POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES AND THE PREVAILING CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NIGERIA: AN ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT
Strategic planning and implementation of well thought out policies is critical for the enthronement of good governance which brings about sustainable development in any country. However, available data shows that poverty is steadily on the rise in Nigeria, despite the country's effort in the implementation of diverse poverty alleviation programmes. Thus, such a worrisome trajectory appears to be linked to so many factors such as corruption, debt burden, rising rate of unemployment especially among youths, overdependence on oil, lack of political will to address poverty, ethno-religious conflicts among others. It argued that efforts to alleviate poverty through poverty alleviation programmes will remain an exercise in futility without first addressing fundamental, societal hiccups like corruption, economic inequality and ethno-religious conflicts. Methodologically, this study adopted documentary method while relying on content qualitative content analysis to analyze data gathered. The study likewise utilized abstractions from the theory of post-colonial state which served as its theoretical framework of analysis. Findings showed that unless selfless and responsible political leadership is entrenched in Nigeria, which would lead to tackling fundamental problems associated with income inequality, corruption, political instability and other related vices in the Nigerian society, the fight against poverty may remain unresolved and the search for sustainable development will continue to be a mirage. The study therefore, recommended among others that the government should first address societal hiccups to the success of poverty alleviation programmes, such as economic inequality, ethno-religious conflicts and corruption. This will engender a fair and favourable playground for the poverty alleviation progrmames to thrive and be successful.

Introduction

The post-colonial history of Nigeria is fraught with development strategies targeted at reducing the sufferings of the masses. Since independence in 1960, Nigeria had launched and implemented over 40 poverty reduction programmes, all targeted at poverty reduction. Onah (2021) identified some of the established programmes as; Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the Green Revolution, the Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Better Life Programme (BLP) for rural women; a gender specific programme designed to improve the life of rural women, the Family Support Programme (FSP), the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), the Strategic Grains Reserve Authority (SGRA), the Accelerated Crop Production (ACP), the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), the Vision 2020, the N-Power, among others.

Similarly, the country had adopted, and domesticated several global and continental development plans, all targeted at mitigating the grave effect of poverty. Some of these global plans include: the Lagos Plan of Action; the United Nation's New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s; the Africa-Europe Summits' Cairo Plan of Action; the World Bank led Strategic Partnership with Africa; the International Monetary Fund-led Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPS), the Japan-led Tokyo Agenda for Action, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD); the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among others. Successive administrations in Nigeria, both civilian and military had ostensibly demonstrated its concern for the plights of the ordinary citizen in Nigeria. Nkom (1989, p.10) observed that motivated by the desire to advertise their "concern" for the sufferings of the ordinary citizen, successive governments in Nigeria have tried to outdo each other with the introduction of new strategies and programmes portrayed in sleek slogans and captivating acronyms.

To secure legitimacy and garner political support, successive governments have embarked on desperate endeavors to sanitize their poverty reduction programs, aiming to distinguish them from the initiatives undertaken by their predecessors (Nkom, 1989). In most cases, "achievements" claimed to have been recorded for such programmes in speeches, statements and media releases were often at variance with the reality on ground. Poverty alleviation strategies and their aims have often been formulated by individuals who are disconnected from the impoverished, rural setting, resulting in a limited and uncertain understanding of poverty. Government officials often fail to involve the general population in the planning and execution of poverty reduction programs, which has resulted in a lack of continuity and disconnect from the citizens. This has ultimately led to the failure of many poverty reduction initiatives in Nigeria, resulting in limited visible development nationwide. According to Liu et al. (2015), sustainable development and poverty reduction go hand in hand.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global frameworks present Nigerian leaders with an additional avenue to demonstrate their unwavering commitment in the fight against poverty. As the nation persistently strives to combat this issue, these initiatives provide Nigerian leaders with an opportunity to intensify their efforts. Internationally, ending poverty within the globe is outlined by the United Nation in the agenda 2030 as the first goal among the seventeen SDGs (Campagnolo & Davide, 2019). Many countries around the world, particularly in Africa, are taking deliberate steps to eradicate poverty by adopting and implementing policy frameworks, all of which have the potential to help alleviate poverty. Nigeria should not lag behind in these endeavors.

