THE HISTORY, OBJECTIVES, ARCHEIVEMENTS AND FAILURES OF THE NATIONAL POVERTY ERADICATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

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BY

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(A) INTRODUCTION

The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in Nigeria was established in 2001 by the Obasanjo administration to replace the earlier Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP). NAPEP aimed to move beyond mere alleviation and focus on the eradication of extreme poverty, aligning with global initiatives like the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It adopted a multi-faceted approach, including skills acquisition through the Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP), and emphasized coordination among various government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector.

(B) THE HISTORY

Key aspects of NAPEP's history:

(1) Shift from Alleviation to Eradication:

NAPEP marked a shift in Nigeria's approach to poverty reduction, moving from temporary relief measures to a more comprehensive and long-term strategy.

(2) Multi-faceted Approach:

The program incorporated various initiatives like the Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP), which focused on skills training for self-reliance.

(3) Coordination and Harmonization:

NAPEP emphasized the need for better coordination among different government bodies and stakeholders to streamline poverty reduction efforts.

(4) Addressing Specific Issues:

It aimed to tackle issues like youth unemployment, rural development, social welfare, and environmental conservation.

(C)THE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of a national poverty eradication program are multifaceted, aiming to reduce poverty and improve the well-being of citizens. Key objectives include reducing absolute poverty, empowering individuals through skills acquisition and employment opportunities, improving access to basic infrastructure like healthcare and education, and encouraging entrepreneurship. Ultimately, these programs strive for a more socially organized and economically prosperous society.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

(1) Eradicating Absolute Poverty:

This involves targeted programs to reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty.

(2) Skills Acquisition and Employment:

Equipping individuals with vocational skills and creating job opportunities are crucial for self-reliance.

(3) Improving Access to Basic Infrastructure:

This includes providing access to clean water, healthcare, education, and other essential services.

(4) Encouraging Microfinance and Entrepreneurship:

Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with microcredit can foster self-employment and economic growth.

(5) Enhancing the Wellbeing of Rural Dwellers:

Programs often focus on improving the living conditions and opportunities for people in rural areas.

(6) Promoting Socially Organized and Economically Prosperous Society:

The overarching goal is to create a society where poverty is minimized and citizens have access to a better quality of life.

(D) THE ACHIEVEMENTS

The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in Nigeria aimed to reduce poverty through various initiatives, including skill acquisition programs, microcredit schemes, and infrastructure development in rural areas. While NAPEP achieved some successes, such as the Keke NAPEP project which

introduced tricycles and generated employment, its overall impact was limited due to challenges like funding constraints and implementation issues.

Specific achievements of NAPEP include:

(1) Skill Acquisition Programs:

NAPEP focused on training youths in vocational trades, offering opportunities for them to learn new skills and become self-reliant.

(2) Microcredit Schemes:

NAPEP provided microcredit to beneficiaries, enabling them to start small businesses and improve their livelihoods.

(3) Infrastructure Development:

The program invested in infrastructure development in rural areas, aiming to improve living conditions and create economic opportunities.

(4) Keke NAPEP Project:

This initiative introduced tricycles as a means of transportation and employment generation, particularly in urban areas.

(5) Youth Empowerment:

NAPEP supported internship programs for unemployed graduates and created opportunities for youth employment.

(6) Conditional Cash Transfer:

Some state governments, like Cross River, adopted the Conditional Cash Transfer program, designed by NAPEP, to enhance entrepreneurial capacity.

(7) Coordination of Efforts:

NAPEP aimed to coordinate poverty alleviation efforts across various government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector.

(E) FAILURES /CHALLENGES

(1) Funding Constraints:

Budgetary limitations and inadequate funding affected the program's ability to reach its full potential..

(2) Implementation Issues:

Problems with the implementation of programs, including corruption and mismanagement, hindered the effectiveness of NAPEP. Many programs suffer from

poor implementation due to inadequate planning, lack of clear policy frameworks, and a failure to adapt to local contexts.Inconsistent policies and a lack of coordination among various poverty alleviation initiatives create confusion and overlap, reducing their overall impact.

3. Political Interference and Instability:

Poverty alleviation schemes are often politicized, with programs being used for political gain rather than genuine poverty reduction. Political instability and changes in government can lead to policy inconsistencies and a lack of continuity in long-term poverty reduction efforts.

(4) Impact Limited:

Despite its efforts, NAPEP struggled to achieve significant poverty reduction and failed to meet its ambitious goals. while NAPEP introduced several innovative approaches to poverty reduction, its overall impact was limited by various challenges. Subsequent administrations have shifted focus to other poverty reduction strategies, such as the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP),

(5) Corruption and Mismanagement:

A significant obstacle is the high level of corruption and dishonesty within implementation agencies, leading to misappropriation of funds and resources.Lack of accountability and transparency further exacerbates the problem, preventing resources from reaching the intended beneficiaries.

(6) Exclusion and Unequal Distribution:

Poverty eradication programs often fail to reach the most vulnerable populations due to various factors, including geographical barriers, social exclusion, and lack of access to information. The unequal distribution of resources and opportunities, with wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, further complicates poverty eradication efforts.

6. Inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation:

A lack of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of programs and identify areas for improvement.

Without proper evaluation, it is challenging to determine which strategies are working and to make necessary adjustments to maximize impact.

In conclusion, while poverty eradication programs are crucial, they require a comprehensive and well-coordinated approach that addresses the

multifaceted challenges of corruption, implementation gaps, political interference, and sustainability issues.

(F) CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while NAPEP introduced several innovative approaches to poverty reduction, its overall impact was limited by various challenges. Subsequent administrations have shifted focus to other poverty reduction strategies, such as the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP).

NAPEP's legacy is one of mixed results. While it initiated some successful projects and highlighted the need for poverty reduction, it ultimately struggled to achieve its ambitious goals due to various challenges. However, NAPEP faced significant challenges, including funding constraints, corruption, and poor implementation. While it achieved some successes, its overall impact was limited, and it struggled to meet its ambitious goals.Over time, the program lost momentum, and subsequent administrations shifted focus to other poverty reduction strategies, such as the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) under President Muhammadu Buhari. Despite its shortcomings, NAPEP remains a notable attempt to combat poverty and improve the livelihoods of millions of Nigerians.

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