

**E**CONOMIC EMPOWEREMENT DEVELOPMENT  
**E**STRATEGY AND NIGERIA'S NATIONAL  
**E**DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW.

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**ABSTRACT**

**S**tarting from the late 1970s, Due to the astronomical socio-political crises Nigeria has experimented with varying degrees of reform packages aimed at resolving these crises. However, these reform programmes instead of ameliorating these crises seemed to have deepened it and thus threw the economy on the throes of acute indebtedness and dependence. In 2003, the civilian government in Nigeria initiated yet a new reform package proclaimed as homegrown strategies to rectify the lingering structural rigidities and bottlenecks in the economy. This reform is based on National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) - revised version of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) of the IMF and World Bank. This study argues that NEEDS policy document is not

**Introduction:**

Nigeria's political environment before the return to civilian rule in 1999 was characterized by a total decay of infrastructure, malfunction public utilities, high level of corruption, general waste, inefficient state enterprises, soaring inflation, unemployment, human right violation, and dissatisfied citizenry. Nigerian had almost lost confidence in the government and military regime of late General SaniAbacha and faith in their beloved country Nigeria. This general or foreseeing issues provoke the stand and pronouncement made at the inauguration of the new

*adequate enough as a reform programme for Nigeria, instead of ameliorating it rather worsen poverty situation in Nigeria. It is the position of this work that NEEDS as an offshoot of SAP and essentially, shares its objective and strategies for achieving macroeconomic stability and economic growth. It therefore argues that the road to economic El Dorado and development in Nigeria is still faced with monstrous hurdles. Equally, the researcher adopted system theory as the main theoretical base of the study to assess NEEDS achievements and challenges in Nigeria. This enables the study to further confirm that failure of previous attempts at poverty alleviation and economic reform policies largely contributed towards hiking the tempo of poverty thereby rendering the poor vulnerable in Nigeria. Thus the study recommends that Nigeria should learn from the Asian Tigers by adopting and designing a manual for Nigeria's economic emancipation, there by taking into consideration domestic factors as pillars for sustainable economic and poverty alleviation policies for critical and realistic development.*

**Keywords:** *Economic Empowerment, Development, Strategy, Nigeria, National development.*

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Civilian administration on 29 May 1999, by the elected Nigeria president General Olusegun Obasanjo (rtd) who stated as follows: "Our infrastructure –National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), Nigeria Telecommunication Limited (NITEL), Roads, Railways, Education, Housing and other Social Services were allowed to decay and collapse (Umoren, 2001:47). The development needed to be achieved by the inaugurated civilian administration growth. Reform was thus considered as imperative for this to happen.

Economic reforms essentially are the different between macroeconomic and microeconomic policies designed by the government to redress the distortion in the economy of any nation. As such Economic reform is not peculiar to Nigeria alone. Almost all countries world over have undertaken different forms of economic reforms at one time of the other. However the

contents and strategy of reforms varies from country to country depending on the circumstance of each country (Kwaneshie, 2005).

Several economic reforms have been undertaken by successive regimes in Nigeria, such as the deliberate injection of foreign capital by the Obasanjo military regime which ended in the huge debt burden several years after, the civilian imposed austerity measure during the second republic and the elaborate Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) which kicked off in 1986. The history of Nigeria is full with a plethora of economic reform policies, (Samuel, 2011).

The return to democracy in 1999 signaled the dawn of a new set of economic reform agenda viz: National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS); State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS); Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS); Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) and; National Agency for Poverty Eradication Project (NAPEP).

The National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) was instituted in 2005 by the Government of President Olusegun Obasanjo and specifically it was designed to address the structural and institutional weaknesses of the economy, tackle corruption and overhaul public expenditure management, (Kwaneshie, 2005).

