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Poverty Incidence and Reduction Strategies in Nigeria: Challenges of Meeting 2015 MDG Targets

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ABSTRACT Nigeria has experienced rapidly rising income, non-income inequalities and poverty levels in the last decade, thus raising concerns about the possibility of achieving the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) poverty reduction target. Also, available statistics from a recent survey by the Nigerian Bureau of statistics indicates that inequality and poverty is deep and pervasive with an estimated 70 per cent of the population living in poverty. This scenario posits that the economic growth process in the country itself is not productive and has not created equal opportunity that emphasizes both the creation of and equal access for all. Descriptive analysis using secondary data was used in this paper. The paper x-rays poverty issues in Nigeria and reviewed poverty reduction measures between 2007 and 2012; and identified pertinent issues that could orchestrate MDG targets to a stalemate; they include poor targeting of recipients' in the previous poverty reduction measures, lack of necessary infrastructure, corruption amongst others. Consequently, meeting the MDG poverty target for 2015 seems like a mirage. The paper therefore suggests that new poverty reduction strategies for Nigeria should be anchored on inclusive growth fundamentals, redistributive public expenditure, increasing rate of productive job creation and a broad based sectoral growth. The paper further recommends that growth should be broad-based, cutting across all sectors and inclusive of the large part of the workforce that poor men and women make up. New strategies should encompass the key elements of benefit incidence amongst the poor population, to support Nigeria's current development agenda (Transformation Agenda and Vision 20: 2020) significantly; against the fact that the 2015 achievement timeline is doubtful.

INTRODUCTION

According to the Human Development Report (1997), there have been two great ascents from global poverty and human deprivation. The first occurred in Europe and North America and was predicated on the industrial revolution, which saw most of them enjoying full employment and welfare states by the 1950s. The second ascent occurred in the developing countries catalyzed by the end of colonialism which resulted in dramatic declines in poverty (viewed as being more of political than socio-economic progress) and offering the possibility of replicating these gains globally. However, despite the progress already recorded worldwide, poverty remains pervasive.

Nigeria as a country is richly endowed with abundant human and natural resources but is still trapped in the poverty net. Poverty has posed a serious challenge to the Nigerian government over the years with its attendant effects of deprivation of basic necessities of life. The definition of poverty is relative, often based on income of individual or group of individuals concerned. The poor are often considered as those earning below a particular level of income recognized as minimum amount needed to provide the basic necessities of life. However, there is more to poverty than income[1]. Right from 1960 when Nigeria gained independence, the goal focus of national economic programmes has been the reduction of poverty, bridging inequality gaps and the achievement of a sustained economic growth that should translate to economic development. Nonetheless, the Nigeria's growth indicators are yet to translate to horizontal and vertical development. Between the periods of 1961 to 1970 the average growth rate of real GDP was 5.1% and between the periods of 1971 to 1980 average real GDP growth rate was 5%. The average growth rate of real GDP was just 1% between the periods of 1981 to 1990 before rising to 5% between the periods of 1991 to 2000 (CBN 2001). However, growth performance has improved significantly since the return to civilian rule in 1999. The period 2001 to 2008 witnessed an average real GDP growth rate of about 5%. However, economic growth has not resulted in appreciable reduction in unemployment and poverty prevalence. This situation is attributable to a variety of factors that have persisted as important policy challenges and has led to several questions regarding inclusiveness in the poverty reduction process.

The World Bank (1996) report on Nigeria, "Poverty in the Midst of Plenty: The Challenge of Growth with Inclusion" captures the current challenge (*high poverty index*) facing Nigeria today. Indeed, if there is one keyword that sums up the state of Nigerian economy, it is pervasive poverty. Nigeria has no business being one of the poorest 20 countries in the world in terms of per capita income levels if it had managed its resources well. The Nigerian nation has the potential to become Sub-Saharan Africa's largest economy and a major player in the global economy by virtue of its rich human and material resource endowment. However, much of its potentials have not been exploited, meaning that Nigeria runs the risk of not meeting the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 especially if current trends continue. The size and strategic importance of Nigeria in Africa (especially in West Africa) is such that the stakes are very high[2]. On the economic front, Nigeria accounts for about 55 per cent of the GDP in West Africa. Thus, a vibrant and growing Nigerian economy will act as a strong growth pole for West and even Central Africa. Howbeit, Sub-Saharan Africa as a region cannot succeed in reducing poverty and it cannot reach the MDGs of 2015 unless Nigeria, with one-fifth of the population in Africa, succeeds in its own economic development.

It is evident that poverty pervades the Nigerian population which makes its eradication a daunting task for the government (Adejuwon and Tijani 2012). For example, 70% of the over 140 million Nigerians currently live below the poverty line of one dollar per day. The rapid urbanization, put at over 5 percent per annum, exerts severe pressure on ailing infrastructure. Nigeria is further ranked as one of the twenty five poorest nations in the world (Odion 2009). Eradicating poverty is an important objective in policy formulation and implementation in the emancipation of human being (UNDP 2004). And as such, it should be an issue of utmost priority for the Nigerian government. Poverty reduction policies must integrate all these dimensions (what, which dimensions) in order to be seen as complete. Efforts and resources needed to address the physiological needs of citizens alone is prodigious enough, not to talk of waging an all – inclusive campaign against poverty, which shows that the socio-economic problems that policies addresses cannot be solved by governments acting on their own, nor are they exclusive domain of one sector.

Against this background, the key policy issues that require immediate attention are: What is the connection between poverty reduction methods and poverty reduction in Nigeria? Do they reinforce each other? And what are the critical links? The solutions to these problems are complex, which is why effective responses have not been forthcoming on a wide scale. NBS (2010) indicates that the incidence of poverty increased sharply from 27.2% in 1980 to 46.3% in 1985 and by 1992 National Poverty level was 42.7% before increasing to 65.6% in 1996 before declining to 54.4% in 2004. In term of the rural-urban divide, statistics show that poverty is more pronounced in the rural areas than the urban area. Rural poverty level increased from 28.3% in 1980 to 51.4% in 1985 but decreased slightly during the period of 1985-1992. However, soared between the years 1985-1996 to 65.6% before declining again to 63.3% in 2004 and increased to 68% in 2010 (NBS 2010). Though the level of poverty in urban area is lower than that of rural area, poverty in the urban area has been on the increase. In 1980, the level of poverty in urban area was 28.3% and by 1985 it was 51.4% before declining slightly to 46% in 1992. In 1996, 2004 and 2010, poverty level in urban area was 69.3%, 63.3% and 70%, respectively (CBN 2011). This increase in urban poverty has continued and may be associated to the upsurge of rural-urban migration in search of better living conditions. In all these, the lack of sustainability in the poverty alleviation methods has been made the culprit.

