



African Journal of Social Work
 Afri. j. soc. work
 © National Association of Social Workers-Zimbabwe/Autor(s)
 ISSN Print 1563-3934
 ISSN Online 2409-5605

Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International License

Indexed & Accredited with: African Journals Online (AJOL)|University of Zimbabwe Accredited Journals (UZAJ)|SCOPUS (Elsevier's abstract and citation database)|Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)|Society of African Journal Editors (SAJE)|Asian Digital Library (ADL)|African Social Work Network (ASWNet)|Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) - South Africa|SJR

Social investment programmes in Nigeria: Impact and challenges

LAMIDI, Kazeem Oyedele and IGBOKWE, Philomena Ify

ABSTRACT

This paper presents an overview of social investment programmes vis-à-vis its impact and challenges in Nigeria. This is with a purpose to engendering their sustainability and dynamics for social development in Nigeria. It relies on secondary data in providing information on the social investment programmes in relation to their outputs and outcomes. It discusses the impacts of social investment programmes, such as generation of employment for the youth, re-prioritisation of agricultural sector, provision of enabling environment and discouragement of 'brain-drain'. The paper analyses some of the key challenges: policy inconsistency, unwieldy scope of the programmes and inadequate funding and concluded that the acquisition of social investment roles in youth employment is a universal social task of adult social livelihood sustenance. The government is recommended to intensify efforts on social investment programmes for youth employment generation.

KEY TERMS: social investment programmes, youth employment, government and social development, Nigeria

KEY DATES

Received: March 2019

Revised: August 2020

Accepted: October 2020

Published: February 2021

Funding: None

Conflict of Interest: None

Permission: Not applicable

Ethics approval: Not applicable

Author/s details: LAMIDI, Kazeem Oyedele, Department of Local Government and Development Studies, Faculty of Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Email address: akandekande@oauife.edu.ng or akandekande@gmail.com
 IGBOKWE, Philomena Ify, Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Current and previous volumes are available at:

<https://africasocialwork.net/current-and-past-issues/>



How to reference using ASWNet style:

Lamidi, K. O., and Igbokwe, P. I. (2021) Social investment programmes in Nigeria: Impact and challenges. *African Journal of Social Work*, 11(1), 1-11

INTRODUCTION

Currently in economic history, no developing country has an antithetical choice than to embark upon the introduction of social investment programmes for youth productive purposes. The programme significance cannot be exhaustively listed; nonetheless it offers, at periphery, the core/basic needs of individual economic livelihood as well as boosting the trends of development indices. Principally, youth constitutes the targeted clusters for the programmes in most countries, though with specific designs for citizens in dependency categories (Soludo, 2004). Despite the fascinating programme outline, structure and benefits, it suffers at the implementation stage due to a number of reasons varying from one country to another. An exploration revealed change in government as an 'ever-present' factor debilitating the implementation of social investment programme. One may then wonder on how programme localization can facilitate the smooth implementation with recourse on both tangible and intangible militating reasons; thus, the theme of this paper precipitating on theoretical modulations. This paper emphasizes the content of social investment projects so as to explicate nature of the respective programmes. Secondary data were sourced from government publications, books and journals on youth and social investment programmes. This is with the intent to explicate the design of contemporary social investment programmes with the aim of engendering their sustainability. This paper is organized as follows: following this introductory part is the second section which provides chronological orders to the series of social investment programmes in Nigeria, such as Structural Adjustment Programme, Better Life Programme, National Directorate of Employment, Peoples' Bank of Nigeria, Family Support Programme, National Agricultural Land Development Authority, Poverty Alleviation Programme, National Poverty Eradication Programme, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria, National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy, the 7th Agenda, and Subsidy Re-Investment and Empowerment Programme. The third section broadly highlighted and discussed the impact of social investment programme. The fourth section analyses the challenges facing the social investment programme in Nigeria.

OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL INVESTMENT IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, government had purposively designed series of social investment programmes in the time past mainly with a view to solving the incessant problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality. In some point in times, it is categorically geared towards reducing the rate of youth restiveness in volatile areas and states of the federation. At Nigeria's independence in 1960, there were serious of notable youth programmes aimed at facilitating social investments especially for the youth population. For instance, Nnamdi, Aminu and Emeka (2013:6) noted that between "the periods between 1962 -1968, 1970 – 1974 (National Accelerated Food Production Programme-NAFPP), 1975 – 1980 and 1981- 1985 were designed by various governments to provide basic infrastructure, diversify the economy, reduce the level of unemployment, achieve dynamic self-sustaining growth and raise the living standard of people." In the same trends, Adoba (2005) and Orji (2009) also stressed that the subsequent social investment programmes, after 1985 up till 1999, were geared towards small and median enterprises and scale trading, reduction of poverty especially among the youth as well as sectoral engagements in the operationalisation of the state economy.

In retrospect, some policies were introduced in the 70s aimed at eradicating the poverty in Nigeria are; Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1977, Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE) in 1977, Green Revolution (GR) in 1980, etc. On the one hand, GR and OFN programmed were designed and implemented to increase the production of agricultural output and facilitate the effectiveness of the performance roles of sub-sectors in the agricultural sector (Ibrahim & Umar, 2008). On the other hand, FCPE was established to reduce high level of illiteracy across local areas in Nigeria. Notably, these programmes recorded a lot of laudable achievements by improving the educational and social qualities of many people residing at the rural areas (Agboola & Lamidi, 2017). However, CBN (1998) identified the inability of the programme continuity to poor political will, social instability and peoples' commitment. Subsequent discussions take note of an overview of some of the programmes in relation to their output and outcome in Nigeria.

Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)

In 1986, Nigeria adopted Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which was designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This was with a view to enhancing a rapid shift from the previous reform agenda and institutionalising the need for reliance on the private sector than the government set-up for solving the fundamental issues of the nation-state economy (Bakare, 2010). Nnamdi, Aminu and Emeka (2013) affirmed that the World Bank assisted the programme with a contribution of about US\$450 million to facilitate international trade and globalisation. Furthermore, the SAP aimed at diversifying the economy of the state; restructuring the government formations and functionaries; reducing the heavy reliance on mono-economy status of the oil sector; promoting

the economic growth in a non-inflationary manner; and, implementing viable mechanisms for balance and fiscal trade payments (Obadan, 2001 & NBS, 2017).

It was however argued that the SAP encouraged inflation with a noticeable adverse effect on income redistribution. Its inducement also influences a decrease in personal satisfaction of the state clients; and the increase in personal insecurity of the state oligarchy. In addition, the SAP heightened the interpersonal conflicts, institutional and cross-sectoral tensions. At economic level, it somewhat inhibits consumer expenditure and local investments for homegrown industrialization purposes (Okoye & Onyukwu, 2007). Aku, Ibrahim & Bulus (1997) identified other shortcomings from SAP to include but not limited to: the deficit of payment positions, diminution of foreign reserves, the drain of managerial talents from managing production to non-economic activities, maintaining organizational efficiency and technological innovation.

Better Life Programme (BLP)

The Better Life Programme (BLP) was established by then Wife of the Military Head of State in person of Late Dr. (Mrs.) Maryam Babangida. She was the Founder of the Better Life Programme aimed at engendering the local women. This programme was designed to cater for the improvement of life quality and social status of the local women. It however aims at creating awareness on the social and economic issues of the rural communities. The expected result of the programme was to bring the rural women to the realization of their full economic potentials for the fulfillment of their livelihood at the local communities (Adoba, 2005). The programme enjoyed a level of acceptability which had impact on the spheres of life of the rural dwellers, especially women.

The programme was regarded as the point of reference for national growth plans and strategies. It provides a tenable component for governing structure across levels of government in Nigeria. In fact, the programme was acknowledged as a basis for the establishment of the National Commission for Women. The commission was later upgraded to the Ministry of Women Affairs. More remarkably, the programme sought to address the continuous rural-urban migration and the categorization of residents that are mostly needed for economic and agricultural activities in the rural areas. However, over-dominance was notable as a major challenge in the implementation of programme, especially by elitist women and those in the corridor of power. This also brought about the change of attention to the partisan women in the rural communities.

