

# Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Nigeria: A Study of the National Poverty Eradication Programme Performance in Abia State, 2001 – 2010

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**Abstract:** Poverty is a household name most especially in developing countries. However, it is a plague that affects all people across the globe. Government at all levels had embarked on policies and measures at different times to ameliorate or eradicate this malaise to no effect. This study adopted poverty alleviation programme in Nigeria with particular focus on the performance of NAPEP in Abia State, particularly between 2001-2010. Poverty alleviation is the most difficult challenge facing Nigeria and its people and the greatest obstacle to pursuit of sustainable socio-economic. Past and present administrations have tried several way to address this ugly situation led to various introduction of schemes and programmes by most government to the creation of National Poverty Eradication Programme, in all states of the federation and Federal Capital Territory during the Obasanjo's administration. The survey research design was adopted while the cluster random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Taro Yamane's formula was used to determine the sample size of 500 in a population of 501 respondents while the Structural-Functionalist Theory was adopted as the theoretical framework. Responses were analysed using simple percentages presented on tables and statistical charts, while Chi-Square ( $X^2$ ) was used to test hypotheses. Findings revealed that there are numerous poverty alleviation programmes with unsatisfactory performance in Nigeria. Also, NAPEP has contributed positively to poverty alleviation while there are also traces of highjacked by the few elites in Abia State, amongst others. In line with the findings, the study recommended that the capacity of NAPEP should be strengthen through improved budgetary allocations. Also, government anti-corruption efforts should be proactive in dealing with matters concerning poverty reduction programmes/agencies and the beneficiaries in Nigeria, amongst others.

**Keywords:** e-Governance, Performance, Civil servants, Skills, Communications, Salary Administration

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## INTRODUCTION

This study examines poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria with particular focus on the National Poverty Eradication Programme Performance (NAPEP) in Abia state. Nigeria has the third highest number of poor people living on earth on the Human Development Index (V20:2020). This position underscores not only the limited choices of Nigerians, but also defines the critical development being faced by government.

The Nigerian economy faces enormous challenges despite human and material resources endowment which gave her the potential to become Africa's largest and a major player in the global economy. But much of its potential has remained untapped, putting attainment of MDGs by 2015 in jeopardy (NPC, 2005, and V20:2020).

Poverty alleviation has called for world attention by making it No. 1 Millennium Development Goals (MDG's). Inadequate growth and high unemployment rate is the

main cause of poverty in Nigeria. According to NPC, (2005) poverty alleviation is the most social menace facing Nigeria and its people and the greatest hindrance to the pursuance of sustainable socio-economic growth. The overall goal of economic development is improvement in human well-being.

Evidence had shown that the poverty line in Nigeria has been on the increase from 27 percent in 1980 to 66 percent in 1996, by 1999 it estimated that more than 70 percent of Nigerians lived in poverty (NPC, 2005). Life expectancy is a mere 54 years, and infant mortality (77 per 1,000) and maternal mortality (704 per 100,000 live births) are among the highest in the world.

According to NPC 2005, Aminu and Onimisi, 2004 and Eleagu, 2013 averred that the sorry state of poverty in Nigeria led to World Bank (1996) to describe Nigeria as a paradox. This is because Nigeria is a country of immense wealth with human, agricultural, petroleum, gas and large untapped solid minerals, yet with high level of poverty line. Particularly worrisome is that the country earned over US\$300 billion from one resource- petroleum- over decades of the twentieth century. But rather than record progress in national socio-economic development, Nigeria retrogressed to become among the poorest countries whereas she was supposed to be among the richest.

Over the years, Nigerian government had made different attempts to reducing the poverty line in Nigeria which led to different poverty alleviation programme. Poverty alleviation is one of the challenge facing the third world countries and the greatest hindrance to the pursuance of sustainable socio-economic growth (NPC, 2005, Baghebo and Emmanuel, 2013). Inadequate growth and high unemployment rate is the main cause of poverty in Nigeria. The lack of growth affects a range of activities in the economy and to boost the economic growth is to empower the people as a means of revitalizing the weakened social pillar. Majority of Nigerians citizens according to (2006 census) citizens live below the poverty line and have limited or no access to basic necessities for a decent human existence. These necessities include potable water, good housing, clothing, shelter, adequate nutrition, basic education, primary health care, security, reliable transportation, sound infrastructure and sustainable sources of livelihood (NPC, 2005, V20:2020 and Amadi, 2014).

