

Challenges and Prospects of Poverty Alleviation in Selected Local Government Areas: A Case Study of Mubi South and Girei Local Government Areas of Adamawa State

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Abstract- *This paper explores the challenges and future opportunities in reducing poverty within Mubi South and Girei local government areas of Adamawa State. The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) was established by the government as a strategy to address poverty in Nigeria. The goal of the programme is to provide economic opportunities to the poor, improving their overall quality of life. However, this study investigates the effectiveness of NAPEP as a poverty alleviation initiative in the aforementioned local government areas. A survey-based research design was employed, with a sample population selected using simple random sampling from two local government areas in different senatorial districts of the state. Both primary and secondary data sources were used in the research. It was found that various poverty reduction initiatives in Nigeria, including those in Adamawa State, have not been successful in their primary aim of reducing poverty. Instead, some of these efforts appear to be misused, leading to the misuse of national resources due to narrow self-interests, which in turn encourages corruption and dishonesty. For these programmes to be effective, the government and implementing agencies must take a more active role, particularly in addressing issues related to poor management and accountability among staff. Poverty is a complex issue that affects multiple areas of life, so efforts to reduce it should be comprehensive and cover all economic sectors, as well as focus on the empowerment of the poor. Strengthening existing strategies and ensuring better management can help these programmes perform more effectively.*

Keywords: *Analysis, Challenges, Prospects, Poverty, Alleviation*

I. INTRODUCTION

The paper examines the challenges and potential of poverty reduction in Nigeria, with a focus on Mubi South and Girei local government areas of Adamawa State.

Over the years, poverty has been seen as a by-product of poor economic growth, and this study was

conducted between 2007 and 2017. Despite Nigeria's wealth in human and material resources, statistics show that the country lags behind in development, as noted by Olaope (2008). Nigeria ranks among the poorest nations globally, as evidenced by various indicators of underdevelopment such as corruption, unemployment, poor access to clean water, high illiteracy, high mortality and disease rates, low income per person, and political, religious, and economic instability. These factors contribute to low living standards and widespread poverty, according to Igbokwe (2012).

This situation has been a major concern for successive Nigerian governments, yet efforts to address these issues have not yielded meaningful results.

The rising level of poverty in Mubi South and Girei Local Government Areas has become increasingly worrying, as indicated by empirical studies. Nigeria, an African country, has at least half of its population living in extreme poverty, as pointed out by Ojo (2008). Similarly, the Federal Office of Statistics (1996) highlights that poverty in Nigeria is widespread, affecting a significant portion of the population. Abiola and Olaope (2008) also emphasize that poverty is a severe problem in Nigeria, leading to hunger, illiteracy, malnutrition, disease, unemployment, limited access to credit, and low life expectancy.

Nwaobi (2003) notes that Nigeria presents a paradox—wealthy in resources but poor in people's living conditions.

Omotola (2008) suggests that Nigeria is richly endowed with natural, geographical, and socio-economic resources, which could place it among the wealthiest nations. However, Ope and Abu (2009) indicate that Nigeria has experienced a sharp rise in poverty levels, with 74.2% of the population living in

poverty in the year 2000. Data from the Federal Office of Statistics, as reported by Garba (2006), show that about 15% of Nigerians were poor in 1960, rising to 28% in 1980 and reaching 76.6 million people by 1996.

In recent times, poverty alleviation has regained international attention.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has long held the view that poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere. This highlights the importance of addressing poverty on a global scale. The World Bank and other international organizations are now giving significant attention to poverty reduction. The African Development Bank has also adopted a policy requiring half of its loans to directly contribute to poverty alleviation. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are playing an increasingly important role in poverty alleviation campaigns in many developing countries. Against the backdrop of economic adjustment policies, it is necessary to thoroughly examine the challenges faced so far in poverty reduction in order to develop a more effective approach for the future.

Concept of Poverty and Poverty Alleviation

Poverty does not have a single, clear definition, but in simple terms, it refers to a person's inability to meet the basic needs of life.