However, the defining features of the Nigerian society appear to be impeding the success of poverty alleviation programmes. The country is replete with corruption, income inequality, ethno-religious crises, and unemployment especially among youths among others. This paper takes a look at both past and current poverty reduction programmes articulated and implemented by the Nigeria state with emphasis on the different challenges militating against the success of the different poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria. More specifically, the point of departure of this study from other earlier studies is its tendency to be

predictive: that the vision 2030 sustainable development goal for poverty alleviation in Nigeria will, like its predecessors, end in futility; given the current economic stance of the country.

Conceptual Definition

Poverty reduction: A conceptual exposition

There are now "two schools of thought" in the conceptualization of poverty. One of the schools teaches classical economics, which defines poverty as the absence of tangible wealth or income. Arinze (1995), who defined poverty as "the lack of income needed to acquire the minimum necessities of life," supported this point of view. "Several types of poverty may be distinguished depending on such factors as, time or duration (long, short terms, or cyclical)," according to Aliyu (2003). Even while poverty may be pervasive in a population, its actual incidence is restricted in scope and direction. "Poverty has economic, social, and political ramifications," claim Gbosi and Philip (2004). The impoverished experience material deprivation, social alienation, and political excommunication.

In general, the concepts of poverty are as follows: inability to obtain necessities or goods; lack of or restricted access to resources that can be used for production. Therefore, those people or households in a given community who are unable to afford a certain basket of essential goods and services are thought to be impoverished. "In this context, basic goods are defined as: food, shelter, water, health care, political and civil rights to participate in decisions pertaining to socioeconomic conditions, and access to productive resources, including education, working skills, and tools" (Ajakaiye & Adeyeye 2001 in Gbosi, 2004). Accordingly, efforts and tactics targeted at lessening the frequency and intensity of poverty in a society are considered to be part of poverty reduction in this study. Therefore, encouraging sustainable socioeconomic growth and development, putting in place social safety net programs, empowering and integrating the public, sustainable development, and good governance are some strategies for reducing poverty.

Sustainable Development

"The concept of sustainable development does not refer to the preservation of nature, but rather to the internalization of strategies, and thus adding new resources to enable economic growth and prosperity to be shared by all," write Barter and Russell (2012). According to Ba-Blewitt (2008) and UNSGHLPS (2012), "sustainable development refers to a series of processes and practices, involving action, and focusing on the improvement of human life." Additionally, it offers a long-term plan to end poverty, lessen inequality, promote inclusive growth, and increase the sustainability of production and consumption. Thus, this study is consistent with the UN's (2005) definition of sustainable development, which defines it as development that satisfies current demands without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to satiate their own. According to Dannbach (2003), integrated decision making is the fundamental tenet of sustainable development, with the integration of environmental, social, and economic issues into all facets of decision-making serving as its foundation.

Theoretical Framework

The Marxist idea of Africa's post-colonial state serves as the foundation for this essay. Marxists view the state in its broadest sense as upholding an order that ultimately serves the interests of the ruling class. This is so that it maintains the circumstances that give rise to the dominance of the ruling class. Ake (1985, p.5) notes the following:

> The state represents a particular form of class domination wherein the ruling class is separated from the system of institutional mechanisms of domination and the state itself is seen as an objective force assisting society. This is achieved through the mediation of commodity exchange.

The state's ability to organize the circumstances that allow the elite class to maintain its dominance in a mature capitalist society is a noteworthy aspect of its nature. This is because the state is not a direct tool of the class that it serves. From both the ruling class and the ruled class, it seems to be comparatively independent (Draper, 1974, pp.74-84).

According to Ekekwe (1980), the state's relative autonomy is essential for structuring the capitalist hegemony in addition to allowing it to supposedly serve the interests of society as a whole. According to Marxist theory, the state under capitalist Western formations may be acting in the bourgeoisie's best interests, but this does not always seem to be the case because the state is typically perceived as neutral, which is the same as claiming that it is class neutral. According to Ake (1985, p. 3), "the state is by no means independent of the mode of production, even though it is institutionally constituted so that it is independent of the social class, including the hegemonic class." Therefore, class dominance still exists under the state, but the state's independence tends to hide this from the "ordinary eye."

