purchasing expensive jets for top government functionaries. But the paramount question worthy of asking is 'how much of these things go into national development'. Using the most recent poverty indicator, such as illiteracy, access to safe water and the number of poor people. Nigeria ranks below Kenya, Ghana and Zambia. Nigeria's GNP per capita is also low compared to those countries while purchasing power continues to decline with high inflation and increasing income inequality. UNICEF classified Nigeria as country with severe child malnutrition and very high under-5 mortality rate. Access to education, health, water and housing is inadequate. Although most of the poor live in rural areas, urban poverty is also becoming an increasing concern. (Bank, 2019)

In 1980, the poverty level was only 28.1% but by 2019 it had jumped to about 50% having been mindful of the implications; the government makes concerted efforts in order to reduce poverty in the country. A cursory look at the measures and programmes embarked upon by the federal government have featured programmes such as Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Better Life Programme (BLP), Family Support Programme (FSP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), People Bank of Nigeria (PBN), Federal Urban and Mass Transit Programme (FUMTP). Despite all these programmes and huge scarce resources devoted to poverty alleviation, the level of unemployment and the general well-being of many Nigerians have failed to improve, all as a result of poor implementation of these programmes due to corruption and misappropriation of resources.

Poverty alleviation is one of the most difficult challenges facing any country in the developing world where, on the average, majority of the population is considered poor. Evidence in Nigeria shows that the number of those in poverty has continued to increase, for instance, the number of those in poverty increased from 27% in 1980 to 46% in 1996; by 1999 it increased to more than 70% (Ogwumike, 2014). Poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria are means through which the government aims to revamp and reconstruct the economy.

Unfortunately, the issues of poverty alleviation has proved to be the most difficult challenge facing the less developed countries where majority of the people live in absolute poverty. However, the government has continued to respond in order to ameliorate the worsening conditions of the poor by shifting public expenditure towards poverty alleviation. Different poverty was seen as a means through which the government could revamp the battered economy and rebuild self-esteem in majority of Nigerian. In spite of these various policies, strategies and programmes (such as Green Revolution, National Fadama Development Project I,II,III, National Poverty

Eradication Programme (NAPEP), National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) seven point Agenda, vision 20-20-20 among others) aimed at improving the conditions of the poor, the number of poor people continues to increase. (Olaolu M.O., Akinagbe O.M., Agbe T., 2013) This could be owing to the fact that, in using static poverty measures based on cross-sectional data, generally expressed by indicators such as the head count ratio and the poverty gap, identifying the poor is based on how far consumption, expenditure or income lies below the poverty line. However, poverty measured at a particular point in time usually does not take into account the future prospects of the household welfare which depends not only on its present income or consumption but also on the risks or shocks it faces. In other word, poverty is viewed as a static rather than a dynamic phenomenon.

The impact of poverty Alleviation Programme add an important aspect to the analysis of poverty as some households experience poverty for long period of time, while others only experience it on a temporary basis due to negative shocks that result into sudden loss of welfare. This indicate that today's poor may not be tomorrow's poor this has led to the increasing recognition in the past few years that there are considerable flows into and out of the poverty pool, for instance, (Agarwal, 2017) observed that a high percentage of household in partisan moved into poverty due to temporary shocks (such as illness or loss of employment) that were reserved just one or two years late. Also many of the people who escaped poverty only succeeded in doing so for one or two years before a reverse in their circumstances forced them back below the poverty line. This brings to the fore knowledge, the importance of the analysis of poverty transition in the prescription of potent policies as well as in design and targeting of anti-poverty programmes.

The analysis of changes of a household welfare overtime distinguished between the chronically poor and the temporarily poor and why some households remain poor extended period of time. Also evidence from research on impact of poverty may differ from those of transient poverty. Thus, the characteristics and needs of the transiently and chronically poor households are likely to differ implying that in targeting these households, alternative policies chronic poverty usually causes more concern among policy makers and scholar than transitory poverty. It is over the less important to understand movements in and out of poverty over time and factors associated with transitions, since they have relevance of poverty persistence (Galbraith, 2015).