It can be described as a condition where people lack access to essentials like food, clean water, shelter, healthcare, education, and employment, which are considered the minimum standards of living in a particular society. These essentials are key to maintaining a decent quality of life. Some researchers, such as Akintola and Yusuf (2001), have identified factors like education, health, child mortality, and other demographic elements as important in understanding poverty. They view poverty as a situation where these factors are either present or not. In short, poverty occurs when individuals or families are unable to meet their basic needs due to limitations in economic, social, political, and psychological conditions.

Poverty alleviation refers to the various strategies and efforts by governments, non-governmental organizations, and individuals aimed at reducing or eliminating poverty.

This process is best approached by focusing on improving people's abilities and increasing their freedom to make choices. A key result of this approach is empowerment, which means providing

people with the tools they need to meet their basic needs and achieve long-term solutions to poverty.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Poverty alleviation is closely linked to economic policies and is especially important in areas like Mubi South and Girei Local Government in Adamawa State.

Statistics show that 70% of the population in these areas lives on less than one dollar a day, facing issues such as poor housing, unreliable electricity, lack of clean water, low agricultural productivity, weak education systems, limited healthcare access, underdeveloped industries, and financial instability. Despite Nigeria's rich human resources, the country's development and people's overall well-being are still lacking. Therefore, Mubi South and Girei Local Government areas have been challenged by poverty. Both state and federal governments recognized that solutions cannot be achieved through individual efforts alone and have therefore implemented various poverty alleviation programs.

The main focus of this paper is to analyze the poverty alleviation programs introduced by the Adamawa State government in Mubi South and Girei Local Government Areas.

It aims to evaluate how effective these programs are in reducing poverty in these areas and to examine the challenges and future potential of such programs. Identified causes of poverty include limited access to jobs, lack of physical assets, poor rural development, inadequate access to markets, low human capital, destruction of natural resources, limited support for those in poverty, and poor community involvement in development planning.

Objective of the Paper

The main goal of this paper is to assess the challenges and prospects of poverty alleviation programs in Mubi South and Girei Local Government Areas of Adamawa State.

Specifically, the paper aims to:

1. Understand the nature of NAPEP's role in poverty alleviation in Mubi South and Girei.
2. Examine the causes of poverty in these areas.
3. Identify the effects of poverty alleviation programs in these areas.
4. Analyze the challenges faced by these programs.

Research Questions

Based on the above issues, the following questions are raised:

1. What is the role of PAWECO in reducing poverty in Mubi South and Girei?
2. What are the main causes of poverty in these areas?
3. What are the effects of poverty alleviation programs in these areas?
4. What are the challenges of these poverty alleviation programs?
5. What are the shortcomings of NAPEP in Mubi South and Girei?

III. HYPOTHESIS

A hypothesis is a proposed explanation for a particular phenomenon.

A statistical hypothesis is an assumption that could be true or false, and is used to test whether it is valid in a population.

Hypothesis 1

Ho: There is a significant relationship between poor governance and poverty alleviation.

Hypothesis 2

Ho: There is no significant relationship between government policies and programs in addressing poverty.

Shortcomings of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)

It has been found that the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) has failed to significantly reduce poverty in Mubi South and Girei Local Government Areas of Adamawa State.

Research indicates that poverty levels in Nigeria have increased over the study period. Instead of declining, poverty rates have risen from 54.6% in 2004 to 70.1% in 2007, and remained at 70% in 2010 and 2012. Nigeria ranked 153 out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index in 2012, compared to 53rd in 1996. In 2015, the poverty rate in Nigeria was at 62.6%.

National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) aimed to train and empower people to become self-reliant in the fight against poverty, but it failed to reach its goals due to several issues. Many young people were trained, but they did not receive the necessary skills or support, such as capital to start businesses. As a result, the people who benefited from the programme were not better off than before, as there were no strong efforts to ensure they could support themselves once the programme ended.

It was also found that even though Nigeria's ability to generate revenue has increased, the poverty rate has not gone down; in fact, it has risen.

This is partly because of a growing population, which the policymakers have not considered in their poverty eradication strategies like NAPEP. While the programme mainly targets young people, especially males, it ignores older people, children, and women—who are more likely to be affected by poverty.

The way beneficiaries were selected for NAPEP was flawed.

Many people said that individuals were chosen based on their connections with influential people who enrolled them in the programme, often for the monthly allowances provided, rather than for the actual training meant to make them self-reliant and employed.