The poverty line in Nigeria have stratified between the haves and have not, between the north and the south, between the educated and the uneducated. Poor people are more likely to live in rural areas and have larger families than the rest of the population thereby given room for tensions and social conflicts which has eroded the fabric that held the society together (NPC, 2005). Social conflicts in various localities in Nigeria has increased poverty not only in areas affected by inflows of internally displaced people but people not displaced often face inadequate infrastructure and other facilities needed to earn a decent living (NPC,2005).Poor parents beget poor children, creating a kind of dynasty of meeting the MDGs statistics from the 1996 survey indicate that poverty is deep and pervasive, with an estimated 70 percent of the population living in poverty (NPC, 2005).

In addition, Nigeria records gross under achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) with a significant amount of its population still living below the poverty

line, and with food insecurity among others. According to Ukpong (as cited in Eleagu, 2013) observes that poverty subjects one not to be respected or regarded as a person in the society. To ameliorate poverty in Nigeria, attempts have been made by various governments to curb the challenge of poverty. It is observed that people no longer suffer and smile but suffer, cry and die. The height of poverty line in Abia State is worrisome, according to Anyebe (2014) affirmed that in spite of most governments efforts on embarking on one form of poverty alleviation strategy or the other the extent to which these programmes have impacted on the poor or positively reduce the poverty rate in Abia state is on the minimal. United Nation's Development Programme report (as cited in Eleagu, 2013) posits that Nigeria is 141 poorest nations on Human Development Index and number 20 poorest countries in the world with 70% of its population been poor and 54.4% living in absolute poverty. It is observed that the fight against poverty is yet to record any success in the alleviation of poverty line in Nigeria.

Evidence had shown that poverty has been a serious menace confronting Nigeria since independence in 1960. According to Kale (as cited in Eleagu, 2013) averred that the poverty line in Nigeria has increased with almost 100 million people living on less than \$1 a day despite strong growth. He also went further to state that those living in absolute poverty are those who can only afford the basic essentials of foods, shelter and clothing and if measures are not taking into cognizance to break the gap between the rich and the poor that the poverty line will be on increase by 2011. Also according to Kale (as cited in Eleagu, 2013) poverty line has slightly increased to 71.5 percent, 61.9 percent and 62.8 percent respectively in 2011 and the Gross Domestic Growth had also increased since then. Most governments in Nigeria have introduced policies, programmes and strategies geared towards the reduction of poverty but with no good success.

Anyebe (2014) averred that the introduction of Agricultural Development Projects (ADP) of 1975 and Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) initiated by the Obasanjo's administration. The aim of the programmes was for the people to have adequate food and fight against hunger which is an element of poverty alleviation in Nigeria. Also in 1986, The Shagari's Administration introduced the Green Revolution (GR) to improve agricultural production and ensure the development of rural dwellers through agro industries, good network of feeder roads, educational facilities, health facilities, electricity, potable water and the like in the rural areas (Amadi, 2014). According to Amadi and Anyebe (2014) noticed the programmes launched by Babanginda to deal with absolute and relative poverty such as the Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) and Better Life Programme to the mobilization, empowerment of women at the grass root level. Also during the Abacha administration Community Bank (CB) and Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) was launched to reduce poverty line in Nigeria to its bearest minimum. The transition to democracy between 2001 - 2010 laid a solid foundation for economic growth and development in Nigeria by Obansanjo launching a Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) to eradicate poverty thereby providing over 200,000 menial-based jobs and creating employment to increasing restive youths (NPC, 2005 & Anyebe, 2014).

In order to ameliorate the poverty line in Abia State; a take-off grant of N6 billion was given for the establishment of the NAPEP schemes in all the states of Nigeria. A study in 2011 cited in Eleagu 2013 observed that 100,000 unemployed youths were trained under its Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP) while 5,000 were trained as fashion designers. Also 50,000 unemployed graduates also partook in the NAPEP Mandatory Attachment Programme, (MAP).

The CAP and MAP was the programme initiated in Abia State to train people both secondary school leavers and graduates. The secondary school leavers were trained in various skills and menial jobs in the areas of agriculture, construction of roads, motor mechanic, hair dressing, furniture making, tricycle (keke) after which they are mobilized to start up their own business so as to get a better living for themselves and their immediate family. It is observed that with huge amount of money sunk for the alleviation of poverty in Nigeria, poverty line is still alarming if not tripled over decades.

According to Tersoo 2013 cited in Eleagu, 2013 affirmed his study on NAPEP on wealth creation in Benue state by saying that Nigeria is a country endowed with rich and natural resources, but over populated with poor people which implies "poverty in the midst of plenty". Also Tersoo noted that in 1960 the poverty line was 15% of its population and in 1980 it rose to 28%, while in 1985 arose to 46% which dropped 43% in 1992. By 1992, the Federal Office of Statistics estimated poverty rate in Nigeria rose to 66%.