Many scholars and researchers both locally and internationally have studied and carry out researches on poverty alleviation programme. To some the so called poverty alleviation program in rural area in Nigeria are just political noise, while Some of these studies indicated

that poverty alleviation programme on rural sustainability has promote effectiveness in the reduction of poverty among the people. Some researchers made similar conclusion about the positive prospects and effectiveness on poverty alleviation programmes, poor people perceptions of poverty reduction institutions are largely that of ineffectiveness and irrelevance in their lives as government's poverty reduction activities contribute little in their struggles to survive and rarely help them to escape poverty, more disturbing in their fact that despite the huge amount of resources committed to those programmes, the poverty situation still aggravates and more people fall into the poverty region rather than escaping from it. The pertinent question that can be drawn from this foregoing are; has poverty alleviation programmes in rural improve the people sustainability in terms of (i) Income generation (ii) Welfare improvement (iii) Job creation and other indices.

CONCEPT OF POVERTY LINE

Poverty line is that level of income or expenditure required by an individual to purchase or satisfy a minimum basket of consumption goods and services for him or her to be consider not in poverty. Poverty line is country-specific, that is, this level of income or expenditure varies from one country to another. Irrespective of countries, households or individuals with per capita income below this line are considered poor. Synonymously, a poverty line is an income level, which separated the poor from the non poor. Budget standards of the minimum needs approach was the earliest in setting the poverty line and has been used by Adawo, (2011). This approach involves the determination of a minimum quantity of various minimum needs or their money equivalent.

Poverty lines are therefore cut off points separating the poor from the non poor. There are two (2) main ways of setting the poor lines: Relative and Absolute. Most developing countries uses, an absolute line rather than relative poverty line.

In an absolute line, the poverty threshold is established as the income level at which household are able to purchase essential food and non food items, including social services. The poverty is freed in terms of a living standards indicator on over the entire domain of the poverty comparison.

(Adawo, 2010) defines an absolute poverty as “one which is freed in terms of living standard, and fixed over the entire domain of the poverty comparison” and a relative poverty line, varies over that domain, and is higher than the average standard of living.

Purpose of the study

The main objective of this study is to access the impact of poverty alleviation programme on rural household

sustainability in rural area of Nigeria.

To determine the impact of poverty alleviation programme in Owo Local Government Area.

To examine whether the programme of the government have meaningful impact on the lives of the rural dwellers by reducing poverty rate.

Research Questions

The following research questions were set to guide the study

i. Does poverty alleviation programme have influence on the rural household in Owo Local Government Area.

ii. What are the impacts of the poverty alleviation programme on rural household sustainability in Owo Local Government Area.

iii. Is there any significant relationship between gender and access to poverty alleviaton programme among the people of Owo Local Government

Significance of the Study

Achieving significant results of the impact of poverty alleviation programme in rural sustainability in Nigeria, it is obvious from several studies that poverty reduction policies in Nigeria were sustained for a short period of time and thereafter failed. Several reasons may be attributed for this failure, reasons like poor maintenances culture on the part of citizens and government of public goods, infectivity of the government towards providing basic infrastructure, corruption, ethnic and religious sentiments and many others. It therefore required that concerted efforts should be made by all stakeholders to contribute to the success of this all-important but elusive goal of reducing rural poverty.

Scope of the Study

The research work looks at a particular aspect of poverty i.e. the poverty alleviation programme on rural household sustainability in Nigeria; it also focuses on some selected areas such as; reduction of Tax, Infrastructure Facilities, Job opportunities and access to education.

METHOD

The survey research design was adopted in this study, this approach was used because it provided the researcher the opportunity of sampling the opinions of large representative of the sample of the population. The population of this study comprises three hundred (300) selected dwellers of the rural household in Uso in Owo local government area in Ondo state Nigeria. The samples of this study are dwellers of the rural house hold; the market men and women, farmers and civil servants in the Area. This consists of 300 respondents from the area. Also, the questionnaires distribution cut across both Male and Female respondents. Random sampling techniques through which all the respondents have equal chance of

being selected are used in this study. The Marital Status falls between either single or married. In this wise, all the participants selected were selected through random sampling techniques.

The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire titled “Poverty Alleviation Programme scale” (PAPC). It was a 18 item questionnaire structured into two sections (A&B). Section A deals with the personal data of the respondents while Section B seek to obtain information on the impact of the poverty alleviation programme on the people and their poverty level. The response options range from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

INSTRUMENTATION

Structured questionnaire that was used to elicit information for the study. The instrument was validated using face and content validity. The reliability index of the instrument was 0.75. The instrument was translated to Yoruba which is their local language to avoid alteration in the original contents of the instrument.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the impact of Poverty alleviation programme on standard of living?