According to Ekekwe (1985, p. 12), the state in advanced capitalist societies differs from that in post-colonial formations in that, while in the former it serves to uphold the social and economic relations that allow for bourgeois accumulation, in the latter case, the state acts as a direct tool for capital accumulation for the dominant class or its constituents due to factors related to the degree of development of productive forces. Thus, the state was a crude weapon of colonial capital, according to Ake (1985, p. 10), which was employed to force Africans into commodity relations, alter their pattern of production, and stop the creation of an African bourgeoisie that was capitalist. The colonial state played a key role in bringing its economy into line with that of the metropolitan state. The development of orthodox capitalist culture in the colonies was prevented by the pervasive role of the colonial state in the economy, which was primarily intended to serve metropolitan capitalism. As a result, capitalist accumulation took the form of utilizing the state apparatus as an instrument for personal enrichment.

In the context of this study, the state in Nigeria serves as a direct tool for public officials to accumulate primitive goods at the expense of development initiatives and the interests of the general populace. Because of Nigeria's instrumentalist nature, relevant public officials perceive the management of poverty reduction initiatives like NAPEP, NDE, N-Power, YOU-WIN, and even the SDGs programs as a chance to materially benefit themselves (Onah, 2021). Against this backdrop, it becomes clear why the Nigerian political elite is unwilling to make significant investments in human capital training, which is the cornerstone of combating poverty, particularly in the country's informal economy. This is so that state officials in charge of these poverty-reduction initiatives would be prevented from using investments in human capital as a means of embezzling money. This hypothesis provides an explanation and understanding for Nigeria's incapacity to develop and carry out sincere and long-lasting programs aimed at reducing poverty.

Methodology

This study adopted the documentary method in collecting secondary data. According to Aniche and Ofodum (2018, p.45) the “documentary method is an instrument for gathering in-depth information. The documentary method relies on secondary sources of data gotten from textbooks, journals, reports etc. It involves the extraction of information or data from already existing works, and therefore, not generated in direct response to an investigator’s stimulus. Data so generated were analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

Strategic Planning, Policy Implementation and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

Before her independence, available data revels that Nigeria had a comparatively low rate of poverty in the years after gaining independence. In comparison to now, the poverty rate was quite low at this time, hovering around 15%. The Cable News (2024) reports that the poverty rate in Nigeria is predicted to increase to 38.8 by the end of 2024, more than double what it was in the years immediately after independence.

According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics, 131 million Nigerians are classified as multidimensional poor, and 71 million live in extreme poverty, according to a Punch newspaper report published in 2023. More so, scholars such as Khan and Cheri (2016) and Nambiappan et al. (2018) argues that the nation is the fourth-largest producer and exporter of palm oil worldwide in addition to being one of Africa's top producers of crude oil. Nigeria undoubtedly has a wealth of resources at its disposal, including a very fertile area that is ideal for agriculture as well as minerals like limestone, iron ore, columbine, gypsum, and kaolin, to name a few. Regardless of all the plentiful human and mineral resources in Nigeria, there is

the prevalence of high rate of poverty in the country, where over one hundred million of its population is living in abject poverty (Jaiyeola & Bayat, 2020).

Hussaini (2014) notes that in a bid to address the poverty crisis in Nigeria, many poverty reduction program strategies have been initiated and implemented by both past and present leaders. These strategies were executed through the adoption of different administrative plans which were categorized into three phases: the Pre-SAP era, the SAP era, and the democratic era (During the pre-SAP era, many efforts were put by the Nigerian government or in collaboration with some international donor agencies. These programs include Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), River Basin Development Authority (RBDA), Green Revolution (GR), Agricultural Development Programs (ADPs), and National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA) (Antia-Obong & Otung, 2019). Although there is a degree of success achieved by some of the Pre-SAP era programs, most of them lacked sustainability and were diverted from their original focus, as a result leading to their failure.

The 1980s saw a severe rise in poverty, which made living in the nation extremely challenging. This caused the government to try to control the situation by implementing SAP; nevertheless, this did not satisfy the desires of a large number of Nigerians (Ogbuke et al., 2020). During the SAP era, numerous initiatives were created and put into action, including as the Family Support Program (FSP), Better Life Program (BLP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN), and Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI) (Hussaini, 2014). Notwithstanding the different poverty reduction programs initiated in the country, poverty continues to raise its ugly head, and this can be traced to corruption, program inconsistency, lack of political will, poor implementation, lack of focus, and lack of sustainability of the programs (Rabiu, 2022).

