

Analysis of Factors Militating Against the Policies and Strategies in Combating Poverty and Unemployment in Nigeria

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Abstract

Available evidence indicates that the incidence of poverty has continued to rise in Nigeria despite several anti-poor programmes initiated by different levels of government. The Harmonized Nigeria Living Standard Survey (HNLSS) of 2009/2010, conducted by the NBS reveals that measures, efforts and programmes put in place by various levels of government to alleviate poverty have remained unsatisfactory. For instance, relative and absolute poverty rates increased from 54.4% and 54.7% in 2004 to 69.0% and 60.9% in 2010; respectively. This implies that the population in relative poverty grew by a compound annual growth rate of 8.56%, above the average growth rate of 7.2% per annum since 2004 the (NBS, in NPC, 2011). The national poverty level also increased from 54.4 in 2004 to 69 in 2010, while the population of people in poverty increased from 68.7 million in 2004 to 112.47 million in 2010, indicating further that the economy must increase above 8.56% per annum for economic growth to trickle down to alleviate poverty to an acceptable level (NBS, in NPC, 2011). The recent report by the National Bureau of Statistics puts Nigeria's poverty rate at 99.284 million or 60.9 per cent. The highlight of the report shows that the North West and the North East, with 77.7 per cent and 76.3 per cent respectively, had the highest poverty rates in the country in 2010 (NBS, 2013).

Introduction

For several decades, poverty, among other social ills, has remained quite endemic in the Third World countries, especially in sub-Saharan African countries and Nigeria in particular, where the per capita income of the citizens has been on serious decline. The poverty situation in Nigeria has remained so pervasive despite the existence and adoption of several policy and reform measures; the latest being the Millennium Development Goals, by the successive political leaders at various levels of government.

Nwachukwu and Ezeh (2007) were of the view that the actualization of the MDGs in Abia state is being challenged by poor leadership, insincerity in governance and reform practices, policy inconsistency, lack of adequate data base, high levels of corruption and non inclusion of the private sector and civil society in programme implementation. Though these scholars and reports examined the patterns of implementation of millennium development goal (1) by the successive Nigerian governments and Abia state executive in particular, they have however failed to examine the implications on the development of institutional mechanisms for poverty reduction in the state within the period under study.

Ezeani (2012) attributes the abysmal failure of the MDGs in actualizing its target of eradication extreme hunger in Nigeria, including Abia State to poor performance of local government system in the country. Thus, according to him, local government as third tier of government closest to the grassroots has the primary responsibility in the implementation of the MDGs responsive programmes and activities. He infers further:

With significant chunk of public expenditure decisions made at the local government level, the responsibility of realizing the MDGs rest on local government. The better local governments are able to target and develop the right interventions, the better will be the result on poverty reduction, health, sustainable development and education (Ezeani, 2012:7)

Regrettably, he observes that in Nigeria, the local government system has not fulfilled its mandate of bringing development to the grassroots despite the various past reforms implemented in the system. According to him, the local government system in Nigeria is characterized by poor governance

and weak government capacity. The capacity of local government institutions to plan, prioritize and deliver development initiatives is weak, resulting in inadequate provision of services. There are limited checks and balances on public funds spending and wide spread corruption at all levels of the system. Consequently, there is a high level of frustration and distrust by the citizens about local government system. He contends that the poor performance of local government system in Nigeria negates the achievement of the MDGs.

Abubakar (2012) avers that as a constructive way of achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria, the past administration of President Olusegun-Obasanjo made concerted effort in the socio-economic and political spheres in order to move the country to greater heights. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDs) according to him, is therefore a reform programme designed to consolidate the achievements between 1999 and 2003 and lay a foundation for sustainable poverty reduction, employment generation, wealth creation and value re-orientation. This coordinational consideration he maintains is perceived as the nation's blue-print for development, and as such, represents the framework by which government, private sector, donor agencies and NGO's hope to put Nigeria on the road to sustainable development. In line with the targets of the Millennium Development Goals, NEEDs seeks to fight against the many strands of poverty through job creation and empowerment of people to success. As a way of bringing the reform programme closer to Nigerians, each state government, including Abia state, was mandated to develop a State Economic Empowerment and Development (SEEDs). The implementation, monitoring and evaluation framework according to him, is through the National Economic Council (NEC) and the National Council Development on planning. Furthermore, local governments were encouraged to develop benchmarks, targets, deliverables, timeliness and implementation guides. The institutional framework of NEEDs is meant to facilitate the process of interaction between stakeholders and to ensure synergy in the implementation process.