National Directorate of Employment (NDE)

Similarly, in the 1986, the NDE was set up to reduce the level of massive unemployment especially among the productive youths in Nigeria. This Directorate geared towards strengthening self-employment, skill acquisition and labour-intensive potentials. The core missions of the Directorate are to, according to Nnamdi, Aminu and Emeka (2013:8) “design and implement programmes to combat mass unemployment; articulate policies aimed at developing work programmes with labour intensive potential; obtain and maintain a data bank on employment and vacancies in the country.” These were with a view to serving as a medium of linking the job seekers with available vacant opportunities in the government offices and ensure good access to job opportunities by teeming youth population of the country. This underscores the significant role of the leadership structure on the board for the national assignment (Agboola, Lamidi & Shiyabade, 2017). More notably, the Directorate engaged in partnership with youth groups and organizations. It also provides training courses for graduates under the auspices of National Employment Training Scheme (NETS) for direct employment into leading sectors of the economy, such as Oil and Gas, Telecommunications and Banking sectors. This Directorate is one of the age-long government agencies; which up till date seeks into direct and indirect employments into the various sectors of the Nigerian economy (Bakare, 2010; Shehu, Abdulahi & Aliero, 2012).

People’s Bank of Nigeria (PBN)

In the early 90s, the PBN was set up with a goal of encouraging the act of savings and provisioning of credit facilities for the rural downtrodden with little or no access to conventional banks. The institution of this bank is mainly to cater for rural dwellers that need access to loans for agricultural economic development. Using the similar trend, the framework for the PBN was further decentralized for the establishment of Community Bank (CB). It was further extended to facilitate easy access mechanisms to banking facilities for the people living in the rural area, thereby supporting medium and small enterprises in the local communities. It is worthy of note that the two banking schemes recorded some levels of successes. Nnamdi, Aminu and Emeka (2013:8-9) noted that “PBN released about N1.7 billion as ‘in-house’ loans from funds derived from the Federal Government coffers and N0.9 billion as loans from funds provided by the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP).” Nevertheless, the banking schemes also encountered some challenges in the course of operation. It was reported that the report of external auditors exposed a loss of over 80% largely due to poor management and corruption. Bakare (2010) maintained that the audit reports revealed that there were public funds which were in some liquidated banks within

the country. Also, there was a high degree of non-adherence to the business rules of the banking systems, most especially by the board executives of the banks. Put simply, public trust was simply betrayed. Furthermore, people also abuse the benefits and potentialities of the banking schemes through seeking for favouritism in their loan requests. There was an attitude of non-repayments of loan received by some politicians.

Family Support Programme (FSP) & Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP)

The military junta of late General Sani Abacha launched the two family-oriented programmes. They were well-conceived family productivity programmes. The late General Sani Abacha introduced 'FEAP'; and his wife introduced the 'FSP'. The former was set up for the provision of health service care delivery, women fertility, child care, youth engagement and balance diet for rural families subsisting in the rural areas. In the same vein, the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) was established with statutory obligations to create platform for accessing credit loans for the production of agricultural use and processing; and upgrading the small and medium enterprises through the formation of local cooperative societies at the community level. The contents of programmes were therefore aimed at creating opportunities for employment at various strata of the local communities. It also induces the planning and setting up manufacturing industries, plants, machineries and equipment at the grassroots levels, thereby providing job opportunities for the training and engagement of the village-based youths. Although, the two (2) programmes, namely, FSP and FEAP were put in place for the improvement of the life quality of the rural people. The programmes were however confronted with non-inspectorial supervision and poor monitoring projects and loans by the supporting local and international agencies as well as community banks (Suich, 2012). In addition, there were purported cases of inflating the cost of purchasing needed equipments for the beneficiaries and procurement of sub-standard machineries for the training of vaillage based youths, thus, weakening the vision and mission of the two (2) programmes at the community level.

