

Poverty: Assessing the Policies of National Directorate of Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Lagos State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: Poverty is a global epidemic that affects various continents, countries, and people. No country is completely free of poverty. The key distinction is the degree and prevalence of social insecurity, crime, social instability, and a generally unacceptably low standard of living. However, this study investigates the policies of the National Directorate of Employment on poverty and unemployment eradication in Lagos state, Nigeria. This study employed a descriptive survey research method. a sample size of 120 staff was selected using the simple random sampling technique. A closed-ended questionnaire was also used to generate the data for the study. Spearman's rank correlation was used to test hypotheses. Also, the secondary sources include Journal articles, textbooks and newspaper. The findings indicate that there is a relationship between unemployment, poverty and NDE alleviation in Lagos State. It was also discovered that the programmes of NDE have a significant effect on unemployment and poverty alleviation in Lagos State. NDE programmes have created job opportunities in Nigeria. The study concludes that to an extent, the NDE skill acquisition training programme has helped in combating mass unemployment. However, the policymakers have not been able to identify the neediest for the programs. Most beneficiaries of such programs are not the intended targeted. The study, therefore, recommends that government should provide needed infrastructure to set a solid foundation and invest in the people. The need to ensure adequate funding of NDE programmes in Lagos State. Government should pay adequate attention to the rural areas especially to the rural farmers, which is the lifeline of a country.

KEYWORDS: Alleviation; NDE; Policy; Poverty; Unemployment

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Poverty reduction has become a priority for governments all over the world. The international concern can be date back to 1944 when the International Labor Organization (ILO) proclaimed that "poverty everywhere constitutes a challenge to progress" in its landmark Philadelphia declaration drafted in the aftermath of World War II (Nwachukwu & Onwubiko, 2008). This statement led to a global relief crossroads, particularly in the United States of America, where segments of society were widely classified as low, healthy and under-diet. However, developing a definite and broadly acceptable definition of poverty has often been difficult because the idea of poverty and unemployment mean different things to different individuals or groups of people (Stafford-Smith, Griggs & Gaffney, 2016).

Poverty can be described as "a lack of income and productive resources to ensure healthy livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; poor health; insufficient or no access to resources such as education; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; deprivation and poor infrastructure; unhealthy environments; and gender inequality and isolation." It is also distinguished by a lack of involvement in decision-making as well as in civil, social, and cultural life (Raleigh & Cairtriona, 2016). It occurs throughout the world: as widespread poverty in several developing nations, clusters of deprivation amid prosperity in industrialized economies, loss of property as a consequence of trade recession, unexpected deprivation as a product of catastrophe or dispute, decreased employee deprivation, and absolute penury of people who have fallen beyond family assistance programs, social structures, and worker protections (Kumar, Kumar & Vivekadhish, 2016).

Poverty has a direct impact on the virtual scarcity of basic infrastructure and social facilities

such as highways, health care, educational institutions, water supply, and other social services. Overt poverty manifests itself among the undernourished population, especially among vulnerable groups, the majority of whom are children and women (Agena, 2008). Poverty alleviation is one of the most daunting problems confronting policymakers where the majority of the population is poor. Evidence from Nigeria shows that number of people living in poverty has continued to rise.

For example, the proportion of people living in poverty rose from 27 per cent in 1980 to 46 per cent in 1985 and 67 per cent in 1996, reaching more than 70 per cent in 1999. (Baghebo, 2001). Even though the World Bank's Nigeria economic report published in July 2014 estimated a poverty rate of 33.1 per cent for a nation with vast resources and a large population to sustain trade. The study appears to be contradictory to facts. Between 2004 and 2009, income inequality increased from 0.43 to 0.49. The study also indicates that the depth and incidence of poverty are greater in rural areas than in urban areas (Leach, 2015).

Poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria are a way for the policy makers to restructure and rebuild the economy. Poverty alleviation initiatives have been affecting government decisions in the country today, with differing outcomes due to the country's high levels of poverty. Alleviating poverty approaches have ranged from Operation Feed the Nation in 1978 to the Green Revolution in 1982, the Directorate of Foods, Roads, and Rural Infrastructures (DFRI), the National Directorate for Employment (NDE), the Better Life Programme (BLP), the Family Support Programme (FSP), the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), and the National Poverty Eradication Programme (PAP).