In the same manner, Ogbulu and Mbazie (2012) note that NEEDs, as a development plan or strategy, was borne out of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declarations wholly adopted by 189 Sovereign States in September, 2000. The MDGs according to them include the eradication of extreme hunger and poverty, achievement of universal primary education, promotion of gender equality and women empowerment, reduction of child mortality, improvement in maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing partnership for development. According to them, the Abia state SEEDs broad policy goals, as with NEEDs at the federal level include:

- Eradicating Poverty
- Attaining Universal Primary Education
- Efficient healthcare delivery and combating HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases
- Ensuring gender balance and women empowerment as well as pursuing pro-poor programmes
- Ensuring good governance, value re-orientation and crisis reduction
- Expanding Investment Opportunities
- Promoting Public-Private Partnership
- Ensuring Sustainable Environment; and
- Wealth creation through small-scale industries and quality local production.

Furthermore, they observe that Abia state poverty reduction programmes under SEEDs have not impacted positively on the citizens, especially the rural populace. The report of the LEEDS stakeholders' validation workshop held at Umuahia between 29th and 28th July 2010 under the auspices of the UNDP and CEPD summed up these problems, thus:

Unavailability of funds corruption, inadequate capacity of the implementation committees, monitoring and evaluation process, gap between participatory method and finance, lack of political willingness, lack of coordination among the three tiers of government and their agencies, poor commitments by the implementers, untimely

adherence and compliance to strategies and targets, ensuring sustainability of LEEDS implementation even when government changes, integration of LEEDS in the LGA budget, transparency, accountability and value for money in implementation (*Thisday*, July 29, 2010:33).

Given the fact that the successive governments in Nigeria have failed to foster the development of institutional mechanisms for poverty reduction in the state within the framework of the relevant MDGs, Warime-Jaja (2010) contends that the growing incidence of poverty in Nigeria and the grim harsh conditions experienced by people have served as motivating factors for unemployed Abians to seek for extra-legal ways to come out of their deplorable state of survival. This according to him explains why there has been a chronic and recalcitrant crime situation that has a systematic occurrence and characterized as dangerous in the state since democratic inception in Nigeria in 1999.

Political leaders should exhibit more political will and transparency in the management of the funds accrued to state in their effort towards establishing institutional mechanisms necessary to combat the increase incidence of poverty in the state. Since the experience the world over has shown that government alone cannot bring about all the necessary changes in the society, political leaders should endeavour to come up with good policies that would help strengthen the state's partnership venture with the private organizations in the effort towards poverty reduction in the state. Related to the above is the need for the state government to come up with right legislation that would help delineate the roles of various poverty reduction intervention projects in the state to avoid overlapping objectives and waste of available resources. The state government should endeavour to specify the modalities and criteria for the execution and disbursement of poverty reduction projects to avoid such projects entering into wrong hands or indeed, serving as compensations to political thugs and sycophants. The government should endeavour to use professionals and people well experienced in the procurement, execution and distribution of poverty reduction projects across the zones in the state instead of party officials and agents.

Despite the abundance of human and natural resources, over eight percent of the total population is engaged in traditional agricultural practices. Informal sector activities undertaken on a small-medium scale include trade and commerce in agricultural and manufactured goods, tailoring services, auto repairs, metal works, carpentry, food processing, and masonry (Kogi State CSDP mid-term review report, 2011).

As various state governments, in collaboration with either the Federal Governments or donor agencies, have embarked on implementing anti-poor programmes to reduce the rising incidence of poverty in their respective states, Kogi State Government, based on the performance of Community based Poverty Reduction Project (CPRP), Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Project (LEEMP), assisted by the World Bank, has embarked on the implementation of the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP). In 2009, Kogi State Community and Social Development Agency (KGCSDA) came into existence to manage the funds provided by the World Bank and a counterpart funding from the federal Government under the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) with a view to bringing about improvement in the socio-economic conditions of the rural communities through service delivery and preservation and effective management of environmental/natural resources.