National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA)

In 1993, the NALDA was established with the intent of providing strategic, tactical and operational supports for the development of land and its resources. This development authority also sought to promote and facilitate optimum utilization of land and its resources at the rural communities. It further encourages the initialisation of economic-size rural settlements. There are notable programmes linked with this development authority, such as: Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP) and the strategic Gains Reserves Programmes (SGRP). These supporting programmes had a remarkable impact on the agrarian sector within intending effect on poverty reduction (Bakare, 2010; Orji, 2009; UNDP, 2010). It was noted that these programmes recorded a significant success on the acquisition of suitable lands in various parts of the country for agricultural development purposes. Nnamdi, Aminu and Emeka (2013) noted that the acquired lands were economically right-sized; and they were technically allocated with regards to the control of land conservations and degradations. However, the programmes encountered some hiccups which include, but not limited to over-stressing the statutes, over-burdening the contents and benefits of the programme, thus rendering some to be ineffective.

Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP)

In 2000, PAP was introduced with a view to creating jobs for the unemployed youth as a matter of exigency in the events of youth restiveness. This programme was to engage and stimulate the teeming unemployed youths into fast-driving economic activities and human capital development. A common engagement activity of the programme was direct labour engagement in patching of potholes, vegetations control along high-ways, maintenance of public buildings and environmental sanitations (Morphy, 2008). However, inadequate funding was acknowledged as a militating factor for the success of the programme. Dangana & Akpan (2009) also identified poor programme design, inadequate coordination, poor monitoring and evaluation. The PAP execution raised outan outright public decry; as it was accused of corruption and shoddiness. As a result, the federal government constituted a committee headed by Prof. Ango Abdullahi shadowed with the responsibility of reviewing the contents of PAP. Nonetheless, Bakare (2010) also noted other problems of the programme to include: excessive politicization, administrative centralization, unbalanced payment, awkward management as well as high-profile level of corruption. Afterwards, it is upon this basis that the committee drafted the blueprint of the establishment of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP).

National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)

Sequel to the above, NAPEP was set up in 2001. This programme adopted a holistic approach by incorporating all important stakeholders in the operation of governance and poverty eradication in Nigeria. This constituted both formal and semi-formal institutions, namely the Federal, State and Local Governments, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the organized private sector, research institutions, women groups and concerned individuals (Okoye and Onyukwu, 2007). Mainly, the NAPEP placed a high premium on the eradication of poverty in its mildness or absoluteness. This objective was clearly set out in policy framework of the programme as measures standing against poverty among other fundamental reasons for the implementation and coordination (Apata, Apata, Igbalajobi & Awoniyi, 2010). This particular motive got adequate intention in the formulation, design and implementation of NAPEP; and made it distinguishable from the previous exercises.

NAPEP ensures effective evaluation and monitoring of its functional aspects. For instance, it closely monitors supportive initiatives at a periodic interval with the purpose of confirming location of the project, its implementation, service delivery, livelihood impact, even distribution and positive influence on the poverty status across communities in Nigeria (Yahaya, Osemene & Abdulrahman, 2011). Also, the evaluation of these indices is subject to broad performance platforms, such as the project objectives, quality of materials used for the implementation, and target groups upon which the achievement can be measured, as well as what is scheduled for its completion and financial implications and costs (Victor, 2018).

The programme is regarded as an improved or modernized version of the previous PAP type by the Nigerian government. Analysis revealed that the programme has successfully trained about 130, 000 youths and engaged over 216, 000 persons; it was however noted that poor cautiousness and forethought seem challenging to the beneficiaries across cities and communities (Okoye & Onyukwu, 2007). In summary, the programme could be rated poor due to inadequate focus on the contents of programme, weak budgetary system, corruptions and poor implementation etc. Project substitution is also a fond version of challenges confronting NAPEP; others include misappropriation of project finances, diversion of the resources, the conversion of public funds for private uses, etc (UNDP, 2015). Above all, what stands commendable about NAPEP is the active engagement of the programme beneficiaries in the identification of the type, structure and process of project implementation. More surprising is that, in a situation where the beneficiaries enjoyed enhanced capacity and active involvement, they still lack insufficient empowerment to become sustainable in the further engagements of the programme for their livelihood.

Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)

SMEDAN was promulgated through the act of parliament, called the SMEDAN Act of 2003. This agency was institutionalised to advance the course of development for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises [MSME] sector of the economy in Nigeria. It was reported that MSMEs comprise more than 75% of all categories of enterprises in Nigeria (Umar, 2010). This is acknowledged as a result of ease in setting up human and capital resources needed for the establishment of MSME. The expected outcome roles of the agency are to seek reduction in the high level of poverty; uproot the inability to generate daily income by teeming populations; and facilitate the advantageous capacity of the opportunities in the country. The roles are planned to be achieved through generation of employment opportunities, open business competitiveness, entrepreneurship development and local resources mobilisation. In addition, this agency is shadowed with the responsibilities of initialising and formulating policy ideas for MSMEs' growth and development. It encourages the promotion of development programme in the area of agro-allied production, provision of technical instruments and operational support services aimed at accelerating the growth, development and modernisation of MSME operations across the country.

There are wide ranges of hiccups associated with the difficulties facing SMEDAN as an agency for poverty reduction. These include, but not limited to urban sensitivity, poor information/communication network, low access to credit facility, poor state of technological infrastructure, inadequate entrepreneurial capacity, stringent collateral condition for loan, corruption, poor synergy among the three levels of government amidst other conditions with attitude, knowledge and skills of the beneficiaries (Orji, 2009 & Umar, 2010).

However, it is important to stress that the problems confronting SMEDAN in Nigeria appear not different to the obstructing factor bedeviling the other government agencies in the discharge of responsibilities on poverty reduction. This is simply because a good number of these agencies are yet to constructively fit into the architecture of social upliftment and economic revolution of individuals and groups from the bottom pyramid of poverty (Ijaiya, Ijaiya, Bello & Ajayi, 2011).

NEEDS Programme

In 2004, the Federal Government under President Olusegun Obasanjo launched an economic empowerment and development strategy at the three categorical stages of governmental administration. At the federal level, NEEDS

simply represent the policy framework for the actualization and coordination of the empowerment activities. In the same vein, SEEDS is the state level framework for the implementation of economic empowerment and development strategy across the federation. Similarly, LEEDS stands for the local government agenda for the execution of rural economic and development strategy. The context of the programme in series has the propensity to gain lofty feet to liquidate the external debt and create the growth of gross domestic product (Morphy, 2008; Bakare, 2010).

However, the trickling effect of the economic acceleration was to sharply guide against the possible shortfall in the power and oil sectors of the economy, transport operational systems, rural-urban migration, educational institutions, health sector, among other questions hinging on the state of unemployment (Yahaya, *et al*, 2011; Shehu, *et al*, 2012). The institutional development of NEEDS requires a strong political will and social dedication by the populace. The non-feasibility of these trends would possibly have negative influence on food security and sustainable development programme (UNDP, 2015). In other words, there is need for a well-coordinated economic growth with considerable level of human support and genuine political will. Job creation is largely acknowledged to be instrumental tool for equitable distribution of economic gains. This would remarkably enable the rural downtrodden to generate sustainable income for livelihood.

The Seven-Point Agenda

The seven-point agenda was political and economic programme set out by President Musa Yar'Adua. The programme content constitutes the tenets of key sectors of the economy, such as land reform, energy and power, agriculture and food sufficiency, mass transportation, wealth creation and employment, security, qualitative and functional education systems (Nnamdi, Aminu and Emeka, 2013). The potency of these sectors was eulogised in different ways, but the underlining factor precipitates on the efforts which energize development of the present economic status without jeopardizing the possible future economic needs and challenges (Olawoyin & Lamidi, 2019). The activities in the sectors could simply help in the catalysis of development in Nigeria. The sectoral agenda hinges on the essentiality of average Nigerians. It is therefore important that issues concerning the populace should be given an outstanding priority. This would also be amplified using the state-of-the-art technological facilities and making the social environment conducive for the satisfaction of present and future needs (Dangana & Akpan, 2009).

Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P)

The removal of subsidy regime could be said to have given birth to the formation of SURE-P by the federal government under the President Goodluck Jonathan's administration. The programme precipitated the functionality of SURE P on the public works, empowerment of youths and women. It is driven by the rate of unemployment status of the teeming youth in Nigeria. Hence, the major mission of SURE-P is to set up the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) with a view to reducing unemployment among graduates especially from higher institutions of learning. Also, the establishment of the programme is geared towards the stimulation of economic growth, standards and opportunities for the actualisation of vision 2020. Operationally, the scheme aims at engaging the unemployed graduates for a period of one year in related firms, companies and organizations to their chosen field of professions. A common goal of this engagement is to acquire necessary skills, garner sufficient experience, and enhance high level of their employability. The expectation becomes goal-oriented as it engenders the engaged graduates to meet the criteria of potential employers in the very competitive labour market in Nigeria (Umar, 2010 & Suich, 2012).