The implementation of NAPEP in Mubi-South and Girei local government areas was not effective for real poverty alleviation.

A trainer mentioned that a number of trainees left the programme and did not gain the skills they were supposed to learn. The lack of political will has contributed to this poor implementation. At times, NAPEP seemed to be a policy created by the government for short-term popularity rather than as a genuine effort to address poverty. Without changes, the programme is not suitable for poverty eradication in Nigeria.

Approaches to Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Adamawa State

Various governors of Adamawa State have launched different poverty alleviation initiatives to benefit the people of the state and reduce poverty and youth unemployment.

Based on my research, I will focus on the different poverty alleviation programmes and skills initiatives that were implemented in Mubi-South and Girei local government areas between 2007 and 2017.

Vocational Technical Training Centres (VTTC)

This programme was started by the administration of Governor Murtala Nyako in 2011.

Over 10,000 youths across all 21 local government areas of the state participated in the skill development programme, and a monthly allowance of five thousand naira was given to each participant. This programme had a positive impact on the lives of the youth and the people of Adamawa State, especially in Mubi-South and Girei local government areas.

Achievements and Success of Vocational Technical Training Centres (VTTC)

i. The programme created job opportunities for the youths of Mubi South and Girei local government.

- ii. It helped reduce youth unemployment in both areas.
- iii. It helped lower youth crime rates in the state, particularly in Mubi South and Girei.
- iv. It reduced the youths' dependence on their parents by enabling them to become financially independent.

Poverty Alleviation Wealth Creation (PAWECO)

In an effort to reduce poverty and support the youth of Adamawa State, the government, under the leadership of Governor Muhammadu Umaru Jibrilla Bindow, launched this programme in 2016.

Over 10,500 youths were trained in various skills. Six hundred and forty youths were trained in tricycle repair by Simba Company, while five hundred youths received training in electronic appliances through the Industrial Training Fund (ITF). Many women were also trained in weaving.

Achievements and Success of Poverty Alleviation Wealth Creation (PAWECO)

- i. The programme equipped the youths and beneficiaries in Mubi South and Girei with technical skills.
- ii. It enabled the people of Mubi South and Girei to meet their financial needs and support their families.
- iii. Both married and single women were empowered, allowing them to meet their needs without relying on their spouses or suitors.

Prospects of Poverty Alleviation Programme in Mubi-South and Girei Local Government

Poverty alleviation programmes initiated by different Nigerian governments have played a crucial role in reducing poverty in the selected local government areas.

These efforts have shown positive results in improving the lives of the people of Mubi-South and Girei.

The success of NAPEP in poverty alleviation includes:

- i. Creation of small-scale businesses.
- ii. Provision of better medical and health facilities.
- iii. Improved access to education due to higher income levels.
- iv. Better employment opportunities.
- v. Introduction of skill acquisition programmes.
- vi. Improved access to food, leading to better nutrition and health.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this paper is to examine various theories related to poverty alleviation in Nigeria, providing a strong foundation for socio-cultural, political, and economic development.

The focus is also on creating a self-sustaining development process that involves active participation from the grassroots level. Many theories exist that explain development, its impact, and how it can help reduce poverty. For academic purposes, it is important to introduce theories that are directly relevant to the scope of this study.

A critical assessment of poverty alleviation as a means for national development can be explored through the lenses of Modernization Theory and the Trickle Down Theory.

Modernization Theory

Modernization Theory views development as the transition from traditional to modern ways of living, influenced by the experiences of Western European countries.

It suggests that less developed nations in Africa, Latin America, and Asia must adopt Western practices to develop. According to scholars, development requires societies to move from traditional practices to modern technologies and social structures. They argue that development is only possible when citizens shift from old methods to the following:

- i. The use of modern technology and stable political systems
- ii. The process of industrialization
- iii. The growth of urban areas

In terms of national development, Modernization Theory claims that development can be achieved through several stages.