Several programmes implemented by the government to combat poverty appear unsuccessful. This has been attributed to political and policy instability, inadequate coordination of various programmes, several budgetary, management and governance problems, lacks of accountability and transparency, and lack of mechanisms for the sustainability of the programmes (Ogwumike, 1995 and 1998; Ogunleye, 2010; Adawo, 2011). These factors, singly or collectively, accounted for the inability to actualize the objectives of these measures. Of most importance however, is the inability of these measures to distribute the social surpluses or combat the condition that breed poverty. As a result, 70.0 percent of Nigerians in 1998 (as against 42.8 percent in 1992) live below the poverty level (Obadan, 2001).

The civilian government enthroned in 1999 with Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as president, promised to give the increasing rate of poverty in Nigeria a good fight. Convinced that poverty alleviation would be the avenue through which the government could revamp the battered economy and rebuild self-esteem in the majority of Nigerians who had been dehumanized through past military regimes, the government, shortly after inauguration in 1999, commenced an elaborate process of producing a poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) with the support of some donor agencies. At the same time, the government set up a committee on poverty alleviation. The recommendation of the committee led to the establishment of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP).

In February 2000, the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) was launched to replace the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). The aims of the PAP were to engage the unemployed in direct economic activities as a means of revamping the economy; to stimulate economic growth through the engagement of semi-skilled and unskilled labour in productive activities; and to reduce social vices and tension in the society, by removing idle persons from the streets. The central strategy of the programme was to commit available funds in the programme to the direct benefit of the participants, rather than spend them on over heads (Asobie, 2004). Specifically, PAP sought, among others, to provide jobs for 200,000 unemployed people; increase the adult literacy rate from 51% to 70% by the year 2003; shoot up the healthcare delivery system from 40% to 70% by the year 2006; increase the immunization of children from 40% to 100%; and develop simple processes and small-scale industries. But rather than reduce the incidence of poverty through job creation as targeted, poverty indicators increased geometrically with the implementation of PAP; as life expectancy at birth in 2004 was 52 years for male and 53 years for female (UNDP, 2004).

In 2002, another anti-poor programme, the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) was launched to assist farmers in achieving their potential for increasing output and productivity and, their incomes on sustainable basis.

In early 2004, the National Economic Development Strategy (NEEDS) was launched as a home-grown poverty reduction strategy following criticisms that PRSP did not address long-time economic development. NEEDS was built around four cardinal goals (poverty reduction, employment generation, wealth creation, and value re-orientation) and four strategies (growing the private sector, reforming government and institutions, implementing a social charter, and value re-orientation) (NEEDS, 2004). Although NEEDS placed emphasis on poverty reduction, employment generation and wealth creation, little or nothing was done to redistribute wealth. Rather, private accumulation through privatization and deregulation of public enterprises (growing the private sector) was vigorously pursued, and this generated poverty instead.

The implementation of the Poverty Alleviation programmes of Obasanjo civilian administration was undermined by a number of weaknesses. First, the poor were not actively involved in the planning and implementation of the programmes to enable the poor actually participates in the programmes. Second was the failure to base anti-poor change programmes on the priority needs of the poor, as articulated by the poor themselves. Third, the policy framework of the programmes paid little attention to allocation of funds, when poverty alleviation/or reduction programmes require a huge outlay of public expenditure. Finally, the programmes emerged as a response to be extended crisis of capitalist development in the periphery, and this undermined both the welfare of the poor and the long term strategies for national development (Asobie, 2004; Ibeanu, 2004; and Obadan, 2001).

As a result of the unimpressive outcome attendant to poverty alleviation programmes implemented by the Nigerian government since the inception of constitutional rule in 1999, the search for more service delivery and result-oriented measures, therefore became increasingly necessary. And given the alleged success stories of Community Driven Development (CDD) interventions as an overall strategy for growth and poverty reduction in other countries and the previous performance of Community Driven Development (CDD) in Nigeria, the Federal Government sought assistance from the World Bank for the implementation of Community and Social Development Project (CSDP). The project is assisted by the World Bank and co-financed by the Federal Government and the twenty-six (26) benefitting states.

The Community and Social Development Project (CSDP) is a developmental strategy, which is anchored on Community Driven Development (CDD) agenda. It was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in collaboration with the World Bank. The overall goal of the CSDP is to improve access to services for Human Development (HD). Under CSDP, at least US \$ 380 million was earmarked to be spent in the benefitting states, local governments and communities in Nigeria over a period of five years on improving the standard of living by sustainably increasing access of the poor people to improved social and natural resource infrastructure services.

