POVERTY AND NATIONAL SECURITY: A REVIEW OF POLICIES 1960 – 2010

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Abstract
Mass poverty is synonymous with failure in security in all states of the globe and Nigeria is no exception. This study reviews past poverty alleviation policies and programmes embarked upon by various Nigerian governments, problems associated with these programmes since independence (1960) to date (2010), and a shedding of more light on the policy outcomes. Recommendations are provided. The need to review the successes and failures of past policies is to reduce the poverty level of the people. As government has always introduced a variety of programmes, which were largely unsuccessful in addressing the problems of poverty, the implications have rendered the Nigerian state insecure with increasing and unprecedented criminal activities. This is a result of a number of factors among which are inadequate commitment to programme implementation, and corruption. This study, based on data obtained from secondary and primary sources, was quantitatively presented. The study concluded that Nigeria needs to make a fundamental shift away from policies and institutional arrangements that promote aggrandizement and more toward policies, programmes and institutions that promote efficiency, sustainable, and broad-based growth and poverty alleviation.

Keywords: Poverty, alleviation, security, governments.

Introduction
In every society, it is no secret that resources are scarce relative to the needs and desires of the people. While some have more than enough of what they need, others do not. This second group of people represents a large segment of society that is unable to provide for themselves and thus wallow in abject poverty. Thus, poverty has become a social problem found in societies all over the world, and the case of Nigeria is no exception. Poverty creates pervasive and widespread inequality. Poverty also exposes the state and individuals to danger in the form of increased criminal behavior, deprivation, denial, and lack. The Vision 2010 report (1998) estimated that over 50% of Nigerians living below the poverty line would experience absolute poverty. Absolute poverty, according to the report, is the inability to provide for physical substances such as food, clothing, shelter, portable water, basic education, healthcare, transport, and work. These groups of Nigerians are the most exploited economically and manipulated politically. An estimate of people living below the poverty line reported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1998) was 70%, today it is 80%. According to the UNDP, anybody living on less than US$1 a day is living below the poverty line and is suffering from deprivation characterized by low calorie intake, poor housing condition, inadequate health facilities, poor quality of educational facilities, low life expectancy, high infant mortality, low income, unemployment and underemployment.

Poverty and security: a conceptualization
Many definitions have emerged as to what constitutes poverty and this paper will examine some of these conceptions of poverty. Poverty is the condition or quality of being poor and the condition of having little or no wealth. It is the deficiency or inadequate supply, meaning that there exists lack in the face of need. Poverty can also be defined as lacking things that are necessary to life. Poverty hurts, degrades, and is capable of driving people into desperation and to getting involved in criminal activities.

Haralombos and Herald (1980) defined poverty as absolute issues which involve human needs and are measured in terms of resources required to maintain health and physical efficiency. According to Aliyu (2002) poverty consists of two interacting deprivations- physiological and social. Physiological deprivation is the inability of individuals to meet or achieve basic material and physiological needs which can be measured either by a lack of income (which limits access to food, education, health, housing, water, and sanitation.
services); or by the failure to achieve desired outcomes, such as a high quality diet (rich in micronutrients), health status, educational attainment, and the quality of health, water and sanitation services received. Social deprivation refers to an absence of elements that are empowering, such as autonomy, time, information, dignity and self-esteem. Lack of empowerment is also reflected in exclusion from important decision-making processes, even when the outcomes are of considerable importance to the poor. Examples are decisions about public investment in the local community, and management of common properties and priorities for agricultural research and extension. The World Bank (2001) described poverty in terms of its manifestations which can be linked to the lack of income and assets to attain basic necessities of life. These are food, shelter, clothing, and acceptable levels of health and education such as rudeness, humiliation, shame, inhuman treatment and exploitation in the hands of the people in authority; absence of rule of law, lack of protection against violence etc.