The lifespan of this scheme was somehow short due to the change in government in 2015. To this end, it might be inconsequential to have subjected the scheme for programme assessment. Nevertheless, the scheme has targeted beneficiaries mostly among the educated ones, leaving behind those that are extremely indigent and poor to get access to tertiary educations. Bello and Abdul (2010) noted that the scheme is somewhat jettisoning the poor individuals who necessarily need skills and knowledge to drive economic support and livelihood, not those individuals with an acquired formal skills and lessons for socio-economic prosperity. Hence, the scheme is targeted at youth elites in the country; and suffer adequate coverage of the rural downtrodden who are actually needed to be liberated from poverty circles in Nigeria.

National Social Investment Programme

In recent time, President Muhammad Buhari launched the NSIP as a platform for the empowerment of the unemployed Nigerian youths in three categories: either young graduates, semi-skilled or semi-literates and unskilled labour with little or no level of education. For the actualization of this NSIP, the programme content was compartmentalized into three dimensions; and in each of the dimensions, some sub-dimensions were enlisted. N-Power Teachers' Corps was one of the dimensional components of NSIP with subsidiaries on N-Power Agro,

N-Power Health, N-Power Teach and N-Power Community Health. Another notable dimensional component of NSIP is the pack of N-Power Knowledge which is designed not necessarily for graduates from tertiary institutions, but for individual youths with requisite level of education at least secondary school. Its subsidiaries include: N-Power Creative, N-Power Tech Hardware and N-Power Tech Software. Also, the third component of the NSIP is N-Power Build with civil divisions in the area of building services, construction, environment services, utilities, automotive, as well as aluminum and gas.

IMPACT OF SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA

There are several challenges confronting the Nigerian economy: of which one of the most prominent ones is unclear-cut formulation and implementation of policy contents as well as its effective measures. In this case, effective policy measures are somewhat lacking for drastic reduction in unemployment and poverty as it is currently. Nonetheless, considering the deplorable conditions of the social investment programme in dependence economy, it is apparent that no nation-state would fail to interrogate episodes of social investment programme without addressing their anomalies. Therefore, there are still concerted efforts towards reduction of unemployment across African economies, specifically in Nigeria as proclaimed giant of Africa. However, the following discussions are the potential exploratory impact of social investment programmes in Nigeria

Notably, there is a high rate of unemployment among the productive youths in Nigeria. In lieu of this, employment generation becomes a resolution mechanism for most of the social investment programmes in Nigeria. The system of social investment programme was structured for the entrepreneurial skills development thereby facilitating development of skills and initiatives with a view to increasing the employability of the graduates especially among other categories of unemployed youths (Adoba, 2005). Social Investment programmes have impacted and empowered most of the youth through the introduction of entrepreneurial skills and initiatives.

Nigeria is rated to be at a low performing stage in terms of human capital development. However, its utilization thus becomes insignificant due to its low availability. Moreso, this remark is compounded by the level of inadequacy in the educational system (UNDP, 2010). In reaction of this, social investment programmes have strong dedications towards restructuring the formal training system for the enablement of manpower production. Also, higher priority was placed on vocational skills being a capable platform for the generation self-employment by most youths in Nigeria.