To address the problems of underdevelopment, the United Nations (UN), developed 8 MDGs with hunger and poverty as the yardstick and critical point of departure in benchmarking underdevelopment (Nwonwu 2008: 3). The targets set for achieving this goal are firstly to halve the proportion of people whose incomes are less than $1 per day by 2015 and secondly halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. As a member of the United Nations, Nigeria keyed into the MDGs and subsequently produced a policy document called the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) to further see to the achievement of the MDGs (Anger 2010: 138). Other strategies have been developed including Vision 20: 2020 and the Transformation Agenda, all of which explicitly express the need for poverty reduction and clearly delineating desired areas of intervention for interested development partners. Since the return to democracy in 1999, the government has also made efforts in creating an enabling policy and operational environment in the country; improving deplorable governance conditions and encouraging active private sector participation in development efforts. Participation of development partners has also been encouraged and welcomed and consistent efforts made to ensure local counter-part obligations to programme and project requirements are timely honoured. The donors on their part have been generous in their contribution of development aid to Nigeria, increasing their volume and scope of activities in recent years. However, in spite of these advances, only marginal improvements have been noted in Nigeria's maternal and child mortality ratios where the bulk of assistance has centred (Okoli 2009).

The (MDGs) are expected to be achieved latest by 2015 and many countries have achieved several targets at different stages. It therefore, becomes imperative to assess the level of progress made so far on the achievement of the MDGs, especially the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, in Nigeria. Nigeria currently faces the challenge of not meeting the MDGs, available statistics from recent survey in the country, indicates that poverty is deep and pervasive with an estimated 70 per cent of the population living in poverty (Kalu and Nenbee 2013). Poverty in Nigeria has great regional, sectoral and gender disparities.[3] Furthermore, there are persistence cases of social exclusion and discrimination against women and this hampers their ability to fully contribute to poverty reduction vis-à-vis the development of the economy. It is in the light of the above that the objective of the paper is to assess and evaluate the progress made so far by the Nigerian government at the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger given that 2015 is just two years away. To achieve this purpose, this paper is organized into 5 sections: Section 1 is the introduction encompassing stylized facts on MDGs in Nigeria, poverty concept, and trends in poverty and inequality in Nigeria. Section 2 reviews MDG Targets and Goals; Sub-Saharan African experience; and poverty reduction efforts (2007-2012) in Nigeria. Section 3 examines policy challenges, while Section 4 concludes the paper.

Poverty Concept

Ravallion and Bidani (1994) refer to poverty as a lack of command over basic needs of consumption, meaning, a state of insufficient consumption level; giving rise to insufficient food, clothing and shelter. Also, Aluko (1975) defined poverty as lack of certain abilities, such as the inability to participate with dignity in societal endeavour. According to Annan et al. (2000), the Millennium Development Goals are set in precise terms - measured in numbers to ensure accountability. Significant openness and transparency of such numbers can enable countries chart a course to achieve the goals and track progress. Assuming the current understanding that poverty goes beyond material deprivation and capabilities, it is evident in the literature that business as usual will not eliminate or reduce poverty (Karlsson 2001)[4]. Tollens (2002) observes that contrary to being an intrinsic characteristic of people, it is a product of the systems of livelihood and the forces (socio–political) that shape them, thereby making poverty reduction highly desirable. However, since the rural poor choose to move to cities without finding employment and income there, some reduction in rural poverty is sometimes accompanied by increased urban poverty. In addition, successful rural poverty reduction usually works by raising the productivity of the poor, while most efforts aimed at alleviating urban poverty are welfare-oriented[5]. Shepherd (2007) believes that meaningful onslaught against poverty must focus on many fronts, engaging both fiscal and non-fiscal challenges.

However, Sen (1992) in his theory of poverty implies the idea that poverty is not a natural Phenomenon within a larger frame of inequality problems; rather it can be eliminated if people are enabled to become autonomous from needs[6]. Rejecting the idea of poverty as a natural object and its inevitability in human societies helps us to orient our questioning towards concrete social practices threatening poverty, their transformations and their effects. As Manning (2007) observed, rapid and sustained poverty reduction requires growth that is 'pro-poor', meaning the pace and pattern of growth that enhances the ability of poor women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth. Also, policies for sustaining growth such as those aiming at strengthening institutional capacity, promoting democratic and effective governance should increase poor people's incentives, opportunities and capabilities for employment so they can participate in and benefit from growth.

However, during the past 50 years, the developing world has seen uneven progress on sustainable growth and poverty reduction[7] (see the worldbank.org). The collective record of the past yields three main lessons. First, good development outcomes require good institutions and policies. Secondly, in order to achieve sustained progress in development, the underlying policies and institutions must be country specific, and thirdly, putting these conditions in place can promote highly effective development assistance[8]. A consistent and coherent implementation is an impetus for developing nations to meet the 2015 target.

Poverty in all its forms is the greatest challenge to the international community. Of special concern are the 1.2 billion people living on less than $1 a day and the additional 1.6 billion living on less than $2 a day. Setting goals to reduce poverty is an essential part of the way forward. A more elaborated definition of poverty considers the 'capability' of the poor, to development, which is not visible in the Nigerian context. Improving access to education and health services for the rural population can be seen as part of this enabling process. Public investment in roads, transport, telecommunication infrastructures and sanitation could also be considered as factors that can improve capability thereby reducing vulnerability of the poor, especially in the context of an unequal geographical distribution of public and private services. There are different definitions of the term *pro-poor growth policies*. On the one hand, some define it as economic growth that benefits the poor proportionally more than the non-poor, in the sense that it increases their income levels more than those of the non-poor (for example, Pernia 2003). Others define it as economic growth that is associated with reductions in absolute poverty (for example, Ravallion and Chen 2003; DFID 2004). Recent debates around these different definitions of pro-poor growth are summarized in a series of short pieces by the UNDP International Poverty Centre (Zepeda 2004; Ravallion 2004; Osmani 2005)[9].

TRENDS IN POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN NIGERIA

There has been a resurgence of interest on the nature of relationship between growth and inequality since Simon Kuznets's seminal paper predicted an initial negative and subsequent positive relationship, the so-called "inverted – u" relationship.[10] Poverty among plenty is the world greatest challenge and the resurgence of interest in the issue derives from the effect that growth has on poverty. Economic growth which is accompanied by high inequality will have a lesser poverty-reducing effect than one which is inequality-neutral. It also follows that the decline in poverty incidence resulting from growth would be larger when accompanied by declining inequality. Howbeit, Nigeria is also one of the most unequal societies in the world, with income distribution skewed heavily such that whenever aggregate growth occurs, it is not shared by all. On the average, Nigerians are very income-poor. But the skewed distribution of the available income makes the situation of the have-nots to be desperate. The UNDP/Nigeria (2001) observes that while the highest income bracket constituting only 10% of the population shares 32% of total national income, the poorest 10% has only 1.5%. Nearly 50% of total national income is owned by 18% of the highest income group. In contrast, the poorest 20 percent of the population own only 4 percent of total national income. Nigeria's Gini coefficient is moving quite close to 1.

