

Poverty Reduction in Nigeria via National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP): Two Decades of Policy Failure?

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Abstract

In spite of the conscious efforts by successive Nigerian governments to reduce poverty in the country, poverty incidence has been on the rise. This study, therefore, attempted to examine NAPEP as a policy to eradicate extreme poverty in the country. Personal interviews and documents were employed in data collection. The data were analysed using tables, simple percentages and spearman rank correlation. The study revealed, among others, that NAPEP as a policy aimed at eradicating extreme poverty has recorded a mixed bag of limited success and continuing challenges. It was, therefore, recommended that the policy should be re-examined and possibly re-designed for effective performance

Keywords: Poverty, unemployment, empowerment, development, policy

1. Introduction

Nigeria has the third highest number of poor people in the world after China and India. Approximately, 54.4% of the country's population live on less than one dollar (US\$1) a day. Successive administrations in the country have initiated policies and programmes geared towards reducing the level of poverty. Two of such were the Agricultural Development Projects (ADP) of 1975 and Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and they were introduced by the Obasanjo Administration.

The objective of the programmes was to ensure that Nigerians had adequate food to combat hunger, which is regarded as one of the elements of poverty reduction in the country. In 1980, the Shagari Administration continued in this line by introducing the Green Revolution.

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The Babangida Administration widened the scope by introducing a programme that was meant to deal with both absolute and relative poverty. The Administration established the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). This was primarily aimed at reducing absolute poverty, while the creation of Peoples Bank was targeted at addressing relative poverty (National Assembly Statistical Information, 2009).

The Abacha Administration established the Community Bank and Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF). The two programmes were targeted at reducing poverty from the polity, whether absolute or relative. However, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) (1999) study on "the rate of poverty in Nigeria" concluded that poverty has been on the increase in the country. During the democratic dispensation, in 2000, the Obasanjo Administration created a Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP). PAP was introduced to urgently create a menial-based 200,000 jobs. The immediate objective was to mop up from the labour market, in the shortest time, some 200,000 unemployed persons in the face of increasingly restive youth. The projects undertaken by the participants of the programme were to stimulate economic activities and improve the environment. It was also to reduce the social vices and stem rural-urban drift. The participants were paid ₦3,500 (local currency) each monthly for a period of twelve months as they were engaged in direct labour activities such as patching of potholes, vegetation control along highways, afforestation, environmental sanitation, maintenance of public buildings, among others.

After about four months of implementation of PAP, the harsh criticisms of the programme by the public made government institute a panel to review it. The panel eventually recommended its discontinuation because of the following identified problems: over-centralization, unsustainable design, uncoordinated management, over-politization, irregular payment, and lack of monitoring logistics and high-level and low-level corruption (Abdullahi, 2008).

The federal government then set up NAPEP in 2001, which replaced PAP. This shows that government was not just trying to alleviate but eradicate poverty in the country. The main areas of NAPEP were categorized into four schemes: Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS), and National Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRCDS) (Aliyu, 2003).

This was a clear demonstration and commitment of civilian administration to address the challenges faced by the poor in the country.

However, in spite of the change in name with much money sunk into these programmes, Poverty rate remains high and the living standard continues to decline. Is this situation a sign that the attempt to use public policy to reduce poverty in the country via NAPEP has failed? The objective of this study, therefore, is to attempt to examine NAPEP as a policy to eradicate extreme poverty in Nigeria.

2 Literature Review

It has been realized that poverty anywhere is a threat to peace, security and prosperity everywhere (Abdullahi, 2008). This reality has in the recent past motivated governments across the globe to redouble effort aimed at improving conditions of living of the people. In the same vein, conscious effort to eradicate all forms of extreme poverty and hunger are made. These efforts by governments of developing nations translate into introduction of economic empowerment and development strategies.

The origin of poverty in Nigeria can be traced to the shortcomings in the various development plans in the country. The first attempt at planning for socio-economic development took place in 1946. This was part of the exercise that produced the 1946-56 plans which covered all aspects of government activities. This development plan which fell within the colonial administration was formulated and implemented solely by the colonial masters without any input, whatsoever from the Nigerian people.

Thereafter, a total of four post-independence development plans have been formulated and implemented- the 1962-68, 1970-74, 1975-80, 1981-85 plans. In these development plans, communities were not fully involved in the planning and implementation of their social services and this partly, contributed to the problems of the plans. Successive administrations in Nigeria have initiated policies in an attempt to reduce poverty in the country. Two of such were the Agricultural Development Projects (ADP) of 1975 and Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), these were introduced by the Obasanjo Administration. The objective of the programmes was to ensure that Nigerians had adequate food to combat hunger.