Of note, the poor status of infrastructural development in Nigeria has usually ignited the passion for continuous formulation of social investment programmes. This is with the intent of solving perennial problems of economic growth and development in Nigeria, and engaging Nigerian youths in all facets of socio-economic life. Moreover, the business environment has remained hostile to both small and medium scale businesses and enterprises (Obadan, 2001; Chukwuemaka, 2009). Hence, social investment programmes could be said to have been playing complementary roles in socio-economic and infrastructural development; as well as launching the private sector of the economy into its full potentials. This stimulates economic growth and private investment much more than direct involvement of government in the operationalisation of economic activities. This assertion is further validated on the basis of the significant effect of private investment on growth of key sectors of the economy. Furthermore, Nigeria is endowed to be a hub of agrarian economic activities across the globe. Still surprising is the high rate of unemployment challenges confronting the economy, despite the potentialities of Nigeria in the agricultural sector (Ekpe, 2011). This has further compounded the issue of discouragement with job exports. It is clear that the most Nigerians make preference for job seeking in other countries, especially in the America and Europe. This is at the detriment of the Nigerian domestic economy. This adventurism choice among youth population in Nigeria obstructs the growth of local companies and industries which has the propensity of job creation opportunities (Ghuri & Gronhaug, 2005). It is in a bid to correct the anomalies of job export that social investment programmes were subsequently introduced in Nigeria for the purpose of self-establishing individuals and keeping their feet firm in the national economic life.

Another impact of social investment programme is its quest to appropriate prospects for economic growth in Nigeria. It is an axiom that a remarkable means of seeking reduction in the rate of unemployment in Nigeria is via acceleration of capacity growth of its young population. Overtime, the Nigerian economy has performed below expectation especially in the area of underutilization of resources, agricultural potentials, and bi-lateral trades. Therefore, it becomes pertinent to sustain the growth of all sectors of the economy in Nigeria with unflinching support, political will and commitment without reservations. Thus, there is need for actualization of economy diversification (Apata, *et al*, 2010).

CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA

In discussing this section, it could be observed that youth empowerment policies of government in Nigeria are enmeshed into problems of policy inconsistency and its unwieldy scope. The poor commitment was also

underscored as a retarding role of social partners among other stakeholders. Remarkably, poor design, formulation and implementation of policies and programmes remain a general obstacle for the trajectory of social investment programmes in Nigeria. Similarly, it becomes more compounded by poor indices of human capital development and insufficient funding of the programmes.

Different from these policy failures, some agencies in the public sector have stressed that the high level of unemployment in Nigeria is simply the multiplier effect of the disequilibrium between available human skills and the requirement of labour markets (Soludo, 2004). The insufficient in human skills obstructs youth development in terms of capacity, economic gains and sustainable means of livelihood; while, in turn, it draws back the level of youth development and its political and economic implication for the country.

A large percentage of Nigeria's population is made up of young individuals within age 20-40 years. In addition, according to a national survey, the determinants of labour market needs were investigated; and it revealed that "about 44 percent of the 20 organizations rated Nigerian science graduates as average in competence, 56 percent rated them as average in innovation and 50 percent rated them average in rational judgment, 63 percent as average in leadership skills and 44 percent as average in creativity. Also, on needed skills like literacy, oral communication, information technology, entrepreneurship, analytical, problem-solving and decision making, 60 percent rated them as poor" (NBS, 2017:10)

Respectively, the above statistics gave an indication to the poor competence of graduates from Nigerian Universities. This buttresses the unemployability nature of most Nigerian graduates by various scouting companies in the labour markets (Ijaiya, *et al.*, 2011). Victor (2018) berated the non-inclusive nature of development plans in Nigeria for creation of jobs. He maintained that the unemployment rate tends to suffer an increase consequent upon lack of job provisioning. It is a growing concern that youths are most often interested in acquiring University education, not minding the course of study. This is because some courses offered at the Nigerian universities are becoming dysfunctional and irrelevant.

IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL WORK

Social investment programme is basically about uplifting the economic life of people across strata of the society. It is rooted in designed policies which strengthen individual capacities and skills with a view to engaging them in full employment, social life and work. Important area of social investment programmes focuses on agriculture, youth training, education, health-related services and job-search assistance. Social investment programmes have been presented in various forms and their activities are geared towards supporting the existing structures of the public spheres as well as structural functionalism of the social environment at large. There are two essential manifestations of social investment programmes in Nigeria, namely volunteerism and formal participation. For this reason, social investment programme is a function of Social work which states concentrated attempt to improve the society.