Poverty and inequality are global phenomenon but the rates in Nigeria are higher than most countries in the world. Since the 1980s, the poverty rate has been trending significantly downward in all regions of the world except in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The ratio of poverty for all less developed countries (LDCs) fell from 27.9% to 21.1%, but the ratio for Africa actually increased from 44.6% to 46.4 % (Adigun 2011). Poverty has been defined by so many researchers all over the world. According to Ben (2008), poverty is defined as a state of long term deprivation of wellbeing, a situation considered inadequate for decent living. Poverty is the inability to attain well a standard of living. Inequality in the other hand is defined as the condition of been unequal. In Nigeria poverty and inequality relates in so many ways and also, it is one of the key problem we are facing today. Problem of poverty has constituted a challenge to the government and policy makers in Nigeria. Earlier government placed their focus on rural development in order to deal with this problem. From the 2nd to the 4th National development plan, the government has devised various ways of solving this problem to no avail. In other to reduce the rate of poverty in Nigeria, the various development plans focuses on providing basic facilities such as adequate supply of water, housing, sewage, electricity and efficient transport and communications network including the establishment of the necessary institutions to ensure their maintenance.

Howbeit, Nigeria is still challenged by poor leadership, inconsistent policies, inadequate data base, high corruption levels, etc. The Nigerian government often parades some growth indices, but, there is mismatch or disconnect between it and existing realities as reflected in the socio-economic lives of Nigerians (NBS 2010). According to Bello (2007) 70% of the over 140 million Nigerians currently live below the poverty line of US$1 per day. A 5 percent rapid urbanization, per annum, results in severe pressure being exerted on the ailing infrastructure. Moreover, being ranked as one of the twenty-five poorest nations in the world further intensifies youth unemployment in Nigeria.[11] Poverty has been on a continuous rise in the country. Figure 1 depicts the situation.

The percentage of Nigerians living in poverty is growing. Poverty in Nigeria has substantially risen between 1980 and 2011. The proportion of non-poor was much higher in the country in 1980 (72.8 percent) compared to 1992 (57.3 percent) and 1996 (34.4 percent). Although it rose to 43.3 percent in 2004, it dropped to 31 percent in 2010 (NBS 2010).

The proportion of the core poor have continued to increase overtime. Statistics indicate an increase of extreme poverty from 6.2 percent in 1980 to 29.3 percent in 1996 and then came down to 22.0 percent in 2004. The picture for the moderately poor was a bit different as the proportion recorded increased between 1980 and 1985 from 21.0 percent and 34.2 percent; and further plummeted between 1996 and 2004, from 36.3 percent to 32.4 percent (NBS 2010). Figure 2 shows that the estimated population in poverty has been on the increase with increase in general population. A cursory look at Figure 2 indicates that poverty level has being on the increase in Nigeria when compared to its level in 1990 which is the reference year of the MDGs. A cursory examination of the performance level compared with the target leaves much to be desired given that 2015 is only three years away and indicators in Nigeria take an average of five (5) years to change. The effect of poverty in Nigeria is widespread. Consequently, the Federal government of Nigeria has embarked on sev-

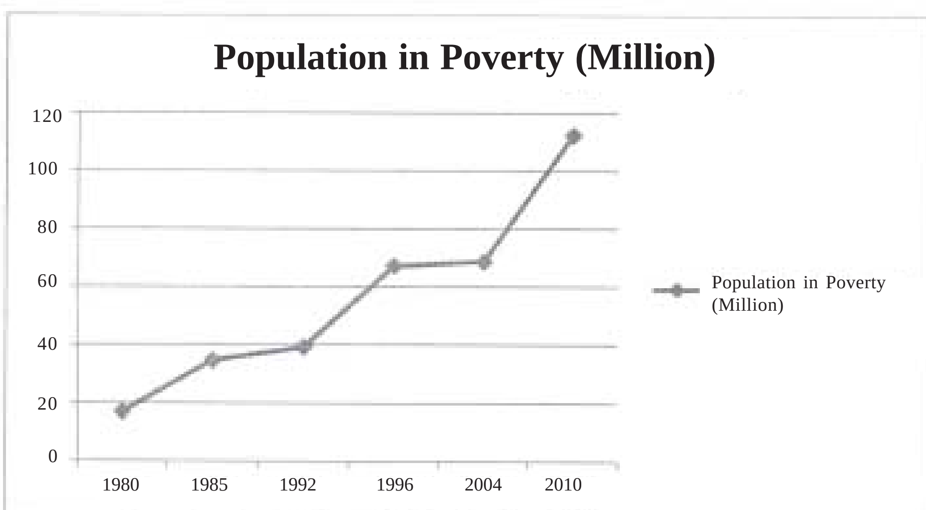

Fig. 1. Nigerian poverty profile (1980 – 2010)

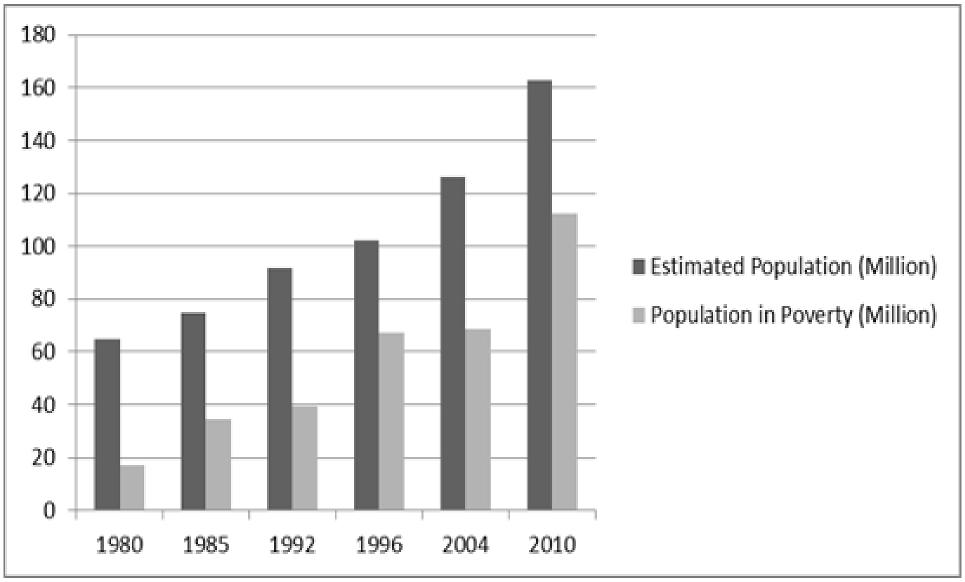

Fig. 2. Nigerian poverty profile – estimated population versus population in poverty

eral management strategies to combat poverty in the country.