In 1980, the Shagari Administration continued in the same vein by introducing the Green Revolution programme (National Assembly Statistical Information, 2009).

The Babangida Administration as earlier stated, enlarged the scope by introducing a programme that was meant to deal with both absolute and relative poverty. The Administration established the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). This was aimed at reducing absolute poverty, while the creation of Peoples Bank was targeted at addressing relative poverty.

The Abacha Administration established the Community Bank and Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF). The two programmes were targeted at reducing poverty from the polity, whether absolute or relative. During the democratic dispensation, in 2001, the Obasanjo Administration created NAPEP. The Administration also established the Nigeria Agricultural and Corporate Rural Development Bank (NACRDB) to address relative and absolute poverty.

The Federal Government further designed and implemented a number of development initiatives and programmes geared towards achieving the country's vision and development goals. These initiatives and programmes include the National Economic Empowerment and Strategies (NEEDS I and II), Seven-Point Agenda, and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). All these programmes were targeted at poverty reduction, wealth creation and employment generation.

In spite of these efforts by successive government, instead of recording remarkable progress in poverty reduction, poverty incidence has been on the rise. What is responsible for this state of affairs?

2.1 Theory

Various scholars of diverse disciplines have tried to explore the concept of poverty reduction and by extension empowerment by attempting to connect the personal and social, the individual and society, the micro and macro. Sociologists have particularly taken it as a challenge to explain such connectivity.

The Meta-theory of empowerment developed by Elisheva Seedam and translated by Flantz (1997) drew inspiration from the interdisciplinary and multidimensional theories particularly those that embark on a search between the individual (micro) level and community (macro) level. The empowerment at individual level therefore is seen as a process of increasing control and transaction from a state of powerlessness. On the other hand, community empowerment is a collective social process of creating a community, achieving better control over the environment and decision making in which groups, organizations or communities participate. Furthermore, the Meta- theory seeks to develop a theoretical meaning of empowering professional practice through which an abstract theory is translated into a practical tool of intervention (Flantz 1997:137). In other words, the theory of empowerment attempts to convincingly integrate the micro and macro levels in order to make clear the interrelations among individual, community and professional empowerment.

NAPEP at the individual level seeks to give voice to the voiceless, increase their control capabilities and facilitate their transition from their state of powerlessness. At the group level NAPEP has created NAPEP communities which through its empowerment and development strategies are to have better control particularly over the environment thereby enhancing desired social progress. The theoretical meaning of empowering professional practice is also applicable to NAPEP. Thus NAPEP activities in NAPEP communities are coordinated by appointed professional officials who seek to guide and help the NAPEP communities to achieve the translation of NAPEP theoretical prescriptions into concrete practical realities. The Meta – theory, therefore, presents empowerment as a process of transaction from a state of powerlessness to a state of relative control over one's destiny.

Empowerment is therefore, a transition from a passive situation where a powerless individual that had become worthless, indulged in self-blame, indifferent and alienated from the environment changes to a more active situation of control. The process of empowerment therefore seeks to influence the oppressed human agency and the social structure within the limitations and possibilities in which this human agency exists and reacts. Empowerment as a process could be described as a being made up of three interwoven process of individual empowerment, community empowerment, and empowering professional practice.

Individual empowerment if acquired in the course of active participation in social change process in groups and organization turn to have special value for both the individual and the environment within which it is taking place. In another vein, community empowerment develops a sense of responsibility, commitment and ability to care for collective survival, as well as skills in problem solving and political efficiency to influence changes in the environment relevant to their quality of life. Finally, empowering the professional practice will facilitate improved intervention by empowerment and development organizations such as NAPEP for sustained individual and community empowerment. Thus, in the empowerment process such as contained in the strategies of NAPEP the people in the NAPEP community are expected to learn, take on socially valuable roles such as participating in rural appraisal for prioritizing community interests, exercise of social skills and exertion of interpersonal influence to take responsibility and to acquire political efficiency. These abilities which NAPEP seeks to introduce to beneficiaries of its programmes will greatly contribute to the joint goals of empowering themselves as individuals and as a community.