Many factors converge to make poverty an interlocking, multi-dimensional phenomenon. It can be seen as lack of voice, power and independence that subjects the poor to exploitation and leaves them vulnerable to rudeness, humiliation and inhuman treatment. (Drewnowski and Scot, 1980). Poverty depicts a situation of lack and deprivation of some groups in the society. As socio-economic and political phenomena, it deprives this group of access to the basic necessities that limit the group and makes them incapacitated (Mbowoso, 1999; Obadan, 1996). Some argue that the poor are poor because they are exploited by more powerful groups in society (Rodney, 1974). Nevertheless, for whatever reason, circumstances of the poor are similar in different societies and tend to produce similar response - insecurity within the family setting with a concomitant effect on the entire nation.

National security is the protection, assurances, a state or sense of safety or certainty, and not being exposed to danger. Security implies a stable, relatively unchanged atmosphere in which individuals or groups may pursue their ends without fear of loss or injury” (Deutsch, 1968). In addition, among the many goals which individuals and government pursue, the broadest and most common is security. It is the basic mode in which most other values, such as wealth, well-being, affection and “the rest” are enjoyed with the expectation that they will last for at least some time. To many people, it is also a value in itself. Security is indispensable and crucial without which crisis, chaos and disharmony will engulf both the government and the governed. Thus, security may be compared to peace, the preservation of peace, and most importantly the provision of individual and state needs through poverty alleviation efforts (programmes).

The significance of security in Nigeria is indeed not adequately catered for. Security is the essential and fundamental element in the continued existence schemes and development plans of any given society. Largely, to a huge number of Nigerians, the third millennium is a serious and severely frustrating epoch. When the global economic recession was raging, the poor were deprived even more.

Nigeria’s poverty profile
In Nigeria, as in most less developed countries, the position is not one of low poverty but of mass poverty. About 80 percent of the population has annual incomes of less than N200.00 (UNDP, 1998). This implies that poverty in Nigeria is synonymous with gross underdevelopment and insecurity. It can therefore be reduced only through the process of rapid and judicious socio-economic development. Measures to stimulate development can thus be relied upon to simultaneously reduce the incidence of both relative and absolute poverty. But this does not preclude additional government actions specifically directed against poverty. A notable aspect of poverty in Nigeria is that the poor are often concentrated in communities without basic services. These basic services include roads, potable water supply and safe sanitation. They also generally lack access to health and education services. Poor households in Nigeria are characterized by lacking in basic education, residing in rural areas, engaging in farming, and having large household size with most adult members, including the household head unemployed (World Bank, 1995).

Nigeria’s festering poverty profile was described as “widespread and severe”. The report of
comparative analysis of welfare ranked Nigeria below Kenya, Ghana and Zambia and expressed concern over the dwindling purchasing power of the people and the increasing income inequality in Nigeria, making life unbearable for the citizenry (World Bank, 1995). Whether measured in absolute or relative terms, poverty is generally more prevalent in the rural communities of Nigeria. The sluggish growth and the low level of income, coupled with inequality in income distribution – as well as lack of access to basic social amenities—have accentuated poverty levels across economic groupings and geo-political divisions.

Data from the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS, 1999) indicate that by 1960 poverty covered about 15% of the population of Nigeria and by 1980, it grew to 28%. By 1985 the extent of poverty was about 46% and then dropped to 43% by 1992. By 1996, poverty incidence in Nigeria was estimated to be about 66% in a total population of about 110 million. The incidence of poverty in Nigeria was 28.1 percent in 1980 which increased to 88.0 percent in the year 2002. As indicated in the table below, this percentage increase represents in absolute term 86.0 million people out of an estimated population of about 116.4 million people.