Statistics shows that inequality calculated by the Gini coefficient rose consistently from 1985 except for a slight decline in 1992. At the national level inequality declined from 0.43 in 1985 to 0.41 in 1992 and rose to 0.49 in 1996. It declined to about 0.43 in 2004 and increased to approximately 0.45 in 2010 (NBS 2010). However, sectoral and regional data show that despite variations around the national average, there seems to be an obvious increase in inequality between 1996 and 2010. The results of the NHLSS 2010 as contained in the Nigeria Poverty Profile 2010 report indicate that poverty incidence have increased since 1980. In addition, this trend may have increased further in 2011 if the potential positive impacts of several anti-poverty and employment generation intervention programmes are not taken into account (NBS 2010).

BRIEF REVIEW OF MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS): TARGETS AND INDICATORS

The MDGs now guide much of the interaction between developing and developed countries, and between developing countries and development assistance agencies. These goals are a compact among all members of the international community to reduce poverty in its many dimensions and to promote sustainable development. The (MDGs) are eight time-bound international development goals endorsed by one hundred and eighty- seven (187) Heads of States of the United Nation (UN) member states at the UN Millennium Summit held in September 2000. These MDGs is part of an agenda-setting for transforming the living conditions of all peoples at the turn of the third millennium. They are also considered as bold initiatives through which the world leaders hope to bridge the chasm between the rich and the poor nations of the world and create a new order of global partnership, development and prosperity. It is an attempt to reclaim the earth for all people by expanding opportunities and removing obstacles. In essence, the MDGs are envisioned as a new world that is working hard to find effective solutions to human deprivation and miseries. The MDGs encapsulate the global aspiration for development. They also encompasses universally accepted human values and rights which forms its core such as the eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing global partnership for development. While the first seven goals are mutually reinforcing and focused on reducing poverty in all ramifications; the last goal, which is the development of global partnership for development, is the crest upon which the achievement of the first seven rests.

The MDGs were drawn from the actions and target contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by one hundred and eighty-nine nations and signed by one hundred and forty seven heads of state and government during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. The MDGs consist of eight goals, decomposed into eighteen (18) quantifiable targets and measurable by forty eight (48) indicators to be achieved in a period of fifteen years starting from year 2000.

The first goal is the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. This goal has two major targets[12]. In Nigeria, the rate of poverty reduction would have to increase many times over to achieve the goal, going from an average annual reduction of 0.5% or less in the 1990s to more than 5% annually until 2015.This target is measured by the proportion of the population living below US$1 per day, poverty gap ratio and the share of the poorest quintile in national consumption.

The second target is the halving of the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, measurable by the prevalence of underweight children under five years of age and the proportion of the population living below minimum level of dietary energy consumption. The third goal is the achievement of universal primary education aimed at ensuring that all children irrespective of sex will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015[13]. The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women formed the third goal. The target is aimed at eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education not later than 2015. The benchmarks for this target are the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education; ratio of literate females to males of ages 15-24 year old; share of women in wage employment in non-agricultural sector; and the proportion of seats held by women in the parliament. Furthermore, the fourth Millennium Development Goal focused on the reduction of child mortality. This goal has the target of reducing by two-third, between 1990 and 2015 mortality rate of under-five year children measurable by under-five year's and infant mortality rate and the percentage of one year-olds immunized against measles. Improvement of maternal health is the fifth goal of the MDGs[14]. The indicators include maternal mortality ratio and the proportion of birth attended to by skilled health personnel.

The sixth goal has two targets; the first is the curbing and the reversal of the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015 measurable by the prevalence of HIV among 15-24 years old pregnant women, condom use rate and the number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. The second target is the halting by 2015 and the reversal of the incidence of malaria and other major diseases measurable by the prevalence and death rate associated with malaria, proportion of population in malaria risk area using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures, prevalence of death rate associated with tuberculosis cases detected and cured under direct observed treatment short course (DOTS).Ensuring environmental sustainability is the seventh goal of the MDGs. This goal has three targets and eight indicators. The first target is the integration of the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and the reversal of the loss of environmental resources. This is measurable by the proportion of the land area covered by forest, ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area, energy use per US$1 GDP, carbon dioxide emission (per capital) and the consumption of ozone depleting CFCs (ODP tons) and the proportion of the population using solid fuels. The second target is to halve by 2015, the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water which is measurable by the proportion of the population with sustainable access to an improved water source, both in the urban and rural areas. The third target is to achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020, measurable by the proportion of urban population with access to improved sanitation and the proportion of households with access to secure tenure (owned or rented). The eight and the last goal of the MDGs is the development of a global partnership for development. This goal has seven targets and sixteen indicators. It is aimed at establishing co-operation between developed and least developed countries with the aim of granting development assistance to the least developed countries, creating market access and debt sustainability.

However, with three years left to reach the 2015 targets set in 2000, it is necessary to establish whether Nigeria is on track to achieve the poverty reduction goal. Based on data provided by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS 2010) the poverty rate in Nigeria has increased to 71.5 per cent in 2011 compared to 61.2 per cent in 2010. In this period, the standard of living of many Nigerians remained unchanged and in some cases worsened. In Nigeria, this problem has remained persistent despite the country's rich endowment with oil and other natural resources. While some development analysts provide explanations for the causes and consequences of poverty, this paper focused on analyzing time series data on poverty rates between 2000 and 2011 and compared them with growth rates in each year.

To meet the MDGs target in 2015, poverty rate in Nigeria is expected to be decreased from 42% in 1990 to 22%in 2015; out of school children will be totally eliminated; decrease under five mortality per 1,000 from 191 to 63.7; maternal mortality rate from about 704 in 1999 (no figure for 1990) to 176 in 2015; to reverse HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis; improve access to water from 54% to 77%; and improve access to sanitation from 39% to 70.[15] Statistics available in the recent 2013 MDGs report which assesses the progress in Africa including Nigeria reported that the country is unlikely to meet most of the MDGs by the 2015 deadline, especially the goals pertaining hunger and extreme poverty eradication (MDG 2013 Report).

MDG Implementation: Sub-Saharan African Experience

Since the millennium declaration in 2000, there have been attempts at the global level to guide the implementation and achievement of the MDGs in 2015. The most current reports on the implementation of the MDGs revealed that there is a major improvement towards the achievement of the MDGs but that the most vulnerable are left behind.[16]

The 2011 report shows that the world as a whole is on track to achieving the poverty reduction target of 23% global poverty rate. Similarly, some poor countries like Burundi, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo and Tanzania have made significant progress in education achieving or nearing the goal of universal primary education. The number of deaths of children under the age of five has decreased from 12.4 million in 1990 to 8.1 million in 2009. New HIV infections have declined steadily by 21% since 1997. The number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy for HIV or AIDS increases by 13 fold from 2004 to 2009. An estimated 1.1 billion people in urban areas and 723 million people in rural areas gained access to improved drinking water source from 1990 to 2008. But the progress has been uneven and there are many people left behind especially the poorest people and those disadvantaged by their sex, age, disability or ethnicity (see MDGs 2011 Report).