3. Research Method

3.1 Primary Sources

Five senior members of staff of NAPEP and five beneficiaries were interviewed. The interviews were intended to extract from the managers and the beneficiaries of the programme their reflections on the system with which they were actively engaged. Each interview lasted between 25-30minutes and it took the form of discussion organized around the following issues: poverty reduction, education as poverty reduction strategy, access to loans, and population growth. All interviews were preceded by formal request and the issues were raised in the e-mail and text-messages. Replies were received indicating willingness to grant the interview and the scheduled time for the interview. Notes were taken down and the relevant jottings were read to the hearing of the interviewees for their consent.

3.2 Secondary Sources

Secondary data were obtained from publications of National Bureau of Statistics, Federal Ministry of Education, National Assembly Statistical Information, National Population Commission, and NAPEP.

4. Results

4.1 Statistics and Data Analysis

The secondary data were analyzed using tables, simple percentages and spearman rank correlation. The results of the interview were used to reinforce the validity of the secondary data.

Table 1: Poverty Incidences by States Including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) (1980, 1985, 1992 And 1996)

STATES	1980	1985	1992	1996
Abia	14.433	149.9	56.2	
Adamawa	33.4447	244.165.5		
Akwa-Ibom	10.2	41.945	566.9	
Anambra	12.837	732.351.0		
Bauchi	46.0	68.968	883.5	
Bayelsa	7.244	443.444.3		
Benue	23.642	940.864.2		
Borno	26.450	149.766.9		
Cross-River	10.241	945.566.9		
Delta	19.852	433.956.1		
Ebonyi	12.8	37.732	351.0	
Edo	19.852	4	33.956.1	
Ekiti	24.947	3	46.671.6	
Enugu	12.837	7	32.351.0	
Gombe	46.068	9	68.883.5	
Imo	14.433	1	49.956.2	
Jigawa	37.554	0	38.771.0	
Kaduna	44.758	5	32.067.7	
Kano	37.555	0	38.771.0	
Katsina	44.758	7	32.067.7	
Kebbi	25.445	8	37.983.6	
Kogi	33.339	3	60.875.5	
Kwara	33.339	3	60.875.5	
Lagos	26.443	6	48.183.0	
Nassarawa	49.549	5	50.262.7	
Niger	34.061	4	429.952.9	
Ogun	20.056	0	36.369.9	
Ondo	24.947	3	46.671.6	
Osun	7.828	3	40.758.7	
Oyo	7.8	28	340.758.7	
Plateau	49.5	64	250.262.7	
Rivers	7.2	44	443.477.3	
Sokoto	25.4	45	837.983.6	
Taraba	33.4	47	244.165.5	
Yobe	26.4	50	149.766.9	
Zamfara	33.4	45	837.983.6	
FCTNA	NA	27	653.0	
Nigeria	28.1	46.3	42.765.6	

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

Generally, poverty incidence in each state increased steadily from 1980 to 1996 with some fluctuation as can be read from table 1. The highest incidence for all the 36 states and FCT was in 1996. In the country as a whole the incidence increased from 28.1 % in 1980 to 46.1% in 1985, then dropped slightly to 42.7% in 1992 and sky-rocketed to 65.6% in 1996.

Table 2: Estimated Number of Poor People by Zones Using 2004 Poverty Rate and the Result of 2006 Final Population Figures, 2009

Zone	Population	Poverty index (%)	Estimated number of poor people per zone
North Central(Kwara, Kogi,Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau and Niger)	18,963,617	67.0	12,705,623
North West (Kano, Jigawa, Katsina, Zamfara, Kebbi, Sokoto and Kaduna)	35,915,467	72.2	25,930,967
North East (Bauchi, Taraba, Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, Yobe)	18,971,965	71.2	13,508,039
South East (Enugu, Anambra, Ebonyi, Abia, Imo)	16,395,555	26.7	4,377,613
South West (Lagos, ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, Ekiti)	27,722,432	43.0	11,920,646
South- South (Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa-ibom, Cross-River, Edo)	21,044,081	35.1	7,386,472
Federal Capital Territory (FCT)	1,405,201	53.0	745,307
Total National	140,431,790	54.4	75,727,981

Source: National Population Commission and National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)

Among the six geo-political zones, North-West has the highest poverty index (72.2%), followed by North- East with 71.2%. South-East has the lowest poverty index of 26.7%. The other items can read from Table 2.

Table 3: Estimated Number of Poor People by State Using 2004 poverty Incidence and the Result of 2006 Final Population Figures, 2009

S/ No	State	Population	Poverty Rate	Estimated Poor people's population
1	Abia	2,845,380	22.3	634,520
2	Adamawa	3,178,950	71.7	2,279,307
3	Akwa Ibom	3,902,051	34.8	1,357,914
4	Anambra	4,177,828	20.1	839,743
5	Bauchi	4,653,066	86.3	4,015,596
6	Bayelsa	1,704,515	20.0	340,903
7	Benue	4,253,641	53.3	2,352,263
8	Borno	4,171,104	53.6	2,235,712
9	Cross River	2,892,988	41.6	1,203,483
10	Delta	4,122,445	45.4	1,867,050
11	Ebonyi	2,176,947	NA	NA
12	Edo	3,233,366	33.1	1,070,244
13	Ekiti	2,398,957	42.3	1,014,758
14	Enugu	3,267,837	31.1	1,016,297
15	Gombe	2,365,040	77.0	1,821,081
16	Imo	3,927,563	27.4	1,076,152
17	Jigawa	4,361,002	95.1	4,147,313
18	Kaduna	6,113,503	50.1	3,062,865
19	Kano	9,401,288	61.3	5,762,989
20	Katsina	5,801,584	71.1	4,124,926
21	Kebbi	3,256,541	89.7	2,921,117
22	Kogi	3,314,043	88.6	2,936,242
23	Kwara	2,365,353	85.2	2,015,280
24	Lagos	9,113,605	63.6	5,796,253
25	Nasarawa	1,869,377	61.6	1,151,536
26	Niger	3,954,772	63.9	2,527,099
27	Ogun	3,751,140	31.7	1,189,111
28	Ondo	3,460,877	42.3	1,463,951
29	Osun	3,416,959	32.4	1,107,095
30	Oyo	5,580,894	24.1	1,344,996
31	Plateau	3,206,531	60.4	1,936,745
32	Rivers	5,198,716	29.1	1,512,826
33	Sokoto	3,702,676	76.8	2,843,655
34	Taraba	2,294,800	62.2	1,427,366
35	Yobe	2,321,339	83.3	1,933,675
36	Zamfara	3,278,873	80.9	2,652,608
3	FCT Abuj	1,406,239	53.0	745,307
	Nigeria	140,431,790	54.4	75,727,981

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, Abuja

Along with increased fertility rate in the country is the issue of poverty aggravation. Table 3 shows that poverty in Nigeria has significant disparities among the 36 states. Poverty level is high states like Yobe, Bauchi, and Adamawa. It is also high in states like Jigawa, Zamfara, Kebbi, Sokoto and Katsina in the North – West. Poverty level is similarly high in Kwara, Kogi and Niger states in the North-Central geo-political zone while Oyo, Ondo, Osun and Ogun states in the South-West have relatively low poverty level with lagos state (the commercial state of the country) having a relatively high poverty level.

Table 4: Adult Literacy and Poverty Rates by states and FCT

S/No	State	Literacy rate	Poverty rate
1	Abia	79.2	22.3
2	Adamawa	56.1	71.7
3	Akwa Ibom	67.0	34.8
4	Anambra	77.8	20.1
5	Bauchi	39.5	86.3
6	Bayelsa	64.3	20.0
7	Benue	67.0	55.3
8	Borno	27.4	53.6
9	Cross River	75.5	41.6
10	Delta	72.9	45.4
11	Ebonyi	57.7	NA
12	Edo	70.3	33.1
13	Ekiti	75.6	42.3
1	Enugu	75.6	31.1
4	Gombe	54.3	77.0
15	Imo	75.4	27.4
16	Jigawa	38.7	95.1
17	Kaduna	66.4	50.1
18	Kano	57.5	61.3
19	Katsina	36.5	71.1
20	Kebbi	51.1	89.7
21	Kogi	64.5	88.6
22	Kwara	55.6	85.2
23	Lagos	89.9	63.6
24	Nasarawa	53.7	61.6
25	Niger	36.5	63.9
26	Ogun	69.6	31.7
27	Ondo	76.6	42.3
28	Osun	74.8	32.4
29	Oyo	73.3	24.1
30	Plateau	61.6	60.4
31	Rivers	70.3	29.1
32	Sokoto	70.3	76.8
33	Taraba	55.7	62.2
34	Yobe	25.3	83.3
35	Zamfara	53.4	80.9
36	FCT, Abuja	79.0	53.0
37	Nigeria	65.7	54.4

Source: Federal Ministry of Education

Table 4 shows Nigerian adult literacy and poverty ratios by states. The table reveals that, Lagos State has the highest literacy rate of 89.9% followed by Abia with 79.2% and poverty rate of 63.6% and 22.3% respectively. Yobe has the least literacy rate of 25.3% and poverty rate of 83.3%, but Jigawa with 38.7% literacy rate has the highest poverty rate of 95.1%. Poverty rate is seen to reduce with higher literacy rate though the case of Lagos State is seen as an exception.