The data clearly indicate high and varying levels among the states of the federation and shows that poverty in Nigeria increased sharply both from 1980 to 1985 and from 1992 to 1996. Furthermore, by 1992 10 states had more than half of their population living below poverty line, but by 1996 all states except Bayelsa had more than half their population in poverty. The poverty situation in Nigeria also depicts regional variation. For example, within these periods, the poverty rate was higher in the north eastern and north western zones with 71.4 percent and 73.0 percent respectively compared with the south western and south eastern zones at 30.9 percent and 44.0 percent respectively (FOS 2004). Similarly, Nigeria’s rank in the Human Development Index in the year 2000 remained low (0.452), being the 148th out of 174 countries (ADB 2003). According to the United Nations Reports (1999), Nigeria’s Human Poverty Index (HPI) was only 41.6%, which places the country among the 25 poorest nations in the world. The HPI for some other African countries as comparism are those for Zimbabwe, Botswana, Kenya, Burkina Faso and Niger which are 17.3%, 22.9%, 58.3% and 66.0% respectively.

With acute and drastic poverty (insecurity), no nation will be able to control the different types of disturbances dictated by hunger and demands necessitated by deprivation and deficiency. A nation that is able to contain and alleviate poverty is in the same instance mopping up disaster, which could have escalated into gigantic and enormous impetus. This becomes most enviable as Nigeria today faces various pressures to its stability as a result of its inability to provide basic necessities and infrastructural facilities for her citizens. Poverty alleviation is in favour of wellbeing for the people of Nigeria. A poverty free nation is a major and key security concern of all states of the world. Poverty is an octopus dragging along multiple criminal and nefarious activities among young and old, male and female folk.
Poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria: a perspective

Attempts to eradicate poverty are not new. Legislation and community efforts to assist the poor exist. The Nigerian government over the years embarked on various policies to eradicate/ alleviate poverty. Policy intervention aimed at poverty alleviation has been both micro and macro based. Micro involves using the household as the basic unit of analysis while macro is based on economy wide policies.

Approaches to poverty alleviation require the implementation of mutually consistent and reinforcing multifaceted packages of policies, plans and programmes. Because the depth and severity of extreme poverty in Nigeria has been alarming, the government has undertaken some economic policies with the aim of reducing, if not totally eradicating poverty. These policies were expected to at least raise the standard of living of Nigerians. The ideological substance of these policies has always been the same in order to be consistent with the overall national philosophy and objectives of the government, which provides for free, democratic, just and egalitarians society; a united strong and self reliant nation; a great dynamic economy and a land full of opportunities for all citizens.

In 1956, the colonial government inaugurated a ten-year development welfare plan for the country. This welfare package was to take care of needs of the masses. From 1962 to 1985, the various development plans of the Nigerian government contained welfare programmes aimed at enhancing the living standard of the populace. At the beginning, (at independence) in 1960 and for the best part of the 1960s, poverty eradication efforts in Nigeria centred on education, which was seen as the key to economic, technological and intellectual development of the nation. Thus, education programmes were implemented alongside agricultural extension services, which encouraged increased food production.

The 1972 General Yakubu Gowon’s National Accel erated Food Production Programme and the Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank, was entirely devoted to funding agriculture. The NAFPP turned out to be a colossal waste and nothing was achieved. Operation Feed the Nation in 1976 by the then military Head of State General Olusegun Obasanjo, expended much money and effort in getting illprepared university undergraduates to go to the rural areas to teach the peas ape farmers how to farm. The 1979 Shehu Shagari’s Green Revolution Programme had the twin objectives of curtailing food importation while boosting crop and fibre production. The overall objective was big (mechanised) farming.