Igbuzor (2013) study investigated that 2011 MDGs report pointed out that sub-Saharan Africa has made some progress towards achieving the MDGs but reaching all the goals by 2015 remains challenging.[17] Although sub-Saharan Africa account for 69% of new HIV infections and 68% of all people living with HIV and 72% of AIDS deaths in 2009, there was phenomenal increase of people living with HIV receiving antiretroviral treatment from 3 percent in 2004 to 37% in 2009. Likewise, there was a great reduction in malaria deaths. From 2000-2009, Botswana, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Madagascar, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, and Zambia reduced the number of confirmed malaria cases and deaths by more than 50%. Similarly, the percentage of people with access to safe drinking water grew from 49% to 60% between 1990 and 2008. Also, there was an 18% point gain in primary school enrolment between 1999 and 2009. But almost half of the world out of school children (32 million) lives in sub-Saharan Africa. The highest level of under-five mortality continues to be found in Africa with one in eight children dying before the age of five in 2009, about 18 times the average in developed regions. Africa has the highest maternal mortality level in the world with 640 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2008. In 2005, about 51 percent of the African population still lived in extreme poverty. Temporarily only \$11 billion was received in 2010 out of the \$25 billion commitment made at the 2005 Gleneagles G8 summit.

The 2012 report reveals that the target of reducing extreme poverty by half has been reached three years ahead of the 2015 deadline as has the target of halving the percentage of people who lack dependable access to improved sources of drinking water. The report indicates that conditions for more than 200 million people living in slums have been ameliorated double the 2020 target. But the absolute number of living in slums grew from 650 million in 1990 to 863 million in 2012. In addition, there is substantial progress in that the world achieved parity in primary school education between boys and girls and there is progress in reducing child and maternal mortality. But over one billion people still remain in poverty. Hunger remains an enormous challenge, children are out of school, and the goal of gender equality remains unsatisfied. The most vulnerable have been left behind and there are severe inequalities. The UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon has observed that meeting the MDGs targets is challenging, is possible but only if governments do not waiver in their commitment and on fulfilling MDG 8-the global partnership for development (Igbuzor 2013)

The 2012 MDG report[18] concluded that in Africa, there has been a steady economic growth and improvement in poverty reduction but more needs to be done to address inequalities, including between men and women. It underscores the need to address the sub-standard quality and unequal distribution of social services between rural and urban areas. It suggests active steps to ensure that economic growth translates into new and adequate employment opportunities for Africa's youthful and rapidly growing population, and social protection systems which grow the resilience and capabilities of poor and vulnerable households. The report advises policymakers to put greater importance on improving the quality of social services and ensuring that investments yield significant outcomes for the poor.

BRIEF REVIEW OF POVERTY REDUCTION EFFORTS (2007– 2012)

Eradicating poverty is regarded as the most important goal of human development. Indeed, it is now widely believed that at its core, development must be about improvement of human well-being, removal of hunger, disease and promotion of productive employment for all **(**Edoh 2003; Kankwanda 2002; Muhammed 2006**)** lend credence to the foregoing when they suggested that a nation's first goal must be to end poverty and satisfy the private needs for all its citizens in a way that will not jeopardize the opportunity for the future generations to attain the same objective. In the words of Muhammed (2006) the MDGs, targets and indicators relating to poverty reduction and hunger, are quite relevant in the case of Nigeria. While poverty is accelerating at a terrific speed, progress towards minimizing the menace is at a slow pace. Implementation of the partnership goals has lagged, and significant progress is apparent only in debt reduction.

After the adoption of the millennium declaration by world leaders in 2000, Nigeria being a signatory to the declaration began the systematic formulation and implementation of policies and programmes aimed at the achievement of the eradication of extreme poverty which is central to the achievement of the MDGs in general. With just three years (that is, twelve years gone) to the deadline to the achievement of the MDGs it is imperative to assess the progress made so far. Figure 3 shows the progress made by Nigeria at the eradication of extreme poverty. In 1990 the reference year for the MDGs, the incidence of poverty in Nigeria was 42.7 and by 2000 it has risen to 65. It remained at this level till 2004 when it declined to 54.4. This decline could be attributed to the reform policy and poverty eradication measures embarked upon by the government. The incidence of poverty remained at this level till 2009. Available statistics indicate the incidence is over 70% currently (NBS 2010). The highlights of Strategies to combat poverty in Nigeria are discussed below:

Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP)

An interim policy for poverty alleviation was introduced in early 2000 to solve the problem of rising unemployment, particularly among the youths. It was intended to increase the welfare of Nigerians, reduce the problem of unemployment, increase the productivity of the economy and to drastically reduce the wave of crime in the society. To achieve these objectives, several measures were put in place; these included the increase in the salary of the public sector workers, improving the supervisory capacity within the nation's institutions, encouraging and rewarding all deserving Nigerian for industry and enterprises, and launching of the Universal Basic Education Programme.

Fig. 3 Nigerian Poverty Profile – Estimated Population versus Poverty Incidence (%)

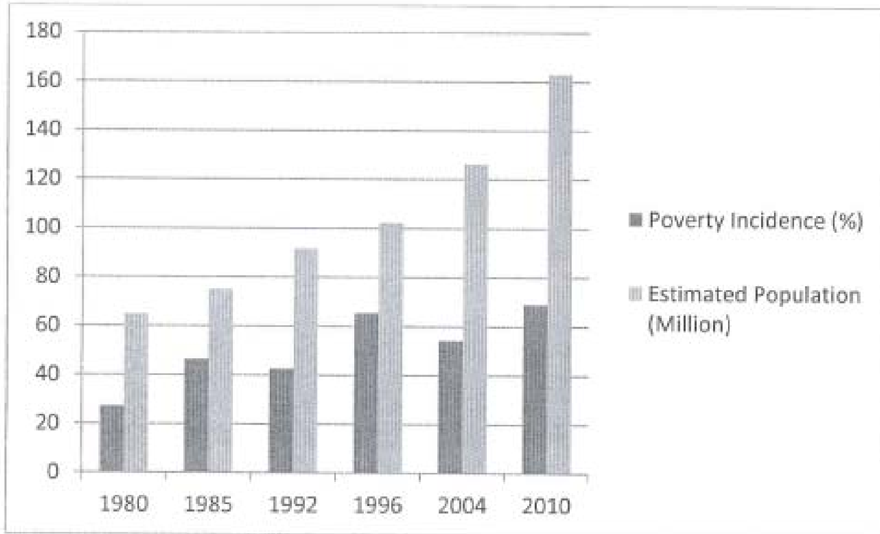

Fig. 3. Nigerian poverty profile-estimated population versus poverty incidence (5\%)

National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)

The aim of (NAPEP) is to address the most pressing manifestations of absolute poverty, and to eradicate it in the shortest possible time. The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) was introduced in 2001 and supervised by the National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC) charged with the responsibility of co-ordinating all poverty eradicating programmes of all government agencies and parastatals and the ministries with the aim of ensuring the central planning and coordination of all poverty reduction programmes in the country. This led to the classification of poverty eradication institutions under NAPEP into four: Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure and Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS) and the Natural Resources Development and Conservative Scheme (NRDCS).this programme was mired in bureaucratic bottlenecks and did not deliver its expected outcomes.