The implication of youth roles in socio-economic development is an essential aspect of social investment programme. It is simply a developmental mission which can be designed for different age-bracket. The youth involvement in social investment programme is a common social responsibility of adult citizens for the sustenance of human livelihood (Bakare, 2010). Moreover, the scheme of social investment programme seems to be organized in most modern societies as a social task that might be observed in a transitory from childhood to adult age. The main psychological characteristic is indicated during the period of role acquisitions in the line of action of social investment programme. Nevertheless, there is indeed an expectation from the society on the mandates of the social investment programme at different societal stages.

In development theory, the social re-engineering of societal roles remains at the core, not periphery of social investment programmes with established linkages to Eriksonian theory. As explicated by Suich (2012), stages of identity and intimacy are characteristic outcomes of gender/martial roles and work commitment of Erikson sequential model of growth and development. While at the centre of the model is the ward and community commitment to the societal development.

It is therefore noteworthy that every individual often uses a role context as a guiding role to another stage of responsibility, such as seeking for job, finding life partner, attaining a particular position in respective workplaces, organization either formal or informal among other individual quests in the social environment (Dangana & Akpan, 2009). Hence, the key mechanism of social investment programme is not only meant for recovery or rehabilitation of peoples' experience in crisis, but for socio-economic engagement in an ordinate manner that will facilitate active, social and psychological commitments to the development roles in the respective communities.

CONCLUSION

Social investment programme is an intrinsic resolution for subduing to the strengths of delinquency or anti-social activities, such as poverty, illiteracy, inequality, collapse of middle class, conduct disorder among others. In simple terms, social investment programme is the antonym of anti-social activities. For instance, if a person identified

with any anti-social order, it is basically a description of poor attitudinal discharge towards the societal norms, such as violent acts, public fights, laws breaking, physical assaults, non-compliance with safety rules and regulations. Furthermore, social investment programme is functionally the antithetical to delinquency, as it endeavours to stand against any fact that is capable of undermining social connections making up the societal fabric by providing ancillary supports to both state and non-state actors and institutions in the society.

REFERENCES

- Adoba, I. 2005. Nigeria: Better Life Programme: A Success – Mrs Babangida. *This Day Newspapers*. Available at www.allafrica.com/stories. Accessed 21 October, 2018 via google.com
- Agboola, T. O. & Lamidi, K. O. 2017. New Public Management in the Nigerian Democratic Experience. *Journal of Research in National Development*, 15(1), 31 - 39
- Agboola, T. O. & Lamidi, K. O. Shiyabade, B. W. 2017. Leadership Crisis and Nation Building in Nigeria: A Symptom of Governance Failure. *Global Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 6(4), 10 - 19
- Aku, P. S., Ibrahim, M. J. & Bulus, Y. D. 1997. Perspective on poverty alleviation strategies in Nigeria, in proceedings of the Nigeria Economic Society annual conference on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. Ibadan: NES, 41-54.
- Apata, T. G., Apata, O. M., Igbalajobi, O. A. and Awoniyi, S. M. O. 2010. Determinants of Rural Poverty in Nigeria: Evidence from Small Holder Farmers in South-Western, Nigeria. *Journal of Science and Technology Education Research*, 1(4), 85 – 91
- Bakare, A. S. 2010. The Determinants of Urban Unemployment Crisis in Nigeria: An Econometric Analysis. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences*, 2 (3): 184-192
- Bello, M. A. and Abdul, H. R. 2010. Has Poverty Reduced in Nigeria 20 Years After? *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 15(1), 23-34
- Central Bank of Nigeria 1998. A Profile of Regional/Zonal Poverty in Nigeria: The Case of Enugu Zone, in Measuring and Monitoring Poverty in Nigeria, Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Conference of Enugu Zone Research Units.
- Dangana, A. & Akpan, U. I. 2009. The Role of Vocational Business Education in Poverty Reduction. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy. *The Voice of the Teacher*. 1(2), 217-223.
- Ekpe, A. E. 2011. Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria through Capitalism Economic Framework: Problems and Challenges. *Journal of sustainable Development in Africa*, 13(2): 181- 191
- Ghuri P & Gronhaug K, 2005. *Research Methods in Business Studies: A Practical Guide (E-book)*. New York. Financial Times Prentