

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Inclusive planning in Nigeria: A veritable tool for poverty reduction**

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**In perceived or real terms stagnation in the supply of poverty alleviation, materials and resources seems to be the order of the day in Nigeria. Even though there are core poverty eradication ministries and agencies, their benefits are not evenly distributed as expected. What we have is a development where some are favoured and others are not. The paper argues in favour of embracing inclusive planning as a veritable tool for the reduction of poverty in Nigeria. The data for the study which provides the basis for this paper were collected from secondary sources. Results show that up till now in Nigeria, 84.4% of the people are poor or moderately endowed. It is therefore suggested that transparency and accountability be employed as two aiding keys of poverty reduction.**

**Key words:** Poverty, planning, Nigeria.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Poverty in developing countries is pervasive and multi-dimensional as it is in Nigeria. As such, the design of poverty reduction programmes ongoing in Nigeria should reflect this multi-dimensional nature. It should incorporate economic, social, and cultural dimensions as well as the political dimension. Three approaches to poverty alleviation are discussed in the literature: economic growth, basic needs and rural development approaches.

The economic growth approach to poverty reduction is based on the fundamental assumption that economic deprivation is at the root of all poverty and that non-economic causes of poverty are only secondary, arising from the primary causes. Attention is therefore focused on rapid economic growth as measured by rate of growth

in real per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or per capita National Income (NI), price stability and declining unemployment, among others. All these are to be attained through proper harmonization of monetary and fiscal policies (Etim and Erotimi, 1976).

The approach works through trickle-down effects. The principle holds that, as economic growth continues, the effects will progressively trickle down to the core poor and most disadvantaged in society. However, the approach has the following shortcomings.

Firstly, there is nothing inherent in economic growth that automatically guarantees poverty alleviation. Secondly, economic growth can be likened to a case of 'digging a hole to fill another hole' That is even when it alleviates

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poverty in some segments of the society; it often creates new poverty or aggravates existing poverty in other segments of the society. Lastly, economic policies and growth are often untargeted to take care of special needs of the core poor in terms of education, health care, better housing condition and so on. So, given the pitfalls of economic growth, the basic needs approach has been favoured as a complementary approach (D'Silva and Bysouth, 1992; Yahie, 1992; and Olayemi, 1996).

The basic need approach (BNA) to poverty alleviation views poverty as being broad in perspective and that programmes should be targeted to tackle the wider causes of poverty (Bamburger, 1992). The basic needs may be described as those basic necessities which would enable the poor live a decent life. However, the basic needs vary from one country to another e.g. Russia and Nigeria. But most of them would include such things as food and nutrition, health care, education, shelter, clothing, transport and employment (Olayemi, 1996).

The rural development approach argues for total emancipation and empowerment of the rural sector. The sector is expected to be treated uniquely in terms of poverty alleviation strategies. The need for unique treatment was necessitated by three dominant factors. The first is the fact that most countries have a disproportionate high percentage of the poor living in the rural areas. The second is that food which is the most essential BNA to poverty alleviation is purely a rural business in developing countries. And the third is that the rural sector is often the weaker sector when compared with the urban sector.

The particular strategy which has received most attention is the Integrated Rural Development Strategy (IRDS) which involves a simultaneous, holistic and inter-sectoral manipulation of all necessary variables which together could alleviate poverty. The primary objective of IRDS is the provision of basic necessities of life which include food, employment and income-generating opportunities, information, shelter, clothing, education, health care, and other social services to the poor. This development strategy should be adequately integrated into the programme for sustainability of the programmes (Oduola, 1996). The components of BNA should be taken as clues to determine the scope and extent of the programme.

Notwithstanding, the availability of these approaches as instrument which can be employed in our country, no attending proportionate benefits accrue yet in the grassroots. Instead, there are cases of unemployment vis-à-vis high level of food importation (Manuaka, 2011:35; Sawyerr, 2012; Akpeji and Ajayi, 2012). What we have is growth without development which invariably breeds exclusion as few people determine resources distribution that are skewed in favour of those at the corridor of power, while citizens are deprived and marginalized in all ramifications (Akinola, 2007f:234).

More so, in spite of the declaration by Nigerian governments (Federal and State) to abide with MDGs' poverty reduction incentives, they are yet to understand how to engage institutional mechanisms. As such, the economy is in disarray and in shambles because the stakeholders in development - government officials, scholars, and industrialist/private sector as well as peasant farmers - operate on parallel lines, instead of as colleagues with equal standing within governance and development arenas. As long as stakeholders in governance and in development are not operating in synergy, poverty is forgone.

In connection with the above background, the paper argues in favour of embracing inclusive planning as a veritable tool for the reduction of poverty in Nigeria. The concept in question entails bringing together stakeholders in governance and development - government officials, scholars, and industrialists etc., to operate in synergy for the actualization of feasible and real poverty alleviation.