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) I and 11

NEEDS—the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy—is Nigeria's plan for prosperity. It is the people's way of letting the government know what kind of Nigeria they wish to live in, now and in the future. It is the government's ways of letting the people know how it plans to overcome the deep and pervasive obstacles to progress that the government and the people have identified. It is also a way of letting the international community know where Nigeria stands—in the region and in the world—and how it wishes to be supported. NEEDS focuses on four key strategies: reorienting values, reducing poverty, creating wealth, and generating employment. NEEDS aimed to restructure the government to make it smaller, stronger, better skilled, and more efficient at delivering essential services.[19]The primary focus of NEEDS 1 includes; wealth creation, poverty reduction, employment generation and value reorientation. The NEEDS 1 document was devoid of programmes and projects which characterized a national development plan. It was not a national development plan; rather, it approximates a policy plan.[20] The document described policy thrusts and key strategies and instruments for different aspects of the macroeconomics framework and various sectors of the economy. NEEDS 11 succeeded NEED 1 in 2008 and was designed as a continuation of the vision, mission and strategies of NEEDS 1. The overreaching goals were the same: poverty reduction, employment generation, wealth creation and value reorientation. NEEDS 11 was seen as a vehicle for realizing the eight MDGs by 2015. Pride of place was also given to production, infrastructure, human resource development and strengthening the private sector.

The economic performance under NEEDS showed a mixed result. While there was improvement in real GDP growth rate, gross national saving and crude oil production, other areas such as infrastructure, power generation, unemployment, inequality worsened. In spite of the elaborate implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanism articulated in NEEDS 1 and 11, effective Monitoring and Evaluation of NEEDS implementation was lacking.

The Seven-Point Agenda: The Seven-Point Agenda (2007-2010) articulated the policy priorities that would strengthen existing reforms and build the economy. The Agenda aimed to achieve double digit growth rates and make Nigeria one of the 20 largest economies in the world by the year 2020 through focusing on the following seven priorities:

I. *Power and Energy* – The infrastructural reforms in this critical sector was to develop sufficient and adequate power supply that will ensure Nigeria's ability to develop as a modern economy and an industrial nation by the year 2015.

II. *Food Security* – This reform is primarily agrarian based. The emphasis was on the development of modern technology, research, financial injection into research, production and development of agricultural inputs that will revolutionize the agricultural sector leading to a 5 – 10 fold increase in yield and production. This will result in massive domestic and commercial outputs and technological knowledge transfer to farmers.

III. *Wealth Creation* – By virtue of its reliance on revenue from non-renewal oil (a resource that does not renew itself at a sufficient rate for sustainable economic extraction in meaningful human timeframes), Nigeria is yet to develop industrially. This reform was focused on wealth creation through diversified production especially in the agricultural and solid mineral sector. This requires Nigerians to choose to work, as hard work by all is required to achieve this reform.

IV. *Transport Sector* – The transportation sector in Nigeria with its poor roads networks is an inefficient means of mass transit of people and goods. With a goal of a modernized industrialized Nigeria, it is mandatory that Nigeria develops its transport sector.

V. *Land Reforms* – While hundreds of billions of dollars have been lost through unused government-owned landed asset, changes in the land laws and the emergence of land reforms will optimize Nigeria's growth through the release of lands for commercialized farming and other large scale business by the private sector. The planned result is to ensure improvements and boosts to the production and wealth creation initiatives.

VI. *Security* – An unfriendly security climate precludes both external and internal investment into the nation. Thus, security will be seen as not only a constitutional requirement but also as a necessary infrastructure for the development of a modern Nigerian economy. With its particular needs, the Niger Delta and North East (that is, Boko Haram) security issues was the primary focus, marshaled not with physical policing or military security, but through honest and accurate dialogue between the people and the Federal Government.

VII. *Education* – The two-fold reforms in the educational sector will ensure firstly the minimum acceptable international standards of education for all. With that achieved, a strategic educational development plan accompanied by massive injection into the Education sector will ensure excellence in both the tutoring and learning of skills in science and technology by students who will be seen as the future innovators and industrialists of Nigeria.

The Seven Point Agenda seem not to have made any meaningful impact on the resolution of the myriad of development problems facing the country. The problems sought to be addressed by the Agenda are as tantalizing today as they were when the Agenda was first formulated. Despite, the Seven point Agenda, there is increasing level of poverty in the Country. Some of the reasons for the low impact or total failure of these structures include: Poor coordination of activities and absence of effective continuous policy formulation; Lack of sustainability of programme and projects; Absence of achievable target setting; lack of impact assessment or monitoring and evaluation ; Absence of effective coordination, collaboration and complementation between the agencies and among the three tiers of Governments; and Duplication of functions with a resulting unnecessary rivalry among institutions.

The Nigerian Vision 20: 2020

The Nigerian Vision 20: 2020 Economic Transformation Blueprint produced in 2009 is a long-term plan for stimulating Nigeria's economic growth and launching the country into a path of sustained and rapid socioeconomic development. The vision is that by 2020, Nigeria will have a large, strong, diversified, sustained and competitive economy that is one of the top 20 economies in the world. The three strategic pillars around which a number of strategic objectives have been developed are; guaranteeing productivity of the people and their well-being, ensuring that the key sources of economic growth are optimized and fostering sustainable social and economic development. For Nigeria to be propelled into the group of top 20 economies by 2020, the economy needs to grow at an average rate of over 13 per cent per. But this growth rate poses enormous challenges in view of three factors; the current relatively low growth rates, short vision period and the implication for investment resources requirements. So, significant effort would need to be made to raise savings and investment levels substantially. What seems clear though is that the economic growth rates achieved in 2011 and the reported 6.6 per cent rate achieved in 2012 can hardly move the economy along the path of achieving the goals of NV20: 2020.