NAPEP got all forms of governments, civil society organization, research institutions, organized private sector, women groups and concerned individuals in the eradication of poverty in Nigeria (Eleagu, 2013).

But after about four months of NAPEP implementation there was harsh criticisms of the programme by the public that led the government to constitute an Ad hoc panel to review it and in 2001 four other schemes of NAPEP was established to centrally fight against poverty from all forms of government according to Francis &Nweze (as cited in Eleagu, 2013). The failure of most government to alleviate poverty as was envisaged by the MDGs prompted the initiation of NAPEP.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Poverty Alleviation**

Poverty alleviation is one of the most difficult challenges facing any third world countries where, on the average, majority of population are still living in abject poverty. Evidence had shown in Nigeria the number of those poor is alarming, for instance the number increased from 27% in 1980 to 46% in 1985 and to 67% in 1996, by 1999 it increased to more than 70% according to Baghebo, and Emmanuel 2015, Amadi, 2014, Eleagu, 2013 and NPC 2005,. The high incidence of poverty in the country has made poverty alleviation strategies important policy options over the years with varying result.

Iwuoha and Obi, 2013 cited in Eleagu, 2013 affirmed poverty alleviation as programmes aimed at improving the living standard. Also Baghebo and Emmanuel, 2013 views

poverty alleviation as programmes in Nigeria which the government objectives is to revamp and rebrand the economy.

According to Reutlinger cited in Banjo, 2019 defines poverty alleviation as the set of purposive acts and processes taken by the government both state and globally to look into the problems of poverty. Ogundikpe cited in Banjo, 2019 conceptualized poverty alleviation as the efforts made by people to provide the basic necessities of life to his family. In the view of Ogundikpe alleviation strategies will be a success when given proper attention to address issues, identify the measures to be adopted and look at it properly for who will benefit from it.

The election of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as the President and Commander in Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces amidst thunderous expectations of a new dawn and the mountain of problems and decay the country have found itself over the years took a radical departure from his predecessors. His first tenure in office was on the consolidation of democracy and thereafter, he focused on banking and Telecommunication reformation. He also initiated the NEEDS, SEEDS, and LEEDS at all levels of the state. The NAPEP among others is indeed a national policy instrument for the reduction of poverty and sensitizing development in the country (Amadi, 2014, Baghebo and Emmanuel, 2014, NPC, 2005 and Obadan, 2002).

The Aim of the alleviation programme is on wealth creation, creation of employment, reduction of poverty and the general orientation of values of the programme.

### **Poverty Eradication**

There have been government attempts at PAP and eradication of which NAPEP are the most recent ones. The rationale behind the definition of NAPEP was established in 2001, by the Obasanjo's administration as a corrective and alternative poverty alleviation eradication programme with the purpose of improving the living conditions of the Nigerian populace, especially the poor and the unemployed according to Iwuoha and Obi, 2012 cited in Eleagu, 2013. The mandate of NAPEP is to eradicate all forms of poverty, ensure better delivery and maximum impact and effective utilization of available resources. To achieve effective poverty eradication led to the establishment of YES, SOWESS, RIDS and NRDCS.

Poverty eradication is the ability to increase the basic needs of life such as having enough and adequate food to eat, good water to drink, good network of roads, power supply, good housing, quality education, shelter, adequate health care facilities, and free from indebtedness and dependency. Poverty alleviation Scheme was to reduce absolute poverty in Nigeria to its nearest minimum; absolute poverty in this context connotes a condition in which a person is unable to provide her basic livelihood for human survival such like food, clothing, shelter, transport, education, health and the like. To actualize the dream of the poverty eradication in Nigeria means that all Nigerian would be provided with the following:

- a) Steady source of good income
- b) Basic health care services or facilities
- c) Good quality and high nutritional diet
- d) Good quality education

- e) Good portable drinking water
- f) Good standard housing units
- g) Good road network and other means of transportation.
- h) Stable and affordable power supply.
- i) Good security and environment for production and trades.