Confirming these statistics, majority of the interviewees (beneficiaries) were of the opinion that poverty is widespread, severe, and varies among the 6 geo-political zones, and differ from state to state, and community to community. Poor access to infrastructure negatively affects a large percentage of the population. The extremely poor people do not have access to food, shelter, treated water, good healthcare, and basic education. They went further to say that factors responsible for poverty in the country include: unemployment, low level of education, inaccessibility to loan/ credit facilities, absence of social infrastructure, low wages, and inflation. They also said NAPEP as a policy or programme has failed as it has been unable to address the issue of poverty because of poor coordination, politicization, and corruption.

This is further corroborated by the Report of National Bureau of Statistics that about 112 million Nigerians are living below the poverty line (National Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Some interviewees (senior staff of NAPEP), nonetheless, maintained that some progress has been made to eradicate extreme poverty but what is achieved is far from intended objective. They, however, expressed their frustrations over political interference and inadequate funding

Table 5: Calculation from Table 3 (Literacy Rate vs Poverty Rate)

	State	Literacy ranking positions	Poverty ranking positions	Differences(d)	d^2
1	Abia	2	34	-32	1024
2	Adamaw	25	10	15	225
3	Akwa Ibom	4	35	-31	961
4	Anambra	17	26	-9	91
5	Bauchi	32	4	28	784
6	Bayelsa	21	36	-15	225
7	Benue	17	18	-1	1
8	Borno	3	19	17	289
9	Cross River	8	25	-17	289
10	Delta	12	22	-10	100
11	Ebonyi	23	NA	-	-
12	Edo	13	27	-17	289
13	Ekiti	6	23	-17	289
14	Enugu	6	30	-24	576
15	Gombe	28	8	20	400
16	Imo	9	32	-23	529
17	Jigawa	33	1	32	1024
18	Kaduna	19	21	-2	4
19	Kano	24	16	8	64
20	Katsina	34	11	23	529
21	Kebbi	31	2	29	841
22	Kogi	20	3	17	289
23	Kwara	27	5	22	484
24	Lagos	1	13	-12	144
25	Nasarawa	29	15	14	196
26	Niger	34	12	22	484
27	Ogun	16	29	-13	169
28	Ondo	5	23	-18	324
29	Osun	10	28	-18	324
30	Oyo	11	33	-225	484
31	Plateau	22	17	-18	25
32	Rivers	13	31	4	324
33	Sokoto	13	9	12	16
34	Taraba	26	14	30	144
35	Yobe	37	6	23	900
36	Zamfara	30	7	-17	529
37	FCT, Abuja	3	20		289
	Total				13659

$r = 1 - \{6 \sum d^2 / n^2 (n - 1)\}$ Where $-1 \leq r \leq 1$, where 'r' denotes relationship between the adult literacy rate and poverty rate by states, 'n' denotes the total number of states in the country and FCT and 'd' denotes the difference between the ranking positions.

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= 1 - \{6(13,659) / 37^2(37 - 1)\} \\
 &= 1 - \{6(13,659) / 1,369 \times 36\} \\
 &= 1 - 81,954 / 49,284 \\
 &= 1 - 1.66 \\
 &= 0.66
 \end{aligned}$$

Here, we rank adult literacy rate and poverty rate by 36 states and FCT as seen in table 5. It also verifies whether there is a relationship (r) between adult literacy rate and poverty rate in the 36 states and FCT in the country using spearman rank correlation.

The result from the computation shows that, in the 36 states and FCT, there is a weak relationship of -0.66 (-66%) between adult literacy rate and poverty rate.

4.2 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and poverty reduction

In September 2000, in an unprecedented gathering in New York, World leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration through which the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) emerged. This universal reform programme that has been hatched and promoted by the UN is aimed at affecting governments, communities and individuals. The MDGs bind countries to partners in order to eradicate extreme poverty, fight illiteracy, hunger, maternal and child mortality, promote access to basic education and safe water, fight diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, promote development of poor countries through technological transfer, debt relief, and increased aid (National Assembly Statistical Information, 2009) . NAPEP draws its activities heavily from MDGs. The key developmental goals outlined in the MDGs declaration are:

- ❖ Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger;
- ❖ Achieve universal primary education;
- ❖ Promote gender equality and empower women;
- ❖ Reduce child mortality;

- ❖ Improve maternal health;
- ❖ Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- ❖ Ensure environmental sustainability;
- ❖ Develop a global partnership for development.