This participation deficit not only accounts for the programs' significant failures but also explains the general public's perceived apathy toward government poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria. Economic growth remains the decisive factor in poverty reduction progress, but poverty is also the result of economic, social, and political processes that engage and strengthen each other in ways that can ease or intensify the state of deprivation in which poor people live. Furthermore, overcoming poverty necessitates coordinated efforts at the local, state, national, and global levels to broaden people's opportunities, motivate them, and increase their protection.

This is the poverty that can be felt in Nigeria, as well as other impoverished countries. Poverty has an impact on one's appreciation towards others, respect for civil liberties, and openness to foreigners. It also has an impact on one's willingness to engage in group events, interpersonal confidence, and self-satisfaction. This choice is motivated by the fact that poverty is both absolute and relative. Even though none of these circumstances is completely reasonable to the people, the reality remains that the definition of poverty is relative. This is because wealth is not distributed equitably. As a result, the report went on to highlight the issues with poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Poverty is a global epidemic that affects various continents, countries, and people. No country is completely free of poverty. The key distinction is the degree and prevalence of social insecurity, crime, social instability, and a generally unacceptably low standard of living. Poverty is thus described as a situation in which a person is deprived of, or lacks, the necessities for a minimum standard of living. Poverty is characterized as the failure to meet a basic standard of living (Molini, Vasco & PierellaPaci, 2015). It did not, however, arise as a result of a casual mindset and a failure to recognize the issue at hand. It has also not come as a result of a lack of response to the poor people's yearning to be liberated from their deplorable and frustrating state of near despair.

As a developing economy, it lacked the ability and resources to deal with growth and international relations issues, and its political leaders were overwhelmed by the magnitude of hunger, disease, illiteracy, and poverty afflicting the country's people. Aside from that, the current world order emphasizes good governance, economic stability, and social justice. Without a question, this is the primary impetus for political leaders to become more concerned with the overall well-being of their people, especially in the area of poverty alleviation (Buba, 2015).

However, in light of the current void that the study seeks to fill, the following objectives are proposed: investigate the relationship between poverty and the Directorate of employment and poverty alleviation in Lagos State, evaluate the effect of the National Directorate of Jobs on poverty alleviation in Nigeria, and analyze the various NDE programs and their impact on poverty alleviation in Lagos State.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the relationship between poverty and National Directorate of Employment and poverty alleviation in Lagos State.
2. To assess the programmes of the National Directorate of Employment and their influence on poverty and unemployment alleviation in Lagos State.

1.3 Research Questions

The study provides answers to the following questions:

1. Is there any relationship between poverty and the National Directorate of Employment and poverty alleviation in Lagos State?
2. Do the programmes of the National Directorate of Employment enhance poverty and unemployment alleviation in Lagos State?

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.0. Poverty in Nigeria

Scholars have interpreted poverty in a variety of ways due to its multifaceted and multidimensional nature. As a result, we will evaluate some of the meanings. According to Salifu (2010), poverty is described as the inability to meet basic needs for a decent living; those who are considered poor are typically those whose resources are insufficient to meet the necessities of life. Poverty is a vicious circle, and breaking free from it is difficult. They went on to say that it is founded on the fact that poor families are more likely to remain poor. They have a low income, a high risk of illness, and limited access to education, information, and better health care. Poverty in Nigeria is a dynamic and daunting problem for people and policymakers alike. Poverty manifests itself in various ways across states and societies, including a lack of food, money, housing, and indebtedness. The poor in Nigeria live in unsanitary and unsafe conditions, with inadequate access to medical care, electricity, sanitation, and other basic services (National Report, 2015). Nigeria is regarded as one of the poorest countries in the world, with some of the lowest human development indices (Ajulor, Ibikunle & Aliu, 2018).

2.0.1. Unemployment in Nigeria and its Effect on Poverty

The jobs rate, or lack thereof, is universally regarded as the litmus test for the effectiveness and efficiency of any administration in most national discourse as well as in development studies and governance. For our purposes, it appears to be the "fault line" between Nigerian youth and national security. The

definition of unemployment is ambiguous. The trend has been to describe jobs while considering the inverse to be the concept of unemployment. The difficulty in describing unemployment is exacerbated when we compare it to its many factors, such as underemployment, low-wage jobs, and informal employment (Adebisi & Oni, 2012).

Gbemisola, Vasco, and Corral (2015) posit that even though youth are not the only employable category in the demographic system, the significance of unemployment cannot be overstated. The problem of youth unemployment is responsible for a variety of social pathologies, not the least of which are abuse, crime, and criminality. While exploring education and skills for employability, the Vision 20:20 Economic Blueprint lamented the following as an economic malaise: the gap in educational quality has severely harmed the competitiveness of the Nigerian labour force in national and global markets. Nigeria is confronted with the paradox of simultaneous existence.