According to Aliyu 2001 (cited in Amadi ,2014) opined that various tiers of government were involved to provide jobs to about 214,367 graduates and unemployed restive youths who were to be paid ₦3,500,00 every month while the federal government rolled out plans to still maintain continuity with the participants of the programmes which is categorized into three groups. These are:

- i) Skilled unemployed
  - ii) Unskilled and uneducated
  - iii) Unskilled /Semi unemployed
- 1) **Skilled Unemployed:** These groups of persons are trained in various vocational skills but need mobilization to enable them establish sustainable viable ventures.
  - 2) **Unskilled and uneducated:** This are group of persons who need formal education through the Universal Basic (UBE) programme and after which they would be provided with permanent menial jobs in the areas of agricultural road maintenance, tree planting.
  - 3) **Unskilled /Semiskilled Unemployed:** This is the combination of persons without formal educational training but need to be trained for a period of three to twelve months and after which they will be incorporated to a construction or manufacturing companies for a period of three years to enable them acquire additional skills. They will therefore be settled with micro-credits.

### **An Overview of NAPEP in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, poverty has evolved over decades to become a critical development, poverty alleviation expresses the efforts of government, non-governmental organization and other agencies to improve or provide a better condition to the poor. The improvement of the general condition of man is to have self-respect, free to make his or her own decisions of life, and empowering the poor to participate in socio-economic and political decisions. The purpose of poverty alleviation is to empower the poor which embraces total transformation of the economic, social, psychological, political and legal circumstances of those not in the corridors of power. The purpose for the evolution over years is centrally focused on rural development and eradication of poverty.

According to the World Bank Report 2020 and Aluko 1995 cited in ObikezeAnanti, and Onyekwelu, 2015 views poverty as the inability to get a minimum standard of living and lack of command to provide for his or her consumption. Agbi (2011) cited in Obikeze, Ananti, and Onyekwelu, 2015 averred that poverty in Nigeria is characterized by hunger, homelessness, malnutrition, alarming rate unemployment, human trafficking, kidnapping, drug abuse, and prostitution among others. She also argued that majority of Nigerians are living in abject poverty which handful of persons live in opulence.

However, in a bid to reduce the alarming rate of poverty in the country has led to diverse government adopting one poverty reduction strategy or the other but have

yielded little or no success. The dawn of democracy in 2001 gave an impetus to address the needs of the poor and underprivileged. The Obasanjo's administration initiated the PAP with the aim of promoting employment and fighting against unemployment. There was a colossal wastage that led to the establishment of NAPEP, in 2001, with the purpose of eradicating poverty. Through the NAPEP, ministries such as Agriculture and Rural Development, Education, water Resources, power and steel, employment labour and productivity, women affairs and youth development, Health, works and housing environment, finance and National planning commission also worked in collaboration with NAPEP.

Again, agencies like Universal Basic Education Commission, (UBEC), Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB), River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA), Small and Medium Industries (SMI), Bank of Industry (BOI), Power Holding Company of Nigeria. (PHCN), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), and Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria. (FMBN), Incorporated to make NAPEP a success.

According to Abdullahi, 2008 cited in Anyebe, After about four months, of NAPEP establishment was marred with criticisms of over- centralization, unsustainable design, over polarization , irregular payment, uncoordinated management and lack of monitoring logistics and high-level of corruption.it was on this premise, that President Olusegun Obasanjo set up a presidential panel headed by Professor Ango Abdullahi to look into the blueprint for Youth empowerment scheme which after their findings led to the recommendation and replacement of NAPEP which gave birth to the following schemes.

1. **Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES):** This provides Job Opportunities in skills acquisition, employment and wealth creation to youths. The primary aim of the programme is to empower the youth economically.
2. **Rural Infrastructure Development (RIDS):** The aim of the programme is to provide and irrigation of water rural-urban transportation; rural telecommunication, rural energy and power supply.
3. **Social Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS):** This scheme ensures the provision of quality forms and special education, health care services, remedial programmes for destitute and physically challenged and so on.
4. **National Resources Development and conservative scheme (NRDCS):** It educates the farmers on the negative effect on the prolonged use of synthetic fertilizer on soil quality and encourages the usage of organic fertilizers for better soil protection and preservation.

#### **Empirical Review**

Diverse studies reveal that poverty is a global phenomenon as ascertained by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The empirical findings of poverty alleviation were achieved by reviewing others related literature.

According to central Bank of Nigeria 1999 cited in Alfa, Otaida and Audu, 2014 defines poverty as:

*A state where an individual is not able to cater adequately for his or her basic needs of foods, clothing, and shelter; is unable to meet social and economic obligations, lacks gainful employment, skills, assets and self-esteem, and has limited access to social and economic agriculture such as education, health care, potable water, sanitation and consequently has limited chance of advancing his or her welfare to the limit of his or her capabilities.*

With the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) view of poverty showed the growing incidence of poverty in Nigeria have stratified Nigeria society between the haves and have-nots, between the educated and the uneducated. The implication of this is that the inability to provide for the family could make one to do anything to keep his family going. And for him to be respected, recognized and regarded in the society, would push him to indulge in one crime or the other. According to New Express as cited in Eleagu, 2013 observed in the 1990s, Abia witnessed high rate of criminality such as armed robbery, kidnapping, illicit drug dealing, child trafficking, prostitution and the like. According to World Bank's View on poverty as the inability of a person to provide or meet his basic needs. A person is seen to be poor when he lives below minimum level.