These include:

- a. The modernization of technology, which involves replacing traditional techniques with scientific methods.
- b. The commercialization of agriculture, moving from producing food crops to cash crops and developing wage labor in farming. It also suggests changing unproductive traditional farming methods in African countries to modern, mechanized agriculture.
- c. The industrialization process, which involves replacing human and animal labor with machines in agriculture.
- d. Urbanization, which refers to the shift from rural areas and agricultural life to urban areas where

industry thrives and social amenities are available

According to this theory, the introduction of modern technology and commercial agriculture would bring about similar structural changes in rural areas.

These changes would affect the organization of production and consumption, as well as other aspects of society, including politics, religion, culture, and the economy. In the long term, these changes are believed to lead to poverty alleviation and national development.

Modernization Theory has faced criticism, one of the main being that it treats development, rural development, and underdevelopment as conditions rather than as historical processes.

Trickle Down Theory

In the 1950s, the Trickle Down Theory emerged as a method to transform the rural parts of economies, including developing countries.

It is closely connected to the growth pole approach. This theory centers on creating growth centers that introduce concentrated investments to trigger change in stagnant systems. It has been used globally to support national development and reduce poverty.

According to Rondinelli (1978), placing services and facilities in urban centers and metropolitan areas generates economic benefits that can spread to surrounding areas and rural communities.

Hoselitz (1957) argues that modernization is best carried out through primate cities, which are essential for development.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS

From the research, several key findings were identified:

- i. Negative economic growth and poor macroeconomic policies lead to increased poverty.
- ii. Limited access to markets and the destruction of natural resources contribute to poverty.
- iii. A lack of human resources and ineffective skill training results in poverty.
- iv. Corruption and bad governance are obstacles in efforts to reduce poverty.
- v. Debt overhang is a challenge for governments in tackling poverty.
- vi. Rapid population growth is a barrier in reducing poverty.
- vii. Comprehensive skill acquisition programs are a potential solution to poverty.

viii. Encouraging small-scale businesses and improving employment opportunities are promising approaches to poverty reduction

ix. Better access to quality education offers hope for reducing poverty

x. Vocational training and internship programs, such as those under NAPEP, are policies used by the government to fight poverty.

V. CONCLUSION

Poverty alleviation programs are intended to help the poor reduce their poverty in areas like Mubi-South and Girei local government. However, due to the methods used by the Nigerian government in implementing these programs, many have failed to truly address poverty. It was also found that most programs are not pro-poor. Recently, the Community-Driven Development (CDD) approach has been used to target the poor. Literature suggests that while many CDD-based programs are pro-poor, they often do not reach the very poorest individuals (Nkoya et al., 2007; Akinlade et al., 2011). This may explain why poverty continues to persist in the country.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. If the National Anti-Poverty Education Programme (NAPEP) is used effectively by all programs to target the very poor, there could be a significant reduction in poverty within the nation. However, the impact of some programs has not been felt among the poorest individuals, both male and female. This suggests the need for equal access to economic resources and more opportunities for female participation.
2. Efforts should be made to prevent elite capture in any Poverty Alleviation and Welfare Empowerment Community (PAWECO) projects through improved targeting.
3. The Nigerian government should focus on strengthening national security and political stability.
4. Both the government and citizens in Mubi-South and Girei local governments should maintain proper discipline.
5. The local governments of Mubi-South and Girei should put more effort into developing infrastructure.

6. There needs to be economic stability and enough welfare services provided in the two selected local government areas of Adamawa state in Nigeria.
7. It is important to make better use of the poor's most common resource, which is their labour. This requires policies that create market opportunities, strong social and political systems, good infrastructure, and flexible technology.
8. Basic social services should be made available to the poor in both Mubi-South and Girei local governments. This includes primary health care, family planning, proper nutrition, and basic education, which are very important.
9. The serious issues of corruption and lack of political will in Mubi-South and Girei local governments in Adamawa state, Nigeria, have made things worse. The political leaders in Nigeria are more focused on their own interests, ignoring the needs of the poor and unknowing citizens, which is making poverty worse in Nigeria.
10. There should be consistent government policies and programs aimed at reducing poverty in both Mubi-South and Girei local governments in Adamawa state, Nigeria.
11. There should be a clear set of policies and guidelines for poverty reduction in Nigeria, especially in the areas of Mubi-South and Girei local governments.
12. All poverty reduction programs in Mubi-South and Girei local governments in Adamawa state, Nigeria, should be carried out properly.

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