Many senior civil and military officers, both in and out of office, used their access to the state to the advantage of the wide range of facilities committed to the Green Revolution. These bureaucrats-cum farmers were also joined by many private businessmen. Some new-breed farmers were only interested in getting Certificate of Occupancy for large tracks of land. The land was then used as collateral for securing loans. When the programme ended in 1983, two billion naira tax payers’ money was wasted. That is more than two hundred billion naira in today’s exchange rate. General Buhari’s Go Back to Land Programme failed because of the far-fetched objectives of making farmers out of all Nigerians. Some analysts argue that the fight against indiscipline and corruption encouraged by Buhari regime were equal to a poverty alleviation programme. By 1986 all major socioeconomic indicators were pointing downwards. The rate of unemployment was (and is still) high, purchasing power of the people was low, poverty was becoming entrenched, and economic growth stopped. Hence, several measures were introduced to reduce the social cost of adjustment. General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993) the then military President, introduced a number of poverty alleviation programmes. These include the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). The establishment of the Directorate was not only a radical departure from the approach of previous regimes, but also recognized the complementarities associated with basic needs such as food, shelter, and potable water. The Directorate had the responsibility of providing basic infrastructure facilities for increased agricultural output, and mobilizing the rural producers by organizing them into co-
operatives, and making them literate and more productive. For instance, between the time of inception in 1986 and 1993, DFFRI had completed over 273,526 KM of roads; and over 50,000 rural communities still benefit from its rural development (Nigerian Outlook, 2001).

In recognition of the fact that many Nigerian poor do not have access to credit, the Federal Government in 1989 introduced a policy to liberalize accesses to credit by the poor with the establishment of the People’s Bank by the Federal Government and Community Banks by the private sectors. The banks were established to fill gaps created by the collateral based conventional banks that are reluctant or ill equipped to meet the special credit needs of the poverty – stricken segment of the society. In essence, the establishment of the People’s Bank and the Community Banks was intended to eliminate these constraints. Another programme that tried to head-off the scourge of poverty by targeting the agricultural sector was the Nigerian Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA). The Authority was intended to reduce the prevalence of subsistence agriculture in the country and in its place infuse large scale commercial farming by assisting farmers with inputs and developing land for them to the point of planting at subsidised rates. While all these programmes collapsed at one point or the other, nonetheless, at least one of these programmes enunciated by the Babangida regime, The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) – has had a 23 - year staying power. By its mandate, NDE is to design and implement programmes to combat mass unemployment involving all categories of labour (skilled and unskilled including graduates of tertiary institutions). In its first year of operation (1987) it created up to 148,000 job opportunities and articulated policies aimed at developing work programmes with labour intensive potentials. From its programmes and its staying power, this was a scheme that could be adjudged as the most successful of Babangida’s poverty alleviation policies. It is on record that hundreds of thousands of youths have benefited from the NDE scheme through its four-pronged approach that include Vocational Acquisition Training (673,000), Entrepreneurial (Business) training (373,366), Training for Rural Employment, and Training for Labour-Based works programme. In 2000 alone, NDE claimed that 21,708 youths received training in vocational skills in 36 states of the federation and Abuja, while 5,075 graduated in different trades. The scheme has a special arrangement for women on how to process, preserve and package food. However, the drawback on NDE’s schemes for now is that there is no follow-up programme for beneficiaries. Many of them who did not utilise the skills they acquired and others who did not properly invest the loans they received, have found themselves in a worse state. While the directorate asserts that it disbursed N526,901,313.11 since inception, for its various programmes, only 24.4% of this total or N129,048,757.63 was recovered from beneficiaries (Nigerian Outlook, 2001).

The better life programme (blp) and the family support programme introduced by Maryam Babangida and Maryam Abacha respectively, aimed at poverty alleviation, were launched in 1987 and 1994 under the same broad objectives. These were, among others, to encourage rural dwellers, particularly women, to improve their standard of living via the promotion and formation of self help rural development project. This promoted education, business management, recreation, and the greater awareness about the plight of women in rural areas. In addition, the programme was put in place to bring women together to highlight their developmental problems and offer solutions through collective actions; educate them in simple hygiene, family planning, and importance of child care; and above all, enlighten them on the opportunities and facilities available to them at the local level for improving and enriching their lives.