Joblessness might have had a role to play in national security, but it is not a sine qua non in this context. Inflation is a constant in all nations, but it is a manageable task. High levels of it can endanger every nation's national security, but there is far more to the issue of national security that warrants putting the issue of unemployment in context. But, when all is said and done, it is worth noting that, based on diverse age categories; the Nigerian workforce has been an integral part of governance since the 1960s. Thus, if the government is not generating jobs, it is a scourge inflicted by the youths in government on the youths who are not in government. It is self-destructive for youths outside of government to promote unemployment by failing to create jobs and an encouraging climate for gainful employment (Beegle, Christiaensen, Dabelen & Gaddis, 2016).

2.0.2. The NDEPA's Roles in Promoting Jobs and Reducing Poverty

The NDE has four main program departments and four support service departments that work with the program departments to ensure that the directorate's mission is met. They are as follows:

VSD stands for Vocational Skills Development Programme. This program makes use of informal sector operators, such as master craftsmen and women, as training venues for unskilled school leavers. Such school leavers are attached to them for long enough periods for the apprentice to learn the requisite skills. It also requires the deployment of well-equipped mobile workshops to train unemployed youths in rural

areas where there are no informal training options. The Vocational Capacity Building Programme includes the following schemes: National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (Fundamental and Intermediate); College; Vocational Skills for Physically Disabled and Disadvantaged People; Collaboration in Skills Training (PIST); and the Displacement Trust Fund (Bhalla & Lapeyre, 2016).

Small Scale Enterprises Programme (SSE): The National Directorate of Employment's business training program includes many fields of business growth for different groups of unemployed people and aspiring entrepreneurs. The schemes under the SSE department where the action is carried out on a national scale (subject to funding availability) are as follows: Business Training - (for tertiary graduates, artisans, school leavers, and retirees) (Entrepreneurship Development Programme - EDP). This includes the Enterprise Start-up and Development Training Scheme (formerly Start Your Own Business), the Micro Business Skills Training Scheme (formerly Basic Business Training), the Advanced Entrepreneurial Development Scheme, and the NDE-Enterprise and Finance Counselling Clinic (NDE-EFCC); Loan Disbursement Schemes – Enterprise Creation Fund; Training for Women in Income Generating Activities; and the Common Facing Scheme (Bradshaw & Main, 2016).

REP (Rural Jobs Promotion Program): The NDE developed a special training program for youths in agriculture to pique the interest of unemployed youths in agriculture to capitalize on the enormous opportunities for jobs and wealth development in the sector and, as a result, to curb the youths' rural-urban drift. Rural Agricultural Development Training Scheme (RADTS); Rural Embroidery Promotional Marketing (RHTS); Integrated Farming Training Scheme (IFTS); Post-RADTS Promotional Marketing (e) NDE Agricultural Park Project (e) (Dauda, 2017).

Special Public Work Programme (SPW): Infrastructure construction and maintenance, according to the NDE, can become labour sponges. Later, the International Labour Organization (ILO) introduced labour-based light equipment methods of rural infrastructure construction and maintenance to the NDE. The NDE piloted this successfully, and it was adopted as an effective work tool. The operational schemes under the SPW in general are the Graduate Attachment Programme (GAP), the Environmental Beautification Training Scheme (EBTS), the Solar Energy Development Training Scheme (SETS), and the Graduate Coaching Scheme (GCS) (Beegle, Christiaensen,

Dabelen & Gaddis, 2016). Planning, Research, and Statistics; Human Resources Management; Finance and Accounts; and Inspectorate are all part of the NDE's service department. Collaboration Branch, Job Centre, Women Employment Branch, Information and Public Relations, Internal Audit, Loans, Properties and Utilities, and Resource Centre & Library are among the branches and divisions.

2.0.3. Nigeria's Various Poverty Alleviation Policies

Efforts by successive governments to eradicate chronic poverty in Nigeria date back to the pre-independence period. During this period, the colonial government devised programs and policies, as well as allocated funding, for the first two ten-year development plans, 1946–1955. The policies were aimed at promoting local production of raw materials such as groundnuts, palm oil, hides, and skin. At independence, various governments planned the periods between 1962 and 1968, 1970 and 1974, 1975 and 1980, and 1981 and 1985 to provide basic infrastructure, diversify the economy, reduce unemployment, achieve dynamic self-sustaining growth, and increase living standards (Backwith, 2015).