Table 1
A Frequency Table Showing Impact of Poverty Alleviation Programme on Standard of Living

S/N	Impacts of Poverty alleviation programme on standard of living	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D
1	The poverty alleviation programme have equipped us with the knowledge and competencies to afford process and maintain good nutrition	67 (23.3%)	207 (71.9%)	10 (3.5)	4 (1.4%)	3.17	.543
2	The government poverty alleviation programme have impacted positively on our ability to secure decent houses	79 (27.4%)	178 (61.8%)	26 (9.0%)	5 (1.7%)	3.15	.643
3	Poverty alleviation programme provides money to take care of my needs	83 (28.8%)	123 (42.7%)	68 (23.6%)	14 (4.9%)	2.95	.848
4	Poverty alleviation programme has improved my standard of living	72 (25.0%)	144 (50.0%)	58 (20.1%)	14 (4.9%)	2.95	.804
5	The agencies have helped in creating employment and this has improved the general standard of life in our area	74 (25.7%)	140 (48.6%)	62 (21.5%)	12 (4.2%)	2.96	.800

N=288
Weighted Mean= 3.04
Standard Deviation=.742

The result in Table 1 revealed that the poverty alleviation programme have a positive impact on standard of living in the surveyed area. This is seen in a weighted mean score of 3.04 higher than the standard mean of 2.50. This is further revealed in mean scores of 3.17, 3.15, 2.95, 2.95 and 2.96 respectively for all

the items measuring standard of living. This indicated that the poverty alleviation programme have helped to improve the standard of living of people in the concerned area.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of Poverty alleviation programme on health status of people?

Table 2
A Frequency Table Showing Impact of Poverty Alleviation Programme on Health Status of People

S/N	Impacts of Poverty alleviation programme on Health status of people	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D
1	It provides easy way to seek, receive and pay for treatment in the health centres	105 (36.5%)	163 (56.6%)	9 (3.1%)	11 (3.8%)	3.26	.696
2	I regularly do medical check-up through provision from poverty alleviation programme	73 (25.3%)	163 (56.6%)	41 (14.2%)	11 (3.8%)	3.03	.741
3	The Poverty alleviation programme does not address any nutritional needs	33 (11.5%)	51 (17.7%)	136 (47.2%)	68 (23.6%)	2.17	.920
4	We are now aware that decent accommodation can enhance the state of our health	78 (27.1%)	154 (53.5%)	48 (16.7%)	8 (2.8%)	3.05	.740

N=2.88
Weighted Mean= 2.88
Standard Deviation=.883

The result in Table 2 revealed that the poverty alleviation programme have a positive impact on health status of people. This is seen in a weighted mean score of 2.88 higher than the standard mean of 2.50. This is

further revealed in mean scores of 3.26, 3.03 and 3.05 respectively for three of the items measuring health status. Although the programme does not address nutritional need of the people as seen in a mean score of 2.17 lower

than 2.50, the weighted mean of 2.88 indicated that the poverty alleviation programme have helped to improve the health status of people.

Research Question 3: What is the impact of Poverty alleviation programme on education?

Table 3
A Frequency Table Showing Impact of Poverty Alleviation Programme on Education

S/N	Impacts of Poverty alleviation programme on education	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D
1	There are public primary schools in our community which were built by the poverty alleviation programme	77 (26.7%)	160 (55.6%)	45 (15.6%)	6 (2.1%)	3.07	.710
2	It is now easy to put our children in school	69 (24.0%)	160 (55.6%)	55 (19.1%)	4 (1.4%)	3.02	.698
3	Poverty alleviation programme enables me to pay for my children school fees easily	67 (23.3%)	158 (54.9%)	60 (20.8%)	3 (1.0%)	3.00	.696

N=288
 Weighted Mean= 3.03
 Standard Deviation=.701

The result in Table 3 revealed that the poverty alleviation programme have a positive impact on education of people. This is seen in a weighted mean score of 3.03 higher than the standard mean of 2.50. This is further revealed in mean scores of 3.07, 3.02 and 3.00 respectively for all of the items measuring impact on

education. The weighted mean of 3.03 indicated that the poverty alleviation programme have helped to improve the education of people.