A closer observation reveals that those involved in the various heinous crime in the state are people without any form of job, skill who fend for themselves, family and siblings who are no longer working as a result of ill health, aged to take care of themselves. It is observed that poverty and unemployment gives room to social ills by increasing social tensions that has eroded the fabric that held the society together Ukpong cited in Eleagu, 2013 observes that poverty subjects one not to be respected or regarded as a person on the society. The study concluded that to get the society free from criminality and the economy on firm footing, there should be adequate well paid employment or skill that will shift their mentality from poverty and vice-versa. Bello et al. (2010) cited in Osmond 2015 examine views the poverty situation in Nigeria by using data of economic growth and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expenditure. Atoloye, 1997 in cited Osmond, 2015 in the study, "strategy for growth-led poverty alleviation in Nigeria" averred that for fast and sustained growth, the new industrial strategy will call for good use of infrastructure which serves as a poverty reduction strategy, noting that the economy of a country can only be boosted in a stable macroeconomic environment and with the right-factors of production. According to the study, the economic growth of a country cannot be sustained in trade deficit that cannot be financial. Maduagwu 2000 cited in Osmond 2015, in the poverty alleviation programmes views domestic investment will boost economic growth and development such as rule of law, infrastructure and education. The rule of law "ensures life and security, gives rights and obligations which can help in reducing political risks to investors and to cut down transportation costs". Business does not thrive in an environment heated up politically.

According to Aliyu and Dansabo (2017) observes that Nigeria does not need any new policy on development and poverty alleviation programmes. All it needs s to

show seriousness in the implementation of existing policies to look into Nigerian poverty and fight against weak governance in all its ramifications. The indicators analyzed in the study were (policy inconsistency, lack of accountability and probity in programme implementation, poor coordination of programme, inadequate funding. Also Chukwuemaka cited in Aliyu and Dansabo also supported their view of Aliyu and Dansabo that the failure of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria is due to poor implementation, incompatibility of policy goals, bad governance, discipline, lack of evaluation monitory policies, and inadequate finding.

In line with the above, Khalid [11] cited in Aliyu and Dansabo argued that the responsibility of various administrations to reduce poverty have been ad hoc and uncoordinated. To buttress his point, he outlined some major factors hindering the success of government effort in the alleviation of poverty, which are: poor coordination, the absence of comprehensive policy framework, ineffective targeting of the poor leading to leakage of benefits to unintended beneficiaries, overlapping of functions which led to institutional rivalry and conflicts, the absence of sustainability mechanism in programme and projects and lack of involvement of the poor especially the unemployed in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Aliyu, 1999 cited in Taiwo and Agwu, 2016 attributed to the failure of poverty reduction programmes in Nigeria to the fact some functions of these agencies and programmes have been duplicated which gives room to unnecessary single influences and interests. Also in some cases, the implementation agencies have been wrongly identified and the roles and functions have been wrongly given out or allocated. Thirdly, there is nonexistence of the right or appropriate implementation agencies which creates gaps in the implementation. Again, there is the problem of poor management, poor accountability and transparency, high level dishonest, pursuit of personal or parochial interests, poor staffing, incompetence, lack of commitment, among the rank and file of the workers in many of the implementation agencies.

Participation must-be prioritized in the issue of poverty alleviation programmes and to achieve success all hands must be in deck (especially the poor for whom the proggmes is introduced) must be involved from planning it implementation stages as is the case with non-governmental organization and international organizations poverty alleviation programmes. Participation does not only accounts for major failure of the programmes, but it shows the apathy among the people towards government poverty alleviation programmes in Abia State.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The survey research design was adopted while the cluster random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Abia State has a total population of 4,112,230 with 17 local government councils/areas. Taro Yamane's formula was used to determine the sample size of 500 To achieve consistency in results, tests and re-test method was

employed to test the reliability of the instrument that was carried out on a repeat of same instrument on (10) purposively selected respondents within Abia State and was done within the time interval of two weeks after the initial test. Responses were analysed using simple percentages presented on tables and statistical charts, while Chi-Square ( $X^2$ ) was used to test hypotheses.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 1 (Hypothesis 1): There are no poverty alleviation programmes and their performance in Nigeria between 2001-2010**