At the state level minimum set of priorities were embarked state government to reflect on its SEEDS, namely, agriculture, small and medium-size enterprises, rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructure (especially roads), and public finance reforms and transparency. The National Planning Commission in collaborating with donor agencies was mandated to provide technical assistance to the states in developing their SEEDS as a necessary complement to NEEDS. Using the Guidance Manual it prepared, the National Planning Council focused and organized training workshops for the states in the six geopolitical zones of the country on preparing, monitoring, and evaluating state plans. The following are the fiscal state from the six geopolitical zones; Lagos State for South West; Imo

State for South East; Kano State for North West; Nasarawa State for North Central; Cross River State for South-South; and Bornu State for North East.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Nigerian Fourth Republic has been characterized with cases of Kidnapping, Militia activities, State secession, and insurgency among others which may not be unconnected with factors of poverty. Since the return of Nigeria to democratic civil rule in 1999 the Federal Government has over time, concentrated on designing and the implementation of several proactive economic policies and programs with a touch of both international and national initiative such as the United Nation Development Program (UNDP), Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA), and National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) 2005 as a shift from what obtained hitherto in order to revamp the economy and by extension improve the welfare of its citizenry. The prospective for achieving these are obvious considering the abundance of human and non-human resource with which the nation is richly endowed. Sadly, Nigeria's economy over the years has been patterned along a mono-cultural line, making oil the mainstay of the economy. Against this background, it is constructivism for one to argue that Nigeria's economic trauma could be traced back to the era of independence when Nigeria freshly amassed enormous oil wealth and the opportunities it contained, which led Nigeria to take tentative steps towards actualizing the potentials not only for leadership in African politics, but also for the major role in the international system which had been ascribed to her as the giant of Africa. The problem therefore is that, Nigeria is not able to perfectly use the availability of untapped mineral resources and labor forces as crucial means to cater for its internal economic discontent that heralded the country's economic, social and political progress as the country passes through multiple economic reforms without yielding positive result.

### **Research Questions**

- i. Are the programmes and project executed by the NEEDs designed to meet the development needs of the people?
- ii. How effective or otherwise is the role performance of NEEDs economic reform policy in six geo-political zones of Nigeria?
- iii. Are there challenges in the implementation of NEEDs reform on poverty and national security in Nigeria?
- iv. What alternative policy strategy should the Nigerian government adopt to investigate against challenges?

### **Objectives of the Study**

- i. To appraise the success or otherwise of NEED in addressing poverty and internal security in Nigeria between 2000-2015
- ii. To evaluate the programmes and project executed by the NEEDs designed to meet the development needs of the people.
- iii. To examine effective or otherwise is the role performance of NEEDs economic reform policy in six geo-political zones of Nigeria.
- iv. To determine those challenges in the implementation of NEEDs reform on poverty and national security in Nigeria.

### **Hypothesis**

1. The NEEDs policy and implementation has achieved the stated growth and objectives.
2. The NEEDs policy and implementation has not been an effective economic reform that reflect on national development in Nigeria.

### **Significance of the study**

The study examines the impact of economic reforms towards reducing poverty and improving national development. Effective policy decision depends on clear understanding of the problem. This is an attempt to provide a critical study that can contribute to effective policy towards reducing poverty and by extension national development in Nigeria.

### Scope of the Study

The paper attempts an appraisal of the NEEDs economic policy on poverty and national development in Nigeria from 2015 to 2021. The justification for the choice of this period is premised on the fact that the period marked significant turning point of the economy when price of crude oil dwindled to \$60 per barrel in 2020-2021 and now to almost \$100 per barrel in 2022 due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its consequent gas pipeline closure to Europe.

### Methodology

The methodology for the collection of primary data was done through oral interview and structured questionnaire methods. Other primary sources were official pronouncements from relevant authorities, persons, groups and personal observations of the researcher.

### The Study Population

The study population for this paper is made up of people who have general and specialized knowledge on NEED in six geo-political zone of Nigeria. This includes technocrats, politicians, civil servants, students, traders, market women and so on. The study population was randomly sampled and their views ascertained. Four hundred people were sampled and studied using the questionnaire method, this cuts across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. Lagos (South West), Imo state (South East), Kano state (North West), Nassarawa (North Central), Borno state (North East) and Cross River state (South South). Fourty five other selected persons were interviewed orally. The fourty five persons were among others, serving and past official of NEED and SEED.

### Sampling Technique

The paper employs a sampling procedure known as cluster sampling. This method involves the selection of samples that are located in the same area. The samples are naturally occurring groups rather than individual members of the population. These clusters include; electoral wards,

market squares, school environments and occupational groups spread across the population. Thus, civil servants, traders, students, farmers and politicians were selected to form the sample.