Transformation Agenda

The Transformation Agenda 2011-2015 is based and draws its inspiration from vision 20: 2020. Over the next four years, the 1st National Implementation Plan (NIP) aims to deepen the effects and provide a sense of direction for the current administration. The programme is targeted at the following:

a. Job Creation[1]:
b. Public Expenditure Management[2]:
c. Foreign Policy and Economic Diplomacy[3]:
d. Human Capital Development Policies, Programmes and Projects: Human Capital Development is strategic to the socio-economic development of a nation and includes education, health, women affairs and labour and employment. Investment in human capital development is therefore critical as it is targeted at ensuring that the nation's human resource endowment is well-informed, skillful, healthy and productive to enable the optimal exploitation and utilization of other resources to engender growth and development.
e. Infrastructure Policies, Programmes and Projects: The infrastructure deficit in key development areas in the country such as housing, transportation, power and ICT is particularly worrisome. The critical significance of these areas in national development cannot be overemphasized. Accordingly, during the programme period the following key priority policies will be pursued to develop infrastructure and consequently engender sustained growth and development in the country.
f. Enablers for Sustainable Growth and Development[4]: Specifically, the laws prevent bureaucracy, poor market access and other obstacles thereby ensuring that businesses invest and operate without the fear of losing out on opportunities to grow. Likewise, property rights and contract enforcement are guaranteed by the rule of law as well as providing great impetus for growth of businesses and the contribution of businesses to economic growth.[5]

Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P)

This programme is a 3—4 year programme and a subset of the Transformation Agenda is designed to mitigate the immediate impact of the removal of fuel subsidy and accelerate economic growth through investments in critically-needed infrastructure. It is noteworthy that, while the 2012 budget allocated the best possible amounts to these critical projects additional resources are allocated to the same projects in the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) to ensure that they are completed at faster rates than envisioned in the 2012 budget. Some of the projects include: Works, Power, Agriculture and Rural Development, Education, Health, Aviation, Federal Capital Territory Administration, Niger-Delta and Water Resources[6]. Through the Public Works, Youth and Women Employment Component of the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Program (SURE-P), the Federal Government of Nigeria established the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS), which aims to provide the unemployed graduates youths with job apprenticeship opportunities that will expose them to skills and experiences relevant to the current labour market and enhance their employability.

Nonetheless, various reasons have been proffered on why anti-poverty programmes initiated over the years in Nigeria have not produced the desired results. Some of which include:

- Policy makers have not been able to ascertain the most useful instruments for alleviating poverty.
- Failure on the part of policy makers to analyse and evaluate past anti-poverty programmes to determine what worked and what did not work.
- There is a lack of participation of the poor at various levels of the anti-poverty programmes.
- Poverty alleviation programmes have also often failed to identify specific target groups amongst the poor that the scheme is meant for.
- There is lack of government drive in eradicating corruption at all sectors of the economy.
- Poverty alleviation programmes often attract meagre federal budgetary allocations and to a great extent show government's under-estimation of the problem.
- There is little or no incentive for banks and other lending houses to become actively involved in the programme. For instance, the administrative costs incurred by development banks are high and commercial banks remain adamant to expand their services to the provision of small-scale loans (Idahosa 2002).
- Programmes in the past have also failed because of the lack of commitment to their sustainability.
- The size of the loan and the rate of return on the economic activity that it finances are so low that even successful projects have not produced sufficient impact to lift borrowers from the poverty trap.[7]

Policy Challenges

In Nigeria poverty appears to be the greatest degrader of the Nigeria economy with serious economic and social consequences. Although several regimes had initiated several policy responses in the past to address the poverty plague in Nigeria. These policies and efforts have not yielded the desired results of alleviating poverty because they were only declarative without concerted effort and lacked the required political will among several other causes. However, at the global level, the quantitative targets of only one of the eight goals will be met by 2015 given the current rate of progress (Adejo 2006). Since 2004, many reports have tracked Nigeria's progress towards the MDG targets. The common thread in reports for 2004, 2005 and 2006 was whether or not Nigeria would achieve national MDG targets. All three reports broadly agreed that Nigeria has the potential to achieve some of the targets before 2015, especially those related to Goals 2, 6, 7 and 8. However, in 2004, it was considered unlikely that Nigeria would be able to meet the goals related to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, reducing maternal and child mortality, HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Nonetheless, the 2005 and 2006 reports described modest progress and cited emerging evidence revealing that extreme poverty and hunger could be eradicated given strong political will.

Evidence from above analysis indicates that Nigeria is set to miss the MDGs targets. Poverty is deep, pervasive and worsening with great regional, sectoral and gender disparities. In particular, poverty is becoming dynastic in the sense of the children of the poor having narrowing opportunities to escape poverty. For example, because of the increasing deterioration of the public education system, education is fast losing its potency as the social equalization ladder.[8]

Other social indicators in Nigeria such as inequality ranks as one of the worst in the world; unemployment is continuously rising and threatening the fabrics of social cohesion, absence of security and participatory democracy; and the imminent HIV/AIDS pandemic are all patiently waiting to explode and with potential dire consequences for productivity in the economy. Thus, Ogujiuba and Alehile 2011 recommend that the challenge for research is to improve knowledge and understanding of inclusive growth in the country. Also, Chukwuemeka (2009) recommends that the power sector should be restructured if Nigeria, must achieve the eradication of extreme poverty by 2015 since it would be difficult for small business holders/poor entrepreneurs to operate and break even without adequate support from public power supply and also that the Credit scheme programme should be well structured to capture the aspirations of the poor and be strictly implemented.

Despite efforts at the dawn of the millennium, with the adoption of the United Nation Millennium Declaration by the Nigerian government, there is still the fundamental challenge of transition from statism and rent-seeking in the system. Howbeit, there are policy issues that need to be addressed before poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria can yield tangible outcomes. Some of these issues are highlighted below.

- *Poor Infrastructural Facilities:* The state of infrastructural facilities in the country is embarrassing. Infrastructures, which are known to enhance industrialization, provide employment especially in the small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) sector and eradicate poverty, are grossly inadequate in the country. This stands as one of the prominent challenges to the achievement of the eradication of poverty and hunger.
- *Macroeconomic Instability:* The Nigerian naira over the years had experienced depreciation in its value with increase in inflation rate. The outcome of macroeconomic instability is the unfriendly economic environment for SMEs to thrive, which would have contributed to the eradication of poverty through employment generation.
- *Absence of Social Security Scheme:* In countries that have succeeded in eradicating poverty, social security scheme such as unemployment benefits, old age benefits and various scholarship programmes for students of various institutions played significant part but these are absent in Nigeria.
- *Low Productive Capacity:* The productive capacity of the Nigerian Economy is highly under-utilized. Industries that would have provided employment are producing at a very low capacity or folding up; increasing unemployment and poverty levels in the country. There is also lack of modernized agriculture. This has drastically reduced the capacity of agriculture to contribute to employment generation and food security as agricultural activities are being carried out with hoes and cutlasses.
- *Falling Standard of Education:* Standard of education in Nigeria is at very low ebb. Graduates of Nigerian tertiary institutions who are supposed to be employers of labour are not properly trained and equipped to do so. They rather rely on the government to provide them jobs which are always non-existent.
- *Corruption:* Corruption in Nigeria is of a serious concern because it has succeeded over the years in neutralizing the efforts of all stakeholders aimed at the eradication of poverty and hunger in Nigeria. Most of the revenue committed to this course hardly gets to the target audience while the campaign for poverty eradication had been without the needed political will. The wealth of written materials on corruption in Nigeria is adequate to convince an outsider that the phenomenon is widespread (Akinbi 2003).