The family economic advancement programme (FEAP), in Nigeria’s quest for a way out of debilitating poverty, FEAP was introduced coinciding with the period that marked Nigeria’s relapse into the global bracket of 25 poorest nations. Significantly, FEAP existed for about two years (1998 – 2000) during which it received funding of N7 billion out of which N3.3 billion was disbursed as loans to about 21,000 cooperative societies nationwide that were production oriented. Such projects targeted for assistance included poultry production, garri making, soap making and animal husbandry. FEAP, an offshoot of the Family Support Programme (FSP), was an empowerment
programme designed specially for locally based producers of goods and services and potential entrepreneurs in the cottage industries. The programme was aimed at improving the standard of living of the low-income groups by stimulating appropriate economic activities in the wards of each local government area in the country (Nigerian Outlook, 2001).

National poverty eradication programme (NAPEP): NAPEP was established in 2000 to take over from Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP). The objective of NAPEP is to eradicate absolute poverty through a coordinated implementation and monitoring of programmes of four schemes; the Youth Empowerment Schemes; Rural Infrastructure Development Schemes; Social Welfare Services Schemes; and National Resources Development and Conservation Schemes (NAPEP, December, 2002). These Schemes were to be implemented at all levels of government. NAPEP has established structures at all levels nationwide. Under its Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP), it trained 100,000 unemployed youths just as 5,000 others who received training as tailors and fashion designers were resettled. A total of 50,000 unemployed graduates have also benefited from NAPEP’s Mandatory Attachment Programme, which is also an aspect of CAP. The programme has established a databank of all unemployed youths in the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital territory (FCT). About 1.1 million youths have so far been registered. Such data could be used in targeting groups in any future poverty alleviation effort (NAPEP, December, 2002).

Other programmes include the Petroleum Trust Fund, Urban Mass Transit Programme, The Guinea Worm Eradication Programme, the Agricultural Development Projects, the Primary Health Care Scheme, the Expanded Programme of Immunization, the Nomadic Education Programme, OMPADEC etc. Having subscribed to the UN-inspired Millennium Development Goals of eradicating global poverty by 2015, Nigeria has embraced the process of outlining its own Poverty Reduction Strategy Process (PRSP). This will eventually bring its anti-poverty efforts into the mainstream of the new global thinking that fighting poverty needs to be driven by some acceptable principles.

Evaluation of the programmes
An evaluation is necessary to determine whether the programmes have met the expected goals to provide judgment of the worth of the programmes (Owen, 1999). Have the programmes been implemented as planned? Have stated goals been achieved? Have the needs of those served been met? What are the unintended outcomes? Does the implementation strategy lead to unintended outcomes? What are the benefits of the programme given the cost?

DFRRI was unable to construct roads in many communities. Large sums of money were expended in comparison to the infrastructure on ground. Better Life Programme impacted more on women in urban areas than to those in the rural areas. FEAP disbursed a lot of micro credit to individuals though the upper and middle classes and they appeared to have benefited more from its programmes. Under NDE the problem of mass unemployment was addressed though the achievements appear to be short-lived since those that actually got trained were excluded from credit facilities. The gains of PTF were felt by the majority of Nigerians though it is argued that it was felt more in the urban areas. A problem encountered by the PTF was its discontinuation by the Obasanjo government. The urban mass transport system, though initially successful, had the problem of maintaining the vehicles and the infrastructure under it. The Nigerian Guinea Worm Eradication Programme reduced cases of guinea worm infestation. The major odds against sustainability and continuity. NAPEP also has impacted many though it has involved a lot of politicization which deprived those that actually were in need of the programme. Atiku Abubakar, the former Vice-President, admitted in 2003 that the Programme failed to achieve its objective.

Generally, in spite of the introduction of the programmes to alleviate poverty, the largest chunk of Nigerians (more than 80%) are still poor and are getting poorer by the day. Thus, rather than become avenues for equitable distribution of income these public enterprises degenerated into avenues for political compensation. It is quite obvious that previous and current development planning efforts have not successfully addressed the problem of
poverty alleviation because the strategies adopted for economic growth have not been strong and well focused on income redistributed. Second, the massive effort to provide social services and infrastructure was not well implemented and not accessible to the generality of the populace. Third, there have been no well-targeted transfers for the poor. Hence, to tackle the problem of poverty alleviation, a critical and objective implementation of policies for growth and income distribution needs to be undertaken.