Following the agreement with the Federal Ministry of Finance and the state governments during an appraisal of the 2007 Country Strategy, and Poverty Reduction Project (CPRP) was integrated with Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Project (LEEMP) to constitute the social component of CDD of the World Bank initiative. On 20th March, 2009, Kogi State Community and Social Development Agency (KGCSDA) came into existence with the responsibility of managing the funds provided by the World Bank and a counterpart funding from the Kogi State Government under the Community and Social Development Project (CSDP). Like the earlier Community-Based Poverty Reduction Project (CPRP), the broad objectives of the CSDP include bringing about improvement in the socio-economic conditions of the rural communities through service delivery and preservation and effective management of environment/natural resources. Since inception, it has executed over 1000 community development projects worth over N1.3 billion in education, health, road, electricity, water and other sectors. Based on the experience of some Communities and Social Development Agency (KGCSDA), this study investigates the role of specialized poverty reduction agencies in community development and, therefore, poverty reduction.

Radical scholars of Nigerian political economy such as Claude Ake, Okwudiba Nnoli, Eme Ekekwe, Okechukwu Ibeanu, Egwu Samuel and others have variously analyzed state-society relations in Nigeria dating to the colonial state. For many of them, the power of the colonial state in Nigeria was absolute and arbitrary. It rigidly controlled all aspects of the colonial economy with a view to maintaining its power and domination, and by so-doing accomplished the central objective of colonization which is the extraction of surplus (Ake, 1996). The tendency to reproduce and sustain the features of the colonial state has been exhibited by the dominant social forces in the post-colonial period essentially because, though political independence caused some changes in the composition of the state managers, the nature and the character of the state were hardly altered. Political power, like in the colonial era, has meant everything, including access to wealth as well as the means to general well-being. To this effect, the use of state power for accumulation has remained rampant and this has particularly “increased the premium on political power and the intensity of political competitions” (Ake, 1996:3).

In Nigeria, poverty has generally been on the increase. the incidence of poverty in Nigeria is also a rural phenomenon, with rural poverty increasing from 28.3 percent in 1980 to 63.8 percent in 2004 (NBS, 2007). Within rural areas, approximately 44.4 percent of households in 2004 could not meet their food expenditure requirements. Another 19.4 percent in 2007 could not meet their food expenditure requirements. The poverty estimates also indicate that rural households headed by males are poorer than female-head households, with all three poverty measures higher for male-headed households in 1996 and 2004 (NBS, 2007).

The predominance of rural poverty over urban was consistent between 1996 and 2004. In 1996, about 70 percent of rural households were poor, as compared with 58 percent of the urban households. It is important to note that the incidence, depth and severity of poverty among rural households are higher than the national poverty figures, while those of the urban households are lower (Omonona, 2010).

One main characteristic of poverty is that it is predominantly a rural phenomenon and writers have consistently made efforts to explain the causes, characteristics, and consequences of rural poverty. According to Bale (2001), approximately seventy percent of the poor reside in rural areas and the rural poor would outnumber their urban counterparts for at least another generation. And the rates of extreme poverty in rural areas are vastly higher than those in urban areas. Most of the poor, particularly the poorest of the poor live in rural areas, often in remote areas. Because of the geographically dispersed

distribution of the rural poor, it is much more difficult for central governments to provide them with public infrastructure, social services, and safety nets equivalent to those provided urban residents. Moreso, Bale (2001) revealed that there are three broad priority areas where governments and donor agencies can take action to assist the rural poor. These include:

- Policies and actions to foster broad-based rural growth;
- Policies to improve the social well-being and reduce vulnerability of the rural poor; and
- Policies and actions to enhance sustainable resource use.

The major causes of Nigeria's poverty go beyond low incomes, savings, and growth-which are usually associated with a poor country-to include high level of inequality attributable to unequal access to income opportunities and basic infrastructure, poor education and health status. Poverty has far-reaching negative consequences for quality of life. The poor are most likely to be exposed to stressful life events, such as unemployment, crime victimization, and illness; they also live with chronic strains such as economic hardship, job dissatisfaction, and frustrated aspirations (Amato and Zuo, 1992). People are considered poor when they are unable to satisfy their basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, and health.