### Computation of Chi-Square ( $X^2$ )

Cells	$F_o$	$F_e$	$F_o - F_e$	$(F_o - F_e)^2$	$\sum(F_o - F_e)^2 \div F_e$
A	40	37	3	9	0.243
B	15	18	-3	9	0.5
C	20	24	-4	16	0.667
D	15	11	4	16	1.455
E	7	6	1	1	0.167
F	2	3	-1	1	0.333
G	7	7	0	0	0
H	3	3	0	0	0
<b><math>X^2</math></b>					<b>3.365</b>

**Source:** Field Work, 2020.

**Decision Rule:** The degree of freedom is calculated as 3. The critical value of 5% (0.05) = 7.815 level of significance as compared with the  $X^2 = 3.365$ . The result of the test of this hypothesis indicates that there are poverty alleviation programmes but they do not engender good performance in Nigeria between 2001-2010 since the calculated  $X^2$  value is less than the critical value of 7.815

**Strength of the relationship:** The result of the test of hypothesis has proved that poverty alleviation programmes do not engender good performance in Abia State. This indicates that the NAPEP as a poverty alleviation strategy in Nigeria only served the purpose of the elites. This has been viewed by many living under the poverty lines as government formalities formulated to serve the already wealthy Nigerians.

Obi, Nwachukwu and Obiora (2008) posited that poverty has always been around in Nigeria even before independence in 1960. Its alleviation has, therefore, come to remain one of the most important goals of development in post-independence. The scholars listed the core poverty alleviation programmes as Better Life for Rural Women, Family Support Programme, Family Economic Advancement Programme, National Directorate of Employment and the People's Bank of Nigeria. Other poverty alleviation programmes listed within the period are: Agricultural Development Projects, National Agricultural Land Development Authorities, Strategic Grains Reserve Programme, River Basin Development Authorities, National Programme on Immunization, National Primary Health Care Development Agencies, SURE-P, etc. The performance of the programmes however proved difficult over the years in achieving its goals as a result of many factors.

Aliyu (2003) in Anyebe (2015) opined that the federal government set up NAPEP in 2001, which replaced PAP. This shows that government was not just trying to alleviate but eradicate poverty in the country. The main areas of NAPEP were categorized into four schemes: Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS), and National Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRCDS). This was a clear demonstration and commitment of civilian administration to address the challenges faced by the poor in the country. However, in spite of the change in name with much money sunk into these programmes, Poverty rate remains high and the living standard continues to decline.

Going by the above, the result of the test of this hypothesis therefore revealed that there are numerous poverty alleviation programmes which are sufficient enough to address the poverty level and improve living conditions of many Nigerians if properly implemented. The performances of these poverty alleviation programmes do not effectively fight urban and rural poverty rather it is an opportunity to enrich the few rich and elites.

**Table 2: (Test of Hypothesis 2): NAPEP has not contributed to poverty alleviation in Abia State**

**Computation of Chi-Square ( $X^2$ )**

Cells	$F_o$	$F_e$	$F_o - F_e$	$(F_o - F_e)^2$	$\sum(F_o - F_e)^2 \div F_e$
A	35	37	-2	4	0.108
B	20	18	2	4	0.222
C	10	10	0	0	0
D	5	5	0	0	0
E	25	24	1	1	0.042
F	10	11	-1	1	0.091
G	4	5	-1	1	0.2
H	0	1	-1	1	1
$X^2$					<b>1.663</b>

**Source:** Field Work, 2020

**Decision Rule:** The Degree of freedom (df) for the table is calculated as  $(R-1)(C-1) = (2-1)(4-1) = 3$  while a critical value of 5% (0.05) = 7.815 level of significance is used to compare the  $X^2 = 1.663$ . The result of the test of hypothesis one rejects the hypothesis if the value of  $X^2$  is greater than the critical value. It accepts the hypothesis if  $X^2$  value is less than the critical value. This result revealed that NAPEP has contributed to poverty alleviation in Abia State since the calculated value of  $X^2$  (1.663) is less than the table or critical value of 7.815

**Strength of the relationship:** The low value of 1.663 for the chi-square when compare with the critical value of 7.815 at 5% level of significance, indicates that NAPEP has contributed to poverty alleviation in Abia State. In agreement with the result of hypothesis, Idakwoji and Stephen (2003, pgs.64-66) notes that Poverty alleviation programmes has been recognized as an instrument par excellence for effective community development. It is infact a veritable tool for achieving economic prosperity

and community development. Hence, it could be said that poverty alleviation is a sinequanon to community development. The past governments have no doubt initiated and implemented various poverty alleviation programmes with the aim of reducing poverty to the barest minimum which would unequivocally bring about community development.