Many of these programs included Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1977, Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE) in 1977, and the Green Revolution in 1980, among others. The OFN and Green Revolution were developed to increase agricultural production and efficiency in the agricultural sector's overall output. FCPE was founded to combat mass illiteracy at the grassroots level. The majority of the programs had some commendable effects by improving the quality of life for many people, but they were not anti-poverty initiatives. In essence, the government just showed concern for poverty reduction in a roundabout way. However, the programs could not be sustained due to a lack of political will and determination, as well as policy uncertainty and inconsistency (Hope, 2017).

Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP): The SAP was the first deliberate policy initiative by the government to alleviate poverty. The era was followed by a serious economic crisis, which lowered Nigeria's standard of living. To combat the crisis, the government implemented SAP with the assistance of the World Bank/IMF. However, the program's implementation worsened the living conditions of many Nigerians, especially the poor. To respond quickly to the crisis, the government planned and introduced a slew of poverty-relief programs between 1986 and 1993, as part of the economy's driven deregulation.

The effect of these programs on poverty alleviation was measured in terms of effectiveness. For example, the establishment of the Directorate of Food, Road, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) was not only a deviation from previous programs, but it also addressed complementary basic needs such as food, shelter, potable water, road construction, and so on. However, DFRRI was unable to meet several of its goals. In reality, it was overly ambitious in scope, riddled with corruption, lacked project harmonisation standards, and lacked effective mechanisms for cooperation across the three tiers of government (Hope, 2017).

People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN): The PBN was founded in 1990 to promote savings and provide credit facilities for the poor who could not otherwise access such loans through the conventional banking system. Similarly, Community Banks (CB) was founded to provide banking services to rural residents as well as to support micro-enterprises in urban areas. The two banking schemes were quite successful. For example, PBN disbursed up to N1.7 billion in in-house loans from Federal Government funds and N0.9 billion in loans from Family Economic Advancement Programme funds (FEAP). However, both banking systems had significant flaws. Their external audits revealed a massive loss of more than 80% due to corruption and mismanagement. According to the audit results, some funds were still stuck in distressed and liquidated banks (Oyemoni, 2013). The Family Support Programme (FSP) was developed to include health care, child welfare, youth development, and improving functional status in rural families. The Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) was developed with a similar goal in mind: to provide credit for agricultural production and processing, as well as small-scale industries, through cooperative societies in rural and urban areas.

These programs were also intended to provide job opportunities at the ward level, to promote the design and manufacture of plants, machinery, and equipment, and to provide opportunities for the training of village-based business operators. While both the FSP and the FEAP were intended to enhance the quality of life for rural residents, they were plagued by several flaws, including the participating banks' failure to supervise and track loans and projects. Besides, fabricators, in collusion with the beneficiaries, inflate the cost of equipment and provide substandard equipment, as well as weak loan recovery.

National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA): NALDA was established in

1993 to provide strategic public support for land development, to promote and support the optimal use of rural land resources, and to encourage the evolution of economic size rural settlements. Other programs related to this, such as the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP) and the Strategic Gains Reserves Programmes (SGRP), had a positive impact on the agricultural sector and, as a result, decreased poverty (Bradshaw & Main, 2016). These programs were effective in acquiring suitable land for development in various parts of Nigeria. They divided the land into economic-size farm plots, labelled them, and advised farmers on all aspects of land conservation and land erosion control. These programs, however, ran into some issues, such as taking on more than their laws permitted, which overburdened them and made them ineffective. In a nutshell, they spent more than they earned. In response to the youth restlessness, the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) was developed in 2000 to urgently build employment for the unemployed. PAP's introduction sparked public outrage and was accused of sloppiness and corruption. Overcentralisation, politicization, illegal payment, uncoordinated management, and high-level corruption were among the issues found with the program. The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) was founded in 2001 to eradicate poverty by involving all stakeholders.

Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES): This covers capability acquisition, obligatory attachment, and efficiency enhancement. The Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS) is concerned with the provision of potable and irrigation water, transportation (both rural and urban), rural electricity, and power supply (Omoyibo, 2015).

The National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC) oversees all poverty-reduction efforts. It tracks all related initiatives regularly to confirm project venue, project execution, project completion, functionality, and functionality of given faculties. The issue is whether NAPEP will be able to help Nigeria achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which call for cutting poverty in half by 2015. It does not have adequate conditions for poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs (Pearson, 2015).