The sampling technique is suitable for this research because, it represents a larger population where it will be impossible to take a census of individual elements. Again, the clusters cut across gender, religion and profession.

### **Data Collection Technique**

As earlier noted, the research uses both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The structured questionnaire and unstructured oral interview were majorly used under the primary data. This is complemented by personal observations of the researcher though with absolute care and avoidance of preconceived ideas so as to achieve reliability of the research findings. The respondents had their views examined through the questionnaire and oral interview method.

The above method affords the respondents the opportunity to freely express their views on the performance of NEED between 2000 to 2015, to ensure the validity and reliability of data collected, the researcher was determined to seek the exact opinion of the respondent on related issues.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The research uses both quantitative and qualitative descriptive analysis to interpret the result and findings of the subject matter under investigation. The use of quantitative descriptive analysis was anchored on simple percentages to sum up various information during the field work, so that appropriate meaning can be reached to appraise the successes or otherwise of NEED in addressing poverty and internal security in six geopolitical zones of Nigeria between 2000-2015. The use of qualitative descriptive analysis on the other hand, affords the researcher to literally explain the statistical result (i.e interpretation) of the findings from the generated information so that conclusion can be drawn based on such

findings, in other to either confirm or disconfirm the research assumption advanced for this study.

## Literature Review

### Economic Reform

Prior to the beginning of the economic crises, the national economy appeared to have witnessed a massive expansion on all front, thanks to the oil boom of the 1970s and the early 1980s, where the revenue accruing to the state from crude oil sales rose from US\$ 4 billion in 1975 to 26 billion dollars in 1980 (Ezekiel, 2003:8; Omoruyi, 1987:29-33). Such phenomenal growth in revenue earnings underpinned the massive growth of the public sector, where government became the prime mover of the economy investing large sum in social, infrastructural, and economic activities with total government employment accounting for 60 percent of the modern sector (Bangura and Beckman, 1984). Besides, the nation's production and consumption pattern, socio-cultural values, style of economic management, policies and programmes implemented were also affected (Olaniyan, 1996). This was not to be unexpected as the state was viewed by the general populace to play a liberating role, which included not only ensuring national independence but also the freeing of the citizenry from poverty, disease, hunger and illiteracy.

However, with the fall in crude oil price in 1981, the revenue accruing to the state fell drastically to US\$ 17.2 billion in 1981, US\$ 12.8 billion in 1982, a situation which immediately set off major crisis that spread quickly to other sectors of the economy (Olukoshi, 1990:30-1; Fashoyin, 1993:80). The implication of this crunch was the collapse of the nation's industrial sector capacity to produce basic consumer goods and import raw-materials and spare parts due to the state's inability to meet industries' foreign exchange needs given their Import Substitution Industrialization strategy (UNIDO, 1985). This in turn fuelled the inflationary spiral in the economy following increases in the price of consumer goods that were in

short supply which in turn affected the general living conditions of the majority of the people.

To redress this trend of dwindling economic depression and recession, the Shagari administration introduced the economic stabilization act in April, 1982, which is a package of stringent demand-management austerity measures that entail cut in public spending, lending rates regulations, restrictions on borrowing to the private sector. Unfortunately, these measures could not correct the economic downturn, which continued with the Buhari regime which was later replaced by the Babangida administration in 1985. It was the administration of Ibrahim Babangida that on 27th June, 1986 began the implementation of the neo-liberal policy of structural adjustment, after having declared a fifteen month economic emergency where deductions were ordered from employees' salaries and corporate profits to strengthen existing demand-management policies (CBN, 1986:10).

The neo-liberal policy measures of privatization, deregulation and liberalization were mainly predicated on the World Bank/IMF initiated model for curtailing fiscal and external imbalances for developing countries which were experiencing high incidence of external debt indebtedness owed it and other bi-lateral institutions since the early 1980s (Mills, 1989:5). Consequently, the key feature of neo-liberal policy was its studied reliance on market forces to correct the perceived distortion in the economy, particularly the over-valuation of the naira which was adjusted. As a direct consequence of devaluation, many industrial firms had to suspend production or scaled down capacity utilization in response to the high exchange rates that increased manufacturing costs owing to the high import content of that sector's products.