There were great hopes for the country's progress out of poverty when the democratic system was restored in 1999. Various initiatives were put into place, including the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), the Poverty Alleviation Program (PAP), and the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (Aliyu & Dansabo, 2017). Many programs, such as the Social Investment Program (SIP), the N-Power volunteer corps scheme, the National Homegrown School Feeding Program, Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), the Micro Credit Scheme (MCS), and the Trader Moni scheme/initiatives, were introduced during the Buhari administration in an effort to lessen the widespread poverty (Abubakar, 2019). However, many social analyst and scholars alike posits that efforts to reduce poverty in Nigeria lack sincere commitment in identifying the poor and the multidimensional nature of poverty in the country. Therefore, most of the efforts being made are not even targeting the actual poor but are used as an avenue for the elites to accumulate materialistic resources to themselves.

The majority of both the past and current government expenditures are devoted to these initiatives aimed at raising the average citizen's standard of living while maintaining the impoverished population's status quo. According to Yusuf (2020), the Nigerian Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs was given N258.4 billion between January and September 2020; of that amount, N96.3 billion was expended during that time. The tragedy is not unrelated to the widespread corruption and robbery of public funds by Nigerian political leaders, which is one of the main reasons that all the programs started and intended to lower poverty among the general populace in the nation have not been executed effectively (Momoh & Attah, 2018). Below is a tabular presentation of some poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria from 1972 till date

Tabular Presentation of some Poverty Reduction Programmes in Nigeria (1972 till Date)

SN	Programme	Objective	Year	Administration
1	National Accelerated Food Production Programme	To facilitate a substantial growth in the cultivation of maize, cassava, rice, and wheat in the Northern states through subsistence farming methods within a limited timeframe.	1972	General Yakubu Gowon
2	Operation Feed the Nation	The initiative was implemented with the aim of enhancing food production across the nation by engaging and involving individuals from all sectors, empowering them to be self-sufficient in providing for their own nutritional needs.	1976	General Olusegun Obasanjo
3	Green Revolution Programme	The initiative focused on enhancing the output of food and essential resources to guarantee food security and self-reliance in staple commodities. Additionally, it aimed to enhance the production of livestock and fish to fulfill domestic and international demands, as well as to broaden and vary the country's foreign currency earnings by cultivating and processing export crops.	1980	Alhaji Shehu Shagari
4	Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure	The initiative aimed to facilitate a holistic advancement in Nigeria's food production, road networks, and rural infrastructure.	1986	General Ibrahim Babangida
5	The Nigerian Agriculture Land Development Authority	The objective of the authority was to provide strategic public assistance for land development, facilitate and encourage improved utilization of Nigeria's rural land and its resources, enhance lucrative employment prospects for rural residents, elevate the quality of life for rural communities, and focus on attaining food security through self-sufficiency and self-reliance.	1993	Chief Ernest Shonekan
5	Family Support Programme	Provided for the creation of an empowerment initiative aimed at supporting local producers of goods and services, as well as aspiring entrepreneurs in	1993	

		cottage industries. It also outlines the requirements for accessing loan facilities, and establishes guidelines for loan repayment within the program.		Chief Ernest Shonekan
6	National Poverty Eradication Programme	Obasanjo initiated the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) in 2000; however, PAP was subsequently discontinued and substituted with the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001. NAPEP adopted a multifaceted approach to eradicating poverty, which included the Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP) focusing on skills training for self-reliance, the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) aimed at providing unemployed youth with opportunities for skill acquisition, wealth generation, and employment, the Mandatory Attachment Programme which involved providing credits and trade training, Rural Infrastructure Development which aimed at overall improvement in rural development, and the Social Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS) which focuses on providing social and welfare services to its beneficiaries.	2001	President Olusegun Obasanjo
7	National Special Programme on Food Security	During the tenure of OlusegunObasanjo, this initiative was implemented across all 36 states of the federation. The primary aim of this scheme was to enhance agricultural output and eradicate poverty in rural areas.	2002	President Olusegun Obasanjo
8	Root and Tuber Expansion Programme	The initiative spans across 26 states and was formulated to tackle the issues surrounding food production and rural impoverishment. Its primary objective was to enhance the farming practices related to root and tuber crops among agricultural workers in order to secure food security.	2003	President Olusegun Obasanjo
9	Agricultural Transformation Agenda	The initiative was established with the goal of shifting the narrative surrounding agriculture from being solely a business venture to being viewed as a crucial development issue. Its primary objective was to entice private investors to invest in agriculture, enhance the value of locally produced goods,	2011	President Umar Yar'Adua