2.1. Empirical Review

Poverty alleviation programs are less successful due to inadequate results. The prevalence of poverty has resulted in underdevelopment. Despite government efforts to alleviate poverty, the rate of poverty continues to

rise. In poverty alleviation organizations and programs, there was reasonable uncertainty, conflict of goals, and duplication of roles. Aiyedoghon and Ohwofasa (2012) investigated the relationship between poverty and unemployment. The incidence of poverty was calculated as a function of unemployment, agricultural, manufacturing, and service contributions to real GDP, population, and inflation rate in Nigeria.

Shehu, Abdullahi, and Haruna (2012) investigated the effects of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) intervention on poverty reduction in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The logit regression method was used to analyze the data in the report. In the logistic model, increased capital expenditure was used as a surrogate variable for IFAD interference. The coefficient of the proxy variable indicates that the IFAD poverty reduction intervention had no statistically significant effect on poverty reduction.

The fundamental flaw in all of the preceding studies is a failure to properly recognize some of the proximate causes of poverty in their study, one of which is unemployment, especially in rural areas. Instead, they concentrated on the successes and shortcomings of these intervention programs or initiatives. This research aims to evaluate an income-generating program such as the NDE as a tool for not only increasing household income in terms of monetary value but also for lifting poor families out of poverty. Apart from the research by Shehu, Abdullahi, and Haruna (2012), all others based primarily on basic percentage analysis and descriptive statistics, which complicates the theoretical puzzle even further. As a result, this study is a modest attempt at a more systematic review, with a focus on assessing unemployment and poverty alleviation regarding the National Directorate of Jobs in Lagos.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Culture of Poverty Theory

Oscar Lewis established the culture of poverty in the late 1950s as a result of a field study among the urban poor in Mexico and Puerto Rico. According to O'Donnel (1997), the theory is prominent among conservative thinkers. The theory that explains the condition of the poor in colonial societies or early stages of capitalism emphasizes fatalism and resignation, implying that the poor lack the effort and vigilance needed to capitalize on opportunities. In Nigeria, the government's efforts to combat the culture of poverty theory are visible through media visibility generated by the nation's National Orientation Agency. These organizations

have been effective in establishing self-help programs.

2.2.2. Social Inclusion Theory

The social exclusion principle was formally accepted at the World Summit in Copenhagen in 1995. It contends that inequality makes many members of society more vulnerable to poverty. The theory is linked to poverty caused by income disparities in the country due to occupational ratings. Nigeria's advocacy and promotion of community-based poverty alleviation programs are aimed at addressing the poverty caused by this theory's assertion. Such programs aim to ensure that the poor themselves own the programs. In the case of the social exclusion theory, it is linked to poverty caused by income disparities in the nation due to occupational scores. Since these theories address poverty in different locations and economic interest groups in Nigeria, poverty alleviation programs will be more successful and thus achieve desired goals if such diversities (locations and interests) are properly taken into account to ensure poor ownership of programs.

III. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research method was adopted for this study. One hundred and twenty (120) respondents were selected randomly. The respondents were selected from each of the poverty alleviation programmes of the NDE at Ojo Local Government, Lagos State, which include the Vocational Skill Development Programme (VSDP), Rural Agricultural Training and Development Programme (RATDP) and Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP). The questionnaire for this study was in two parts, section A and B. Section A collects demographic data about the respondents. It covers issues such as age, gender, education qualification, years of work or working experience and department of the officials. While section B examines in detail the major research questions. The respondents were made up of the following people from the NDE poverty alleviation programmes, which include: public servant, private-sector workers, traders, students, apprentice and residents located at their various offices, shops or markets and school. A total of ninety-two questionnaires were administered and ninety was duly completed by the respondents and used for analysis while two were not returned and were further analysed with Spearman rank.

IV. INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1. Hypotheses One:

H₀: There is no relationship between unemployment, poverty and NDE in Lagos State.

The analysis indicates a strong positive correlation between the dependent and independent variable with ($r= 0.658$; $P<0.05$). The P-value which represents the probability of accepting the null hypothesis (H_0) falls short of the decision rule. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected while the alternative hypothesis (HI) is accepted. Therefore, there is a relationship between unemployment and poverty alleviation in Lagos State.

4.2. Hypotheses Two:

H₀: National Directorate of Employment programmes do not enhance poverty alleviation in Lagos State.

The above shows a strong positive correlation between the dependent and independent variable with ($r= 0.629$; $P<0.05$). The P-value which represents the probability of accepting the null hypothesis (H_0) falls short of the decision rule. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected while the alternative hypothesis (HI) is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that the National Directorate of Employment programmes enhance poverty alleviation in Lagos State.