**Barriers to effectiveness of the programmes**

Several factors have led to the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the programmes. These include poor conception that is poor policy formulation and coordination, lack of involvement of the stakeholders who are the poor themselves, inadequate implementation strategies, policy discontinuity, and lack of sustainability, absence of policy framework, absence of target setting for ministries and agencies, duplication of functions among institutions and agencies. Embarking on projects that have no relevance to the poor, abandonment of projects, unhealthy competition between institutions and agencies, existence of barriers in the form of bureaucratic hurdles, incomprehensible rules and regulations and difficulty in accessing information and lack of supervision.

Other problems include carefree attitude of staff to government initiatives, high incidence of illiteracy, complete absence of or poorly developed infrastructural facilities particularly in the rural areas, distrust and lack of confidence on the part of the people. The government is often separated from the people and do not know the realities and conditions of those they are helping, the political leaders are usually more interested in themselves than the poor, lack of participation and involvement of the beneficiaries in the programmes. Corruption and inadequate commitment to programme implementation, political instability, has been the major obstacles to the success of poverty alleviation programme in Nigeria. For these reasons the intended outcomes have not been wholly achieved.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

For a nation so well-endowed with human and material resources as ours, the current levels of general poverty and unemployment especially among the youths, represent the most serious condemnation of our past policies and strategies. While history will record that all manners of programmes, schemes and projects have been introduced in the past to reduce the unacceptable level of poverty among Nigerians, it is also on record that they have all suffered from a myriad of weaknesses, from faulty conception, to widespread corruption, indiscipline and the absence of the political will of the leaders to make them succeed. Certainly, throwing money in the form of cash handouts or the establishment of institutions that merely serve to channel easy money to selected groups does not solve the problem. Nonetheless, most of these poverty alleviation programmes suffered the same fate; they all failed due their lack of a design to alleviate poverty parse and they lacked a clearly defined policy framework with proper guidelines for poverty alleviation. They suffered from political instability, political interference, policy, and macroeconomic dislocations, and they also lacked continuity.

Government should not presume that they know what will benefit the poor better than the poor themselves. Projects should be embarked upon because the people need them, not because some contractors (who stand to profit from the projects) are pushing for them. If development is about people, it cannot happen without the participation of the people. The citizens should clarify their own needs and priorities. They should speak up and stand up for what they consider their priorities, and speak and act against white elephant projects. It is also reasonable that before funds and loans are dished out to the public, the government should do well to take stock of the past attempts at alleviating poverty in this country. The fact is that the Nigerian State today is collapsing and becoming increasingly unsecured and unstable. Some say the state has already collapsed, that the state, like the other embattled African states, remains relevant only in the juridical sense (Crossroad, March 2009). The state has relinquished it’s functions and obligations to the highest bidder(s).

There are now 120 million miniature states
in Nigeria. Each is providing (or hoping to provide) its own electricity supply, water supply, education for their children, and security of life and property.

In view of the escalating nature of poverty and attendant security threats in Nigeria there is the need for government to restructure and redesign approaches that will permanently reduce poverty through the provision of basic infrastructures and services that are efficient. It is not enough that these are provided but that the cost should be affordable to the poor.

There is also the need for greater investment in human development. Evidence shows that investment in human capital, especially in planned education, shelter, and social services, increase the productivity of the poor and make the state less vulnerable to lack of security. Government at the same time needs to address the ever-increasing rate of socio-economic insecurity which has a tendency to increase the number of poor people in the society. The government must brace up to tackle the problem of poverty if it is serious about attaining development and becoming a force to be reckoned with in the international system by the year 2020.

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