The nature of rural poverty is variously explained by liberal and radical scholars. For the former, we can discern three attempts to explain the nature of poverty, particularly rural poverty. The first explanation focuses on the individuals as responsible for their poverty situation. Typically, politically conservative theoreticians blame individuals in poverty for creating their own problems, and argue that with harder work and better choices the poor could have avoided their problems. Other variations of the individual dysfunction of poverty ascribe poverty to lack of genetic qualities such as intelligence that are not so easily reversed. Books like Hurrnstein and Murray's *The Bell Curve* (1994) are modern uses of this explanation. Rainwater (1970:16) critically discusses individualistic theories of poverty as a "moralizing perspective" and notes that the poor are "afflicted with the mark of Cain. They are meant to suffer, indeed must suffer, because of their moral failings. They live in a deserved heel on earth. Ironically, neo-classical economics reinforces individualistic sources of poverty. The core premise of this dominant paradigm for the study of the conditions leading to poverty is that individuals seek to maximize their own well being by making choices and investments, and that they seek to maximize their well being.

The second explanation holds that poverty is caused by Cultural Beliefs Systems that Support Sub-Cultures of poverty. This explanation suggests that poverty is created by the transmission of generations of a set of beliefs, values, and skills that are socially generated but individually held. Individuals are not necessarily to blame because they are victims of their dysfunctional subculture or culture. Culture is socially generated and perpetuated, reflecting the interaction of individual and community. This makes the "culture of poverty" explanation different from the "individual" explanation that link poverty explicitly to individual abilities and motivation. Technically, the culture of poverty is a subculture of poor people found mainly in ghettos, poor regions, or social contexts where they develop a shared set of beliefs, values and norms that are separate from but embedded in the culture of the main society.

The third explanation avers that poverty is caused by Geographical disparities. Rural poverty, ghetto poverty, urban disinvestment, Southern poverty, third-world poverty, and other framings of the problem represent a spatial characterization of poverty that exists separate from other theories. While these geographically based explanations of poverty build on the other explanations, they draw attention to the fact that people, institutions, and cultures in certain areas lack the power to claim redistribution. As Shaw (1996:29) points out, "Space is not a backdrop for capitalism, but rather is restructured by it and contributes to the system's survival. The geography of poverty is a spatial expression of the capitalist system." That poverty is most intense in certain areas is an old observation, and explanations abound in the development literature about why regions lack the economic base to compete. Recent explanations include disinvestment, proximity to natural resources, density, diffusion of innovation, and other factors (Morrill and Wohlenbery, (1971:57-64). In a thorough review of the literature on rural

poverty, Weber and Jensen (2004) note that most literature find a “rural differential” in poverty, but that the spatial effect is not as clearly isolated from individual effects as needed for confidence.

On the other hand, radical scholars locate the persistence and escalation of rural poverty to the intervention of capital and capitalist state. Focusing on Nigeria, they argue that the intervention of capital and capitalist state in the rural economy and the consequence formulation and implementation of a variety of rural policies, programs and strategies have had little or no benefits on the inhabitants of the rural areas. Rather than improving the living conditions in the rural areas, the intervention has exploited, impoverished and alienated the peasants and consequently weakened their capacity to understand, control and transform the natural environment. They have further argued that rural development policies, strategies and programs prescribed, guided and funded through external resources such as World Bank, IMF, and others have led to the creation of an enabling environment for the favorable operation of MNCs; establishment of various bureaucracies to siphon resources; exacerbation of the rural socio-economic condition; and furtherance of rural poverty, structural dependence and under-development (Abass, 1993, 1989; Asobie, 2004; Ake, 1996; Ibeanu, 1993, 2004).

Similarly, Oshewolo (2011) maintained that Nigeria hosts the largest population of poor people in sub-Saharan Africa. The writer further contended that poverty is more endemic in the rural areas, particularly in some Northern zones. It was revealed that since independence, successive governments have made unsuccessful attempts to combat the scourge of poverty. Factors such as poor governance, official kleptocracy, weak legislative framework and poor budgeting culture have been identified as being responsible for the escalating incidence of poverty, despite a number of ideas that have been generated to address the scourge. Oshewolo further noted that good governance, sound reform practices, effective involvement of the private sector and civil society are required to achieve the goal of poverty reduction. Finally, he stated that the present global system and the regime of international trade need to be made more democratic to empower poor countries and reduce the vulnerability of their economies from the adverse effects of globalization.

Contributing, Anger (2010) opined that the incidence and severity of poverty in Nigeria are among the most challenging in the world. The writer further revealed that the efforts of previous regimes in Nigeria to implement pro-poor programmes with a view to addressing the poverty scourge yielded meagre returns due to lack of political will to implement those programmes. He also stated that though the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provide a platform for addressing the rising incidence of poverty, the Nigerian situation indicates that there are still glaring constraints and challenges such as corruption, infrastructural inadequacies and so on.