Chinsman in Eminue (2005) observes that the introduction of NAPEP has provided relative succour to alleviate poverty in the state. He further stressed that poverty alleviation programmes A huge amount of money has been spent through different agencies for poverty alleviation programmes in Abia State to improve the economic condition of the poor people of the State. The programme has a positive impact on the beneficiaries. The programme is not successful with regard to generation of employment as some activities created regular employment and some others created seasonal employment of the beneficiaries. It is observed that standard of consumption of food, clothing, education, health and other items etc., improved. It revealed that state made an impact in developing the social awareness and living condition of the beneficiaries. The study also reveals that 43.86 per cent of the beneficiary households benefited in this programme as they increased their annual net income assets and savings etc. The incidence of poverty among the beneficiary households declined and the social empowerment of women improved significantly.

Through NAPEP, the NDE has been able to trained more than 2 million unemployed Nigerians, provided business training for not less than 400,000 people including entrepreneurs, vocational training up to 90 different trades, and assistance to more than 40,000 unemployed to set up their own businesses. It has organized labour-based groups through which 160,000 people benefited. Its predicament is worsened by the fact that it has over stretched itself by engaging in skills acquisition, granting of loans, procuring and selling agricultural inputs such as fertilizers. It has succeeded in recovering less than 10% of its loans with resettlement of trained beneficiaries.

**Hypothesis 3: There are no problems associated with the implementation of NAPEP in Abia State**

**Computation of Chi-Square ( $X^2$ )**

Cells	$F_o$	$F_e$	$F_o - F_e$	$(F_o - F_e)^2$	$\sum (F_o - F_e)^2 \div F_e$
A	25	22	3	9	0.409
B	15	18	-3	9	0.5
C	20	17	3	9	0.529
D	10	13	-3	9	0.692
E	50	56	6	36	0.643
F	50	44	6	36	0.818
G	45	45	0	0	0
H	35	35	0	0	0
<b><math>X^2</math></b>					<b>3.591</b>

**Source: field work, 2020**

**Decision Rule:** The degree of freedom is calculated as 3. The critical value of 5% (0.05) = 7.815 level of significance as compared with the  $X^2 = 3.591$ . The result of the

test of this hypothesis indicates that there are problems/challenges associated with the implementation of NAPEP in Nigeria since the chi-square value of  $X^2$  (3.591) is less than the critical value of 7.815 at 5% level of significance.

**Strength of the hypothesis/relationship:** Eminue (2005) in Obi, Nwachukwu and Obiora (2008) opined that Nigeria has experienced waves of poverty alleviation programmes which are of economic dimensions. However, these programmes have many setbacks which have consequently led to non-achievement of the intended objectives. The scholar mentioned the followings: lack of proper focus, inadequate coordination, political instability, unwieldy and expensive scope, lack of executive capacity, corruption and mismanagement, “top-down” rather than “bottom-up” approach, duplication of implementation agencies, micro-credit problems, absence of cost effectiveness in some PAPs, high administrative cost, inadequate funding, slow economic growth, infrastructural inadequacies and macroeconomic and sectoral problems.

Anyebe (2015) averred that in spite of the introduction of NAPEP to address the issue of poverty, poverty is still widespread and severe but varies among the 6 geo-political zones and among the 36 states and FCT. North -West geo- political zone has the highest poverty index (72.2%) while South-East has the lowest (26.7%). Indeed, 75, 727,981 (54.4%) of the country’s population live on less than \$1 per day (NAPEP Report, 2009). This is lower than the incidence of 65.6% in 1996 but it was still high and worrisome.

The challenges of poverty which affect more than half of the population and the growing inequality and increasing graduate unemployment remain worrisome. This is in spite of an average economic growth rate of over 6.0%. The issues of growth without employment, growing inequality, high incidence of poverty and the unbaiting unemployment are some of the challenges facing the country (National Assembly Statistical Information, 2009).

The poverty situation became worse when as many as 112 million or 70.0% of Nigerians were living below the poverty line in 2013. An individual is considered poor in Nigeria when he has an availability of less than 137.4 thousand Nigerian Naira (roughly 361 U.S. dollars) per year. The NBS (2019) noted that 40.1 percent of population in Nigeria lived in poverty due to poor performance of the poverty alleviation programmes that is characterized by inflation, poor funding, slow economic growth, infrastructural inadequacies and macroeconomic and sectoral problems.