		transform the overall perception of agriculture, and generate employment opportunities for the burgeoning youth and female population in Nigeria.		
10	Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YOUWĪN)	The central aim of the scheme is to empower the Nigerian youths by providing grants to small business owners.	2011	President Goodluck Jonathan
	The Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (Sure-P),	Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) was aimed at ensuring youth development through youth empowerment programmes that were aimed at creating jobs and alleviating poverty	2012	President Goodluck Jonathan
11	National Social Investment Program (Nsip)	with the aim of ensuring a more equitable distribution of resources to vulnerable populations, including children, youth and women	2015	President Muhammadu Buhari
12	N-Power for youth empowerment	The programme was designed to provide young Nigerians with job training and education	2015	President Muhammadu Buhari
13	Conditional Cash Transfer programme	Designed to directly supports the 'most vulnerable' by providing 'no-strings-attached' cash to those in the lowest income group, helping to 'reduce poverty, improve nutrition and self-sustainability, and supporting development through increased consumption.'	2016	President Muhammadu Buhari
14	Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme	The micro-lending investment programme was targeted at entrepreneurs with a focus on young people and women. It provides cost-free loans to beneficiaries, helping to reduce business start-up costs	2016	President Muhammadu Buhari

15	TraderMoni scheme	designed to provide small loans without collateral to small-scale traders or artisans that may not be able to access loans or credit through banks and traditional financial institutions	2016	President Muhammadu Buhari
16	Home-Grown School Feeding Programme	Geared towards increasing school enrollment by providing meals to schoolchildren, particularly those in poor and food-insecure regions.	2016	President Muhammadu Buhari
17	MarketMoni and FarmerMoni	Targeted at market women and farmers, respectively. These were to improve the traders' standards of living by expanding their businesses.	2017	President Muhammadu Buhari
18	Nigerian Youth Investment Fund, (NYIF).	The NYIF aimed to financially empower Nigeria youth to generate at least 500,000 jobs between 2020 and 2023	2020	President Muhammadu Buhari
19	Market Moni 2.0	To help in promoting the development of locally established businesses, petty traders, and market women micro-enterprises across the country.	2023	President Bola Tinubu
20	Conditional Cash Transfer" (CCT)	The CCT programme was introduced by former President MuhammaduBuhari as part of his administration's 2016 Social Intervention Scheme to reduce poverty in Nigeria.	2023	President Bola Tinubu

Source: Authors' Compilation (2024) from Data Generated from Secondary Sources

The fight against poverty in Nigeria and some identified challenges

Globally, the essence of political leadership is service to the citizenry and also for the provision of good governance. However, in the case of Nigeria and some other African countries the situation seems different as this can be seen in the continuous rise in the poverty level resulting to social vices. The corrupt practices and behaviours exhibited by those in position of power and authority are worrisome and calls for concern. The following are some challenges militating against poverty eradication in Nigeria:

Corruption: Corruption is one of the causes of the increasing poverty level in Nigeria. In any successful government, the public sector is determined by the effective utilization of workers. Regrettably, however, the public sector in Nigeria is damaged by a high level of corruption, bribery, and fraud. This scenario has led to inefficiency, diversion of resources, and general infrastructure decay in the country (Ogunlana, 2019). Pathetically, this corruption exists at all levels (government, private and individual) in Nigeria (Salihu & Gholami, 2018). In line with the above, Agbo (2024) reports how the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) detained a former Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Sadiya Umar-Farouq, for questioning over allegations of corruption in the handling of N37.1 billion social intervention funds during her tenure. This amongst others are corruption cases which stand as a reason for poverty increase in Nigeria.