Similarly, Eneanya (2007) averred that in relative terms, people are poor when their living conditions fall radically below the community average. In absolute terms, however, poverty refers to insufficient or total lack of basic necessities of life like food, housing, safe water, health care services and income. Poverty alleviation is, therefore, seen as the central policy objective of international development agencies, such as World Bank, United Nations, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and national governments, particularly in Third World Countries. Poverty alleviation is equally seen as a challenging moral agenda because globally while over 1.3 billion people currently live in conditions of endemic hunger and poverty, the wealth of the minority continues to increase.

Jacob (2007) also noted that Nigeria was in 2007 rated one of the poorest nations in the world notwithstanding that the Federation Account disbursed 16.45 trillion naira to the three tiers of government between June 1999 and May 2007. For him, poverty has indeed assumed an unprecedented proportion in Nigeria, manifesting not only in abysmal decline in economic indicators but more glaringly and tragically in the suffering and hardship of the vast majority of people.

Ogbuozobe (2011) noted that a number of Development Plans have been formulated and implemented in Nigeria, with a view to generating, development in the various components of the country in order to improve the standard of living of the people generally and the poor in particular. A significant feature of all the four Post-independence Development Plans prepared and implemented in the country, in the view of the writer, was the dominance of professionals and technocrats in government in the designing of the Plans with little or no involvement of the supposed beneficiaries of the development projects. There was thus general apathy toward the Plans thereby making them

inadequate to achieve the objectives for which they were prepared in the first place. This has worsened poverty conditions in Nigeria.

Harber (2002) explored the relationship between education and poverty reduction. The writer argued that authoritarian rule in Africa has exacerbated levels of poverty in a number of ways. He further maintained that the achievement of greater levels of democracy would be impossible unless political culture and civil society in Africa become more democratic, which of course would depend on the spread of more democratic values and behaviours. The writer further discussed three examples from Africa where education has not played a significant role in furthering democracy and provided some examples of African countries where serious attempts are being made to change education systems in a more democratic direction. In his view, democracy would be a better option than authoritarianism in helping to reduce poverty in Africa, while education could potentially play a significant role in helping to develop more democratic political systems by cultivating and developing the values and behaviours of a democratic political culture.

Assessing the key poverty indicators such as literacy level, access to safe water, nutrition, infant and maternal mortality, and the number of people living on less than \$1 a day, Khalid (2007) opined that Nigeria is ranked among the 25 poorest nations in the world below Kenya, Ghana and Zambia despite all the efforts and resources devoted for many years to fighting poverty by successive governments in Nigeria, along with the support of richer nations and international development institutions. This unsatisfactory situation calls for a re-examination of the policies and practices of poverty eradication programmes in Nigeria.

Bird *et al.* (nd) argued that people in Remote Rural Areas (RRAs) have low accessible resource endowments, are excluded socially and institutionally, and that no existing overarching solution has worked particularly or uniformly well to address the causes of persistent rural poverty. There has been a widespread policy failure in RRAs because the focus on livelihoods developments, based on successes in non-remote areas has failed to take into account the special risk, exclusion and marginalization characteristics of RRAs. The result of the inability to redress the constraints to development in RRAs is, therefore, increasing geographical inequality and chronic poverty. Addressing the causes of persistent poverty, particularly in Remote Rural Areas would involve a greater emphasis on human capital and security.

Muzaale (1987) revealed that poverty, particularly rural poverty in Africa, is on the increase, both in incidence and intensity, despite the wide variety of national and international measures undertaken to eradicate it in the last two decades. The writer attributed the failure of these measures to the inability to identify and emphasize the true underlying causes of the problem; wrong programmatic prescriptions; and lack of organizational requirements for programme implementation. He opined that national governments in Africa have tended to treat poverty as a purely economic problem that could be overcome by means of carefully planned and implemented economic development programmes. But this approach has led not to a reduction in poverty but to mere increases in average incomes and GNP.

Sen (1981) focuses on the causes of starvation in general and famines in particular. The author aptly demonstrates that the food-centred analysis of starvation and famines is fundamentally defective because it fails to adequately account for why starvation can develop even without a decline in food availability. Some people had to starve while others could feed themselves, and what allows one group rather than another to get hold of the available food.

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