### **Economic Reform Strategy**

The SAP or economic reforms period which started in 1986, was another opportunity at engaging in the process of economic reconstruction. This was in response to finding solutions to the mal-functioning of the economy arising from resource mismanagement, corruption and lack of endogenous

direction occasioned by the “oil wealth illusion”, ill-externally conceived programmes and foreign debt obligations to international financial creditors like the IMF/World Bank. The goal of SAP was to create a new environment for the transformation of major sectors of the economy through the policies of privatization, market reforms and liberalization, deregulations and exchange rates devaluation. The ultimate objective was to achieve non-inflationary growth and to stimulate domestic production of tradeable goods (Adeyemi, 1996).

It was believed that this process of restructuring and diversifying the productive base of the economy by allowing the private sector to drive the economy with the state playing a minimalist role, will generate economic growth that will be used to reduce the observable inequality in the economy. Since the rise of conservative neo-liberal macro-economic orthodoxy in the industrialized countries, especially the United States and the United Kingdom, many analysts of the neo-liberal school have attributed much of Africa’s economic malaise to the magnitude of state intervention in economic activity (Balassa, 1984:317-39). The school views state intervention as self serving and inefficient, crowding out available productive resources from more efficient private sector. As such, proponents of this school advocated the curtailment of the role of the state and the expansion of the market mechanism. This was to be carried out by measures such as reduction of public expenditures, elimination of subsidies, privatization of state owned enterprises (SOEs), decontrolling prices, interest rates, exchange rates and imports. Sponsored by the IMF/World Bank and the industrial powers led by the United States, the neo-liberal policy has now become the dominant ideology underlining much of North-South economic relations (see Mengisteab, 1995).

### **Development/National Development**

Development connotes among others, the progress, improvement, upliftment or desirable changes in the totality of certain aspect of human life. This could be social, economic, political or technological change.

In classical philosophical school, it could be referred to as the good life, which in relative terms, varies from one person to another. One can say therefore that development is a multi-dimensional or multi-faceted phenomenon. Development changes over time and space. What is considered or defined as development in 2005 may not be considered as development in many years later. Consequently, it should be stressed that all these dimensions of development are used for analytical purposes, otherwise, they are all intimately related.

Development is a dynamic phenomenon, which is continuous and unending. By this, it is both an end and a goal or desirable level of human condition and at the same time, a means of attaining one's goal. Dudley Seers offered one of the generally accepted conceptions of development purely from human/social term. He pictured the question to the human/social analysis of development from three basic angles:

- i. What has been happening to poverty
- ii. What has been happening to unemployment
- iii. What has been happening to inequality

To him, if all these three are prevalent or existing in the society, then that would mean the non-existence of development. Development accordingly is eradication of these three, paving way for the improvement and upliftment in the standard of living of the people. Similarly, he observed the issue of self-reliance as one of the key components of development. To him, development must be a self-generating and self-sustaining phenomenon.

It is not an intermittent thing, but one that is self-propelling. This means, development is not a thing that comes from above, but one that is generated within the capacity of the people. The recent conception of development is that, in addition to out-come of the issues raised above, development includes other issues like democracy, human rights, free market economy, environmental control, population control, gender equality etc. In other words, unless a political system adheres to the principles of democracy, particularly liberal democracy and unless there is existence of human

rights, equality between sexes are permitted, development by this implication ceases to exist.

### **Economic Reforms Initiatives And Implementations 1986-98**

Successive Federal Governments of Nigeria had initiated several programmes, which were aimed at reducing and alleviating rural poverty. Some of these programmes as noted since the 70s include the OFN, Green Revolution, DFRRI, Better Life for Rural Women, Family Support (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and lately National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) among others. Although several claims of successes of these programmes by their initiators and cronies are evident, it is the view of this researcher that emphasis should be laid on the failures of these programmes so as to identify the whys, etc in order to reinforce current programmes aimed at poverty alleviation especially rural development and sustainable activities for the improvement of quality of life.

The Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) programme was home grown, but targeted at food production and self-sufficiency at the rural areas. The advent of Green Revolution, on the heels of OFN was indicative of the inadequacy of this programme to address the food production problems and allied activities meant to elevate the living standards at rural level. Again, came DFRRI, which unlike the Green Revolution with universal acclaim and acceptance especially amongst capitalist countries was a home initiative, targeted at food production, rural development, rural infrastructures, skill acquisition and micro business development. The ambitious plans of DFRRI in the self-assigned tasks became unwieldy in conception, implementation and even obtaining the enabling Act without duplicating functions with already existing establishments tasked with similar functions. The lack of inputs from the grassroots rural dwellers and stakeholders in rural development and poverty issues did not help matters in the success of DFRRI, just like the other programmes whose

policy concepts were rather handed down from the imperial powers now masquerading under various multinational establishments in the developing countries. Besides, when the Better Life Programme (BLP) was inceptioned and targeted at elevating the living standards of the rural women. Such targeted but isolated approach to poverty problems at the rural areas failed to wholly tackle the problems. The lack of deep rooted conceptualisation and packaging of the programme to address the real problems of poverty merely reduced its activities to slogans and jamborees by exclusive women in corridors of power using electronic and print media to implement the programmes.

Again the usual absence of inputs from the targeted beneficiaries at the rural level during programme design and conceptualisation was noticeable with the BLP. The short – comings in the BLP and earlier programmes geared towards rural development, were thought to have been taken care of, by the advent of FSP/FEAP. The FSP shifted emphasis to the role of family in rural development, and so the programme mobilized women from the three tiers of the government of Nigeria – Federal, State and Local governments. The programme intervened in several areas aimed at enhancing the self-sustenance of the rural women and better health practice by them and used their children/infants. The success of this programme to the initiators may have prompted its expansion, and rechristening of the programme to FEAP, with more budgetary allocation of about N4.5 billion in the 1997/98 fiscal year. The expanded FEAP did not survive into the years because the initiator abruptly was displaced, coming with the demise of her husband and then Head of Nigerian Government, Sani Abacha. Similarly, this programme was known to be the pet project of one technocrat, who was guided by theoretical concepts and outcomes of guided visits to Latin American and South East Asian countries, with little or no inputs from rural stakeholders who were to benefit from the programme. However, arising from criticisms of the FSP, FEAP was to include an innovative rural development approach where specific or peculiar projects were to feature and be sponsored, in line

with requirements and not necessarily the needs of the particular local areas of interest.

The NDE programme was established to compliment the efforts of other poverty and rural development measures, specifically mandated to train unskilled young Nigerians towards skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development. This, it is hoped that backed by the micro business funds put together by the Federal Government of Nigeria could boost employment generation in the informal sector.

How far this programme is succeeding is still open to debates, as it is observed that the NDE programme had been severally afflicted with political decisions like suspension of the programme, usurpation of the functions of the NDE through politically motivated outfits like PAP, NAPEP which barely served political aggrandizement policies of the Government for political loyalists and party members. Finally, the NEEDS document was according to the authors and sponsors put together as a holistic approach to turn round the economic, political and social problems in Nigeria which had combined to impede economic growth and national development.

Although the authors and sponsors claim that the package had taken into account at the programme design stage, the identified problems which had made earlier programmes unsuccessful; Nigerians are yet to even come to terms with the all-ambitious, highly technical and controversial NEEDS document as the messiah for their economic recovery. In summing up the common feature characteristics of the various programmes targeted at rural development and enhancement of quality of life for Nigerians at the rural areas, it would be safe to observe that these programmes suffered from bureaucratic bottle-necks, participation of the beneficiaries at the programme design stages, apathy by the people against the programme, lack of continuity – often due to incessant changes in governments, political instability, poor funding, unattainable ambitious plans, absence of established permanent infrastructures for implementation, duplication of functions with existing establishments leading to antagonism and sabotage, mismanagement of funds, materials and equipment meant for the programme implementations, resistance from elites suspicion of

the influence of multinationals' interests and government doing the bids of foreign governments and capitalist industrialised institutions.