Debt burden: One of the things that raises Nigeria's poverty index is debt load. This is due to the fact that funds required for economic expansion and development are periodically diverted to pay off debt that has been incurred. As a result, less money is anticipated to be spent on social and physical infrastructure for the benefit of the underprivileged (Omoniyi, 2018a). The government's ability to implement effective programs to reduce poverty in Nigeria is being hampered by the steadily declining price of crude oil and the rising proportion of external debt. It is also worthy to note that the cyclical borrowings which the nation engage in, increases the debt profile of the country internationally with Nigeria‟s total public debt stock rising continuously from NGN8.32 trillion in September 2013 to NGN22.7 trillion in March 2017 (Okafor et al., 2021).

Unemployment: Unemployment is also a factor that increases poverty in Nigeria. When people are unemployed, the cost of living becomes very high for them, and their standard of living remains very low. Their source of livelihood drains over time. Hence, there is a strong correlation between poverty and unemployment (Ucha, 2010). Hence, unemployment plays a huge role in the continuous rise of poverty among households and individuals, leading to limited access to education and health opportunities, access to good housing, increase family vulnerability, and loss of self-confidence.

Overdependence on oil: The Nigerian government's over-reliance on crude oil has resulted in the total abandonment of all other economic sectors in favor of oil. Nigeria's economy is facing significant challenges as a result of the misappropriation of oil riches by its government and the current global oil price collapse, which is making poverty there worse. Literature has shown that agriculture is a very good industry that might improve Nigeria's standing in international trade; yet, the country's poverty and crime rates have increased as a result of the overreliance on oil at the expense of agriculture (Adeniyi & Dinbabo, 2020).

Lack of Political will: Another significant factor contributing to Nigeria's growing poverty is a lack of political will. Research has demonstrated a relationship between the political system and the decline in poverty in any given country. In actuality, there is more to Nigeria's growing poverty than just looking at its causes and giving remedies. Put another way, the government must genuinely commit to developing policies and implementing actions aimed at lowering poverty in Nigeria. Only when there is political will from the leaders—and Nigerian politicians lack this—is this achievable. Deficit of political will is a significant roadblock to progress. For instance, the entire development goal will be impacted if leaders misuse the funds allocated for development.

Insecurity: Nigeria has long struggled with a number of security issues, and the nation's level of insecurity is still a major worry. The general state of insecurity in Nigeria, which includes, but is not limited to, insurgency, abduction, communal strife, farmers-herders' fights, and ethno-religious conflict, among other things, contributes to the entrenchment of poverty in the impacted areas. Nigeria's progress has been

severely hampered by insecurity, which has raised the nation's poverty rate. The nation's economic development may be hampered by the persistent destruction of property and loss of life. Any community's economic activity may be severely hindered by the insecurity. As a result, the rate of poverty in society has increased (Akpa & Nebeife, 2017).

Nepotism: Favoritism toward members of one's own family, close friends, political party, religious or ethnic group, and other people is known as nepotism. Given that it frequently results in a lack of accountability, meritocracy, transparency, and fairness, it can have a substantial impact on the growth of a country. Because nepotism is so pervasive in Nigerian politics and government, it frequently leads to the nomination of unfit and inept people to important posts. This impairs the competence and accountability principles and makes it more difficult for government institutions to operate effectively. Appointing people based only on personal ties frequently results in dishonest public servants, poor policy execution, mishandling of public monies, and stagnation in critical areas including infrastructure, healthcare, education, and economic growth.

Conclusion

The study established that poverty reduction strategies adopted by successive government to stem the tide of poverty has not been totally successful. This is largely due to existing societal obstacles to the poverty alleviation programmes such as economic inequality, ethno-religious conflicts, corruption among others. Furthermore, successive governments failed to take into consideration economic realities at various times when formulating or implementing their various poverty alleviation programmes. Therefore, the study concludes that unless the government first tackles the aforementioned societal hiccups to the poverty alleviation programmes, as well as narrow its views and become more realistic in the set goal and timeframe for achieving such goals, efforts to alleviate poverty in Nigeria through poverty alleviation programmes will remain an exercise in futility.

Recommendations

Arising from the above, this study recommends the following:

i. Government should first address societal hiccups to the success of poverty alleviation programmes such as economic inequality, ethno-religious conflicts and corruption. This will engender a fair and favourable playground for the poverty alleviation progrmames to thrive and be successful.

ii. Feasible and realistic goals within a projected time that is achievable should be set. The condition of the Nigerian economy and the prevailing socioeconomic realities should be considered before establishing poverty alleviation programmes in order for them to be successful.

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