Research Question 4: What is the impact of Poverty alleviation programme on financial status of people?

Table 4
A Frequency Table Showing Impact of Poverty Alleviation Programme on Financial Status of People

S/N	Impacts of Poverty alleviation programme on Financial status	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D
1	Poverty alleviation programme increase the rate of my savings	63 (21.9%)	144 (50.0%)	76 (26.4%)	5 (1.7%)	2.92	.740
2	The Poverty alleviation programme have helped in training many people on crafts and trade so they are self-reliant	73 (25.3%)	166 (57.6%)	39 (13.5%)	10 (3.5%)	3.05	.726
3	We have enjoyed better access to soft loans given by the government	65 (22.6%)	160 (55.6%)	40 (13.9%)	23 (8.0%)	2.93	.825

N=288
 Weighted Mean= 2.97
 Standard Deviation=.766

The result in Table 4 revealed that the poverty alleviation programme have a positive impact on financial status of people. This is seen in a weighted mean score of 2.97 higher than the standard mean of 2.50. This is further revealed in mean scores of 2.92, 3.05 and 2.93 respectively for all of the items measuring impact on financial status. The weighted mean of 2.97 indicated that the poverty alleviation programme have helped to improve the financial status of people.

and rural dwellers means of livelihood change with little efforts unlike those in urban areas whose lives depend on sophisticated material.

Respondents also agreed that poverty can be as a result inadequate resources, lack of power to participate in design of development programmes and inadequate access to assistance for those living at in-margin. This implies that there is general loss in confidence in a society stricken by poverty and this renders government policies ineffective. This is contrary to the findings of (Guntur, 2011), who in his findings agreed that causes of poverty include and not limited to inadequate resources, inability to participate in development programmes as participation in a development programme in a way develop and individual..

Majority also agreed that poverty results in increasing the fragility and vulnerability of members of society to external influences this finding is also in agreement with (Olaolu, M.O., Akinnaigbe O.M., and Agbe (2013) in which it was pointed out that poverty might be as results of external influence , according to them if one

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the data collected in the course of this study, it is clear that majority of the respondents agreed that poverty alleviation programme has significant effect on the poverty indices of citizens in the rural areas such as access to health care facility. Respondents also show that there exists significant relationship between Poverty alleviation programme and the poverty reduction especially in rural areas. This is in line with the findings of (Guntur, 2011), in which it was revealed that peasants farmers

is confined to internal need without looking at what is happening globally the need will be limited. This can be the reason poverty alleviation programme is having significant impact on rural dwellers. Furthermore, finding also reveals that poverty makes production remain largely subsistence due to lack of capital needed for expansion. Labour becomes incentive and marginal productivity remains low. This findings is contrary to the finding of (Oladeji, S.I., Abiola, A.G., 2012) in which it revealed that poverty might not necessarily means subsistence production as one may be producing in small scale and enough for him as taste and dependence add to poverty level of individual.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded from the findings that there is poverty in rural areas as in urban. It is also established that there is poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria including rural areas. The programme against the general belief is having impact in rural areas. Olaolu et al (2013) give reason for this as rural dwellers were not all that exposed to outside influence. Therefore, little household material will be sufficient for them. It is also the practice of sitting government to concentrate poverty alleviation programs in rural areas as well as politicians in government because they believe it is easy to manipulate them during elections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research recommends that poverty alleviation programme should include skill acquisition for the inhabitants of the area in which they intend to establish the programme, which includes;

i. The government should help people-based, grass-root; house-to-house programme be re-evaluated and re-engineered to have better impact in their lives.

ii. The government should continue to provide infrastructure such as building of classrooms, health centers, good roads, electricity, housing, community town halls, pipe borne water, etc

iii. The government should supply necessary inputs that can improve people's livelihood, productivity and increase their wealth (income) these inputs can be in form of fertilizers, farming machines, improve seeds, training programmes, skill acquisition programmes, credit facilities among others, since majority of the people are farmers.

iv. There consistent and stable policies: over the years there has been a constant change in government policies at alleviating poverty especially during the SAP era but none has translated into a success story due to corruption on the part of the government, often wrong policies lead to the same problem it was intended to solve. Therefore, government policies should be more purposeful and objectively implemented without prejudice especially in the area of poverty related programmes at ensuring rural household sustainability.

v. Government should emphasize man development as one of the antidote of poverty eradication.

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