## METHODOLOGY

The data for the study which provides the basis for this paper were collected from secondary sources. It involves review of literature upon which poverty alleviation approaches were discussed and clarification on the basic concept to place the study in its relevant theoretical framework. The data from National Bureau of Statistics also forms part of the secondary data used.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result show that in Nigeria 84.4% of the people are poor or moderate (Table 1) as 9.5% are very poor, 37.5% poor, 47.5% moderate, 5.2% fairly rich and 0.9 % rich. There is high magnitude of poverty in the urban and rural sectors. The same is applicable in the different States that make up the country. Implied in this is the need to inclusively plan to reduce poverty.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper argues in favour of embracing inclusive planning as a veritable tool for the reduction of poverty in Nigeria. The data for the study which provides the basis for this paper were collected from secondary sources. In line with the above, two key factors recommended for inclusive planning workability are transparency and accountability. Transparency in inclusive planning and the extent to which stakeholders are informed will strengthen both their willingness and capacity to participate and take decision. It will increase the motivation of the people for creating sustainable results. An open exchange of information will lead to discussions about objectives among the key figures and promotes the willingness to reach a consensus. The dissemination of

**Table 1.** Percentage distribution of household livelihood in Nigeria based on Income.

	Very poor	Poor	Moderate	Fairly rich	Rich
National sector	9.5	37.5	47.5	5.2	0.9
Urban	6.1	30.1	56.2	6.3	1.2
Rural	11.6	41.9	41.2	4.5	0.8
<b>States</b>					
Abia	15.8	47.2	30.3	4.9	1.8
Adamawa	10.2	46.6	39.2	3.5	0.6
Akwa ibom	14.0	36.4	43.3	4.5	1.8
Anambra	10.1	37.5	45.0	5.1	2.2
Bauchi	7.1	42.3	41.9	8.1	0.6
Bayelsa	32.6	35.0	28.6	1.7	2.1
Benue	12.6	50.4	32.7	3.8	0.5
Borno	3.9	41.7	51.3	2.4	0.7
Cross river	17.0	52.7	26.0	3.7	0.7
Delta	13.2	43.5	36.2	6.0	0.7
Ebonyi	27.6	51.4	15.2	5.2	0.5
Edo	3.9	29.8	59.1	6.1	1.1
Ekiti	8.0	37.6	51.1	2.7	0.6
Enugu	13.2	36.2	42.2	7.7	0.8
Fct abuja	3.3	39.0	55.6	1.3	0.8
Gombe	7.5	42.6	46.3	2.9	0.8
Imo	20.5	46.7	30.4	1.8	0.8
Jigawa	4.9	30.7	56.0	7.3	1.0
Kaduna	8.8	43.5	38.2	9.0	0.5
Kano	11.5	41.9	40.8	5.2	0.6
Katsina	7.9	40.8	46.2	4.5	0.7
Kebbi	6.6	39.6	46.3	5.3	2.2
Kogi	5.8	32.2	58.7	2.9	0.4
Kwara	3.8	36.6	57.0	2.4	0.2
Lagos	4.3	20.5	66.2	8.3	0.7
Nassarawa	7.0	26.9	60.0	5.9	0.2
Niger	6.9	25.1	59.6	7.7	0.7
Ogun	2.7	21.8	69.2	5.2	0.1
Ondo	5.9	46.4	44.2	3.4	0.0
Osun	1.9	23.6	65.3	7.0	2.3
Oyo	7.6	38.3	49.5	3.9	0.6
Plateau	7.6	31.1	55.9	4.0	1.4
Rivers	12.0	45.9	33.9	6.2	1.9
Sokoto	8.6	23.3	59.4	7.5	1.1
Taraba	10.1	54.3	29.8	5.4	0.4
Yobe	11.0	35.4	49.7	3.3	0.5
Zamfara	15.3	37.2	43.6	2.8	1.0

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (Abubakar, 2013:108).

information in the local language(s) will contribute to an improved transparency. In addition, it will strengthen the trust of the population in poverty reduction programmes.

Accountability will require that institutions and

individuals know that their performance or lack of it matters. If it is to find ways to hold donors, experts and businesses more accountable for their participation in development projects associated with poverty, Nigerian

government will have to develop its own monitoring capacities and to identify and publicize ways of present accountability. Establishing accountability mechanisms to measure the roles of the various actors in the chain also will require new and independent dedicated body that has no stake in the outcomes of the projects. The body would be mandated to go behind the typical statistics to detect impact at village level and also measure the relative responsibility and accountability of the chain of stakeholders. Accountability thus would require transparency and collaboration among all actors.

### Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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