Table 1 shows the ranking of Nigeria by Transparency International. Transparency International, the global coalition against corruption ranked Nigeria 122th of 180 countries in 2008, 130th of 180 countries in 2009, 134th of 178 in 2010, 143th of 183 countries in 2011, and 135th of 176 countries in corruption perception index, in 2012.

Table 1: Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for selected years in Nigeria

Year	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for Nigeria	122	130	134	143	135
Total no. of countries	180	180	178	183	176

Source: Adapted from Transparency International website

CONCLUSION

Despite that the nation is among the top oil producers in the continent of Africa and richly endowed with vast human resource and solid minerals hence, indicators of poverty level in the nation give a different conclusion. Though the Federal Government of Nigeria has made several commendable efforts aimed at the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger through its various initiatives, incidence of poverty in Nigeria is still as high as 70% in 2010 as against 42.7% in 1990. The effect is that poverty has been on the increase despite all efforts of the government. Therefore, the possibility of Nigeria attaining the MDGs of eradication of extreme poverty by 2015 is in doubt.

Some of the problems identified as inhibiting poverty reduction in the Nigerian economy include inconsistency in macroeconomic policies, instability and policy reversals, conflicting macroeconomic policy goals, dominance of public sector in the areas of production and consumption, pervasive rent-seeking and corruption facilitated by government being the hub of economic activities. Others are inadequate infrastructure and decay, highly volatile macroeconomic aggregates, weak institutional capacity for economic policy management and coordination, unsustainability of public finance at all levels of government, and lack of effective coordination among the tiers of government, among others. A number of these problems are institutional while others are results of disharmony between goals and means.

Finally, the increasing concern expressed on the subject matter underlines the fact that evaluation of pro-poor programmes must go hand in hand with the formal policy evaluation, namely the evaluation of the policies' selection, design and implementation processes. What is the point of evaluating policies when they are never decided on and often very poorly implemented? The evaluation processes must give just as much weight to the logical design of 'good policies' as to the social and institutional conditions required to implement them in practice. The participatory and administrative processes conditioning any action count just as much as a sound definition of the action itself. Given the enormity of the economic development challenges and the relatively low index of capture, there is the challenge of how to set priorities, make maximum impacts and remain focused. Obviously, there will be demand and pressure to get into everything since literally everything needs to be done, given the country's initial conditions. This temptation must however be resisted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government of Nigeria needs help, to meet the challenge of initiating an inclusive rapid growth with social-structural transformation to strategize, prioritize, and to manage its own resources better. But such must be predicated on sound analysis and evaluation of the state of the economy. Summarily, poverty reduction strategies in Nigeria, therefore, have to incorporate distributive features and high level of inclusiveness. This can be achieved by promoting human capital development. Government should invest more in education sector, increase public spending on social services and enhance access to basic education and primary health care by building on existing government policy, provision of vocational training centers to equip youths, in particular for self-employment. Public policy should go beyond building people's capacities into matching capacities with opportunities in order to significantly link the demand and supply of human capital.

There is broad acceptance that rapid and sustained growth is the single most important way to reduce poverty. Growth accounts for more than 80 per cent of poverty reduction and has lifted about 600 million above the poverty line since 1980. In the 1990s growth rates in the developing world out-paced those in the developed world for the first time. Better growth performance in poor countries is therefore central to achieving the MDGs. Yet ensuring that more countries achieve and sustain high per capita growth rates remains a key fundamental. Quality infrastructure in the country would facilitate business and provide the enabling climate important for attracting domestic and foreign investments, adopting new technologies, and raising productivity.

To reduce poverty and improve the quality of life in Nigeria will require a sustained economic growth. However, the extent of poverty reduction would depend on the degree to which the poor participate in the growth process and share in its proceeds. Improvements in human, physical and social capital of the poor are key fundamentals to increasing their ability to participate in growth. It is clear that both the pace and pattern of growth matter for poverty reduction. The challenge for policy streamlining is to combine growth promoting policies with the right policies for assuring that the poor fully participate in economic development. However, the challenge for research is to improve knowledge and understanding of what policies, technologies and investments matter for sustained and inclusive growth in the country.

NOTES

1. It entails the lack of access to a range of basic services and infrastructures, which include education, health, food, safe drinking water and other basic necessities of life.
2. Nigeria is the source of stability in the West African region— having led a multilateral peacekeeping force to Liberia and Sierra Leone, and continuing peace-keeping role in the sub-region.
3. See http: //ji4d.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/NEEDS.pdf
4. In other words, poverty reduction requires more than just delivering money and advice.
5. Rural poverty alleviation may reduce migration, thus helping to reduce urban poverty.
6. No real development is possible if basic needs are unmet and larger and larger strata of the population are kept in a condition of dependency.
7. Many western countries have recorded progressive improvements in economic and social indicators, but sub-Saharan countries have been left behind.
8. There is a broad consensus that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provide a frame for many of the desired outcomes as well as agreement about the actions for achieving them — especially the policies and institutions that developing countries need to put in place.
9. The most important point, about which there is little disagreement, is that rates of poverty reduction depend both on the rate of economic growth and on changes in distribution.
10. See http: //www.biu.ac.il/soc/ec/wp/3-01/kuznets.pdf retrieved 13 August, 2013
11. See http: //www.utexas.edu/conferences/africa/2012/12Abstracts_h-p.html
12. The primary target is the reduction by half of the poverty level and the proportion of people with income less than one dollar a day between 1990 (the reference year) and 2015.
13. This target is measured by the net enrolment in primary education, proportion of pupils starting grade one, who reached grade five and literacy rate of people between ages 15-24 years.
14. This goal has the target of reducing the maternal mortality ratio by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015.
15. See A Presidential Committee on the MDGs 2nd/3rd Quarter Report for 2009
16. Millenium Development Goals Report 2011
17. Ibid
18. MDGs 2012 Report
19. National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) National Planning Commission Abuja 2004
20. Obadan I.M.(2012) Perspectives on the Nigerian Economy: Management Strategies and Development Outcomes
21. Accordingly policy measures will be pursued during the programme period to reinvigorate various sectors of the economy and enhance their employment generating potentials.
22. Apart from adhering strictly to the monetization policy, government will entrench a culture of accountability by beginning to sanction and prosecute officers that breach established financial management rules and regulations.
23. In order for Nigeria's foreign policy goals to be achieved it is imperative that Nigerian missions are well-funded and properly focused. Rationalizing missions and appointing honorary consuls to deal with consular issues may also be necessary in areas where Nigeria's interest does not loom large as practiced by other countries.
24. Enablers comprise laws, regulations, policies, public infrastructure and services including international trade agreements that facilitate the activities of economic agents, to enable them operate profitably, competitively, as well as to function optimally
25. Transformation Agenda Document 2011
26. Agbata C. F.(2012) Potential Benefits from Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P)
27. Amenaghawon J. I. *(2012)* A Critical Assessment of Poverty Alleviation/Eradication Programs
28. Children of the poor are condemned to a dysfunctional public education and hence become largely unemployable and/or unemployed.

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