4.3. Discussion of Findings

The study mainly focused on examining unemployment and poverty alleviation: regarding the National Directorate of Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Lagos State. The highlights of the empirical results are as follow:

The result from the first test concluded that there is a relationship between unemployment and poverty alleviation in Lagos State. Similarly, the test of the second hypothesis showed that the National Directorate of employment has a significant effect on unemployment and poverty alleviation in Lagos State. Finally, the result of the third test showed that the National Directorate of Employment programmes enhance poverty alleviation in Lagos State.

V. CONCLUSION

The outcome of the study has clearly shown the type of skill acquisition training programme offered by NDE and skills acquired by beneficiaries. Also, the NDE skill acquisition programme has enough schemes and type of job from which the beneficiaries acquired necessary skills that guaranteed their employment. It revealed that, to an extent, the NDE skill acquisition training programme has helped in combating mass unemployment. However, the programme has its

challenges. There is a link between unemployment and poverty alleviation, loss of livelihood, inequality, and restiveness as evidenced by the numerous violent protests against the wielders of power in Nigeria. To overcome this and many other societal ills noted among the unemployed people today, the Nigerian government needs to go back to the drawing board to fashion out a more effective poverty reduction policy to curb the menace of unemployment and its consequent poverty amongst the youths.

There is no doubt in the fact that successive government in Nigeria have attempted to alleviate poverty at one time or the other through their poverty alleviation related programmes, the conclusion is that as laudable as some of these programmes are they have not been able to lift the life of the majority of Nigerians above the poverty line. The reasons for this are not far-fetched; they include; the role of globalization on the economy, disparities in peoples income, health and education disparities, inequalities in power, macro-economic mismanagement on the part of the successive government, corruption, misuse of oil windfalls, neglects of agriculture and poor infrastructural base among others. It is believed that sustainable poverty alleviation is achievable in Nigeria if investment in physical infrastructure is improved upon, enhanced probity and accountability at all levels of governance are embraced and an attempt is made to reform the polity such that the government is made to be more accountable to the people. Poverty eradication in Nigeria is a difficult and herculean task as efforts so far exerted by various past administration has been relatively futile. Poverty has weighty consequences on the poor, the family and society. Once poverty is not broken; it breeds vicious poverty at a higher level. It causes a lack of regard for constituted authority. It breeds hunger, social rejection, and dejection and in extreme case, it can lead to armed robbery. The issue of poverty alleviation should be taken with all sense of seriousness it deserves and not ordinary paying lip-service to it. The prevailing situation, therefore, calls for an immediate policy effort to fine-tune the economy in the direction of reduced poverty and inequality levels to revamp and bolster the economy via generating employment, investing in human development and skill acquisition and providing a favourable environment for investment to thrive.

5.1. Recommendations

Given our findings, the researcher recommended the following:

Government should provide the necessary infrastructures needed to lay a solid foundation for investment to thrive, this can be done by not only increasing its capital expenditure but investing it in projects which will generate more externalities than it will consume like energy and transportation. In Nigeria, it is also worthy to mention that such allocations/ contracts should be carefully monitored to reduce corrupt practices which bedevil the public sector. It is recommended that NDE programmes should re-structure or streamline their activities and programmes primarily towards the agricultural and informal commercial sectors of the state. Furthermore, the NDE should ensure that its programmes are fully funded and adequate inputs should be supplied for all phases of the programmes, as many of the respondents complained of insufficient inputs at the training centres. Besides, adequate loans should be given to enable beneficiaries to start-up and sustain their businesses, as there are high costs associated with running a business in the state.

Governments poverty alleviation programmes (PAP) must pay adequate attention to agriculture, especially rural farmers. These farmers should be reached through cooperatives at ward levels in the rural to effectively reduce the high rural poverty, and subsequently, reduce the prevailing contractor-farmers syndrome. These contractor farmers" use their positions in governments to hijack state allocations and incentives made for the (unorganized and uninformed) rural poor as is the case with fertilizers and microcredits.

The proposed poverty alleviation Trust fund is a welcome idea, and also very important in the poverty reduction process and should be decentralized to serve as a veritable source for states and local government councils to obtain conditional grants that can enable them to alleviate poverty in their respective areas through effective social expenditure programs under the supervision of this agency. The programme must be adequately financed by the federal government. The officers and supervisors of NDE should sensitize/encourage the prospective trainee to involve themselves in other skills that are offered by the directorate. Instead of concentrating on some particular skills

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