**Test of hypothesis 4: NAPEP has not been able to empower the youths through skill acquisition programmes in Abia State.**

**Computation of Chi-Square ( $X^2$ )**

Cells	$F_o$	$F_e$	$F_o - F_e$	$(F_o - F_e)^2$	$\sum(F_o - F_e)^2 \div F_e$
A	25	22	3	9	0.409
B	15	18	-3	9	0.5
C	20	17	3	9	0.529
D	10	13	-3	9	0.692
E	50	56	6	36	0.643
F	50	44	6	36	0.818
G	45	45	0	0	0
H	35	35	0	0	0
$X^2$					<b>3.591</b>

**Source: Field work, 2020**

**Decision Rule:** The degree of freedom is calculated as 3. The critical value of 5% (0.05) = 7.815 level of significance as compared with the  $X^2 = 3.591$ . The result of the test of this hypothesis indicates that NAPEP has been able to empower the youths through skill acquisition programmes in Abia State since the chi-square value of  $X^2$  (3.591) is less than the critical value of 7.815 at 5% level of significance.

**Strength of the hypothesis/relationship:** Osita (n.d) stated that there is improvement in income distribution. Relatively high levels of inequality persist in Nigeria, even where solid growth and a reduction in the average incidence of poverty have occurred. Current high levels of inequality, low human capital development, and the low level of assets held by the poor in Nigeria underline the importance of instituting a pattern of growth beneficial to the poor. Despite these, evidence has shown that economic growth is a powerful means of reducing poverty, not all patterns of growth have the same impact. For example, production incentives that encourage growth in rural areas will likely directly benefit farmers but also indirectly benefit the landless through an increased demand for labour and those involved in agricultural marketing. Labour-intensive agricultural growth is particularly important for poverty reduction because agriculture in Nigeria provides employment for up to 70 percent of the labour force.

Most Abian youths were given access to agricultural loans to help assuage the poverty effects of the dwellers. A different set of strategy was adopted to reduce their poverty, such as increased access to productive assets and technologies to increase the productivity of activities they typically perform. A restructuring of FEAP also benefit the youths in raising their level of economic activities and income, enhancing access of small scale farmers and traders (particularly women) to credit, improving rural infrastructure, and generating and applying better production technologies are important measures for poverty alleviation. Also, the rural people have lead productive and enjoyable lives, and therefore, to participate actively in various social-economic activities, they also need better access to education, health and water supply services. The effect of growth on poverty is measured by the extent to which national growth in income helps to reduce the national measure of poverty. This growth elasticity depends on the ability of the poor

to take advantage of expanded economic opportunities offered through growth, which in turn is governed by their access to land, credit, education, health care, markets and so on.

In the same vein, Magaji (2005) argued that, the current poverty eradication policies are micro in nature which have been able to address household poverty level. For instance, by training the thousands of people and giving stipends, poverty eradication might not occur as expected. To this extent it could be reasoned that the nature and character of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria have change the standard of living and poverty situation on the youths of Abia State to a reasonable level.

## **Conclusion**

From the results obtained from the analysis of primary data above, the hypotheses clearly shows that the implementation of NAPEP has significant impacts on entrepreneurial development among youths and the provision of micro credit facilities to entrepreneur in Abia State but unfortunately the policies of NAPEP were poorly executed in the state. Again and notwithstanding the above point, much is still to be desired. The findings agrees with the earlier position of Mustapha (2012) that there is emphasis on the youth empowerment scheme (YES) neglecting the other mandates; even the YES itself focused more on the disbursement and administration of NAPEP's vehicle popularly called "KEKE NAPEP". To explain the significant level obtained in the results above. Issues of natural resource development and conservation scheme, Abdu (2012) observed, from a cross national assessment, less than 20% of the target beneficiaries have benefited through this scheme. This means that NAPEP has not made much impact in harnessing agricultural, water and solid minerals resources and conservation efforts especially in the rural areas where the main occupation is agriculture. There is also more concern in the development of educational and health facilities in rural communities in the state.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- i. The study recommends that for poverty eradication programme to succeed in Nigeria, there is need for massive investment in human capital through quality education for all, improved modern healthcare services, employment generation, capital building, radical infrastructural development, establishment of industries for export promotion.
- ii. There is need to strengthen the capacity of NAPEP through improved budgetary allocation. Other stakeholders; federal, state, local and institutions concerned with poverty reduction should increase concern so that other objectives/ projects identified by the agency can be address and accommodate more people living below poverty line.

## **REFERENCES**