### **National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (Needs) Statement of Vision and Mission**

The vision for Nigeria's development derives from her history, endowments, experience, and aspirations. The visioning process has drawn inspiration from the views of a cross section of stakeholders and the provisions of the Constitution regarding the overall thrust of the aspirations of Nigerians. The vision underscores the necessity and urgency to build a modern Nigeria that maximizes the potentials of every citizen to become the largest and strongest African economy, and a force to be reckoned with in the world before the mid 21st century. Nigeria envisions a 21st century that is Africa's century, and with Nigeria among the leading nations.

The most recent articulation of this vision as embodied in the 2001 Kuru Declaration is as follows:

*"To build a truly great African democratic country, politically united, integrated and stable, economically prosperous, social organized, with equal opportunity for all, and responsibility from all, to become the catalyst of (African) Renaissance, and making adequate all-embracing contributions, sub-regionally, regionally and globally."*

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theory adopted in this paper is system's theory. The system's theory asserts that every system, including political system, is sub-systems that make up the entire system (Easton, 1965). There are assigned functions provided with enabling environment, including resources, appropriate authority, and so on to enable them discharge their responsibility optimally. Where this is the case, there is said to be stability in the political system. On the other hand, instability reigns in the political system where

the contrary is the case and the subsystems and entire system are also unable to function optimally (Almond, 1960).

Input and output analysis of a political system is very important. A political system is said to obtain its inputs, that is to say demands, supports, security, or freedom, cooperation, criticism, resources, information, direct labour, etc. from the government. These inputs are what the subsystems employ to discharge their responsibilities, so that the political system can send out its outputs into the environment and obtain further inputs for its operations.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the achievements recorded by NEEDS, the reality indicates that the reforms have left much to be desired. The basic infrastructures including water, electricity, education, transportation and health facilities remain deplorable. In spite of the increased economic fortune as a result of high crude oil prices in the international market in the last 13 years, Nigeria is still grouped among poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with a very high poverty level (UNDP, 2009) and collapsed infrastructures (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2007). Unless the Nigerian State plays its required role as provided in the neoliberal economic order of providing enabling environment, the actualization of poverty reduction would continue to remain a mirage. Regular and efficient power supply remains the main infrastructure that is required to release the full entrepreneurial energies of Nigerian economy. Stable power supply is the basis for creating more wealth, providing more job opportunities and unleashing unprecedented economic growth and poverty reduction (Fashola, 2010).

Although the neoliberal oriented reforms represent the Government robust and bold attempt to reposition the Nigerian economy to achieve economic progress, the reforms could be functional only when the State fulfills its stakeholder role within the premise of a free market economy. The major obstacles to improving opportunities and capabilities of the poor and reducing their vulnerabilities contained in the reforms remain at the level of Nigeria's leadership where the political will and ethical considerations seem to be lacking. Going by the reform critique, the

reforms substantially benefited only the political class, big business enterprises, rent seekers and a few local small and medium scale entrepreneurs. Nigeria must have focused leadership and stronger State institutions for reforms to significantly reduce poverty and stimulate economic progress. Corruption, poor state of basic infrastructure and weak institutions remained the major deterrents to investment, sustainable growth and improvement in social welfare (DFID, 2006). Leadership and stronger institutions for successful neoliberal reforms including NEEDS could be achieved through promotion of popular democracy, free and fair election and quality education.

### **Recommendations**

- i. Anti-poverty programmes should be enshrined in the law and their execution made mandatory for every administration. This implies that the programmes shall transcend the whims and caprices of individual administration. The programmes should be sustainable and thoughtfully articulated rather than episodic and stop-gap as seems to be the current vogue.
- ii. Strict legal and spiritual oath of office should be encouraged. Automatic death sentence for any embezzlement of public fund in order to improve sanity.
- iii. The targets of the programmes, the poor themselves should be active participants in the formulation and execution of anti-poverty programmes meant to benefit them. The notion that officialdom can think and act for the poor is fundamentally wrong and an insult on the afflicted. A man living in affluence can hardly understand the real problems of the poor<sup>4</sup>. A development strategy to generate employment in both rural and urban areas is also of great essence. New Jobs directed at the poor not at the middle or upper-class would go a long way to check poverty.

- iv. Effort should be made to address the problem of neo-capitalist formation of the Nigeria state which is the bane of development.

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