Table 6: The MDG Challenge in Nigeria

Millennium Development Goals	Current status in Nigeria
Reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty by 50% in 2015	55% Of Nigerians live on less than US\$1 per day.
Halve the proportion of people suffering from hunger	29% of children are underweight.
Ensure that all children complete primary education of adequate quality	Less than 60% of primary aged children attend school. 7 million primary- aged children are not in school.
Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2015.	The number of girls enrolled in primary education is 92% the number of boys. In some states it is less than 40% particularly in the Northern part of Nigeria.
Reduce child mortality by 2/3 among children under five	One in five Nigerian children die before their fifth birthday. Main causes are malaria (33%), VPD (22%), diarrhea (19%), and acute respiratory infections (16%).
Reduce deaths of mothers due to child bearing by 75% between 1990 and 2015	One Birth In a hundred results in the death of the mother. Women In Northern Nigeria have a one in fifteen chance of dying through a pregnancy related cause.
Halt the spread of AIDS	5% of Nigerians are infected with HIV- over 10% in some states, over 1 million children have already been orphaned by AID
Halves the proportion of people without safe drinking water by 2015	Less than 50% of the rural population has access to a safe water source.

Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys 1995 and 2000; Demographic and Health Survey, 2003; National Living Standard Survey, 2004.

Table 6 shows that Nigeria's status is not enviable. It is doubtful if the country will achieve the poverty-related MDG by the year, 2015.

4.2 Major Findings

- Poverty is still widespread, severe and varies among the 6 geo-political zones and the 36 states and FCT.
- Factors responsible for extreme poverty in Nigeria include unemployment, low level of education and absence of social infrastructure.
- There is a weak relationship between adult literacy rate and poverty rate.
- Finally, NAPEP as a policy aimed at eradicating extreme poverty, has recorded a mixed bag of limited success and continuing challenges.

5 Discussions

In spite of the introduction of NAPEP to address the issue of poverty, poverty is still widespread, and severe but varies among the 6 geo-political zones and among the 36 states and FCT. North -Westgeo- political zone has the highest poverty index (72.2%) while South-East has the lowest (26.7%). Indeed, 75, 727,981(54.4%) of the country's population live on less than \$1 per day (NAPEP Report, 2009). This is lower than the incidence of 65.6% in 1996 but it was still high and worrisome. This was generally corroborated by a keynote address by the then Vice-President, Goodluck Jonathan at 2009 Budget Retreat for Committees on Appropriation and National Planning of the House of Representatives. He acknowledged that:

the challenges of poverty which affect more than half of the population and the growing inequality and increasing graduate unemployment remain worrisome. This is in spite of an average economic growth rate of over 6.0%. The issues of growth without employment, growing inequality, high incidence of poverty and the unbaiting unemployment are some of the challenges facing the country (National Assembly Statistical Information, 2009).

The poverty situation became worse when as many as 112 million or 70.0% of Nigerians were living below the poverty line in 2013.

According to the final result of the 2006 population census, Nigeria has an annual population growth rate of 3.2% (one of the highest in the world). Rapid population growth with low socio-economic growth could make it difficult for NAPEP to achieve its objective of eradicating extreme poverty.

We also attempted to compare the degree of literacy with poverty rate in the 36 states and FCT. Literacy is a human right; it is regarded as a tool for personal empowerment and a means for social and human development. Literacy is one of essential instruments for eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development. However, the computed spearman rank correlation value reveals that, in the 36 states and FCT, there is a weak relationship of -0.66 or -66% between adult literacy and poverty rate.

6. Conclusion

It is concluded that NAPEP is indeed, a conscious effort by Nigerian government to eradicate all forms of extreme poverty but the performance of the programme is a mixed bag of limited success and continuing challenges, due to certain problems. These problems range from poor coordination, political interference to corruption.

7. Recommendations

Policy recommendations are made based on the major findings of the study and they are as follows:

- NAPEP as a programme should be re-examined and possibly re-designed to make it effective in eradicating extreme poverty. The programme should be de-politicised and there should be effective monitoring to check cases of corrupt practices.
- Government should do more in the area of infrastructural development and the educational system should be made entrepreneurial.
- Finally, Government should design an effective policy on fertility so that we can have a population that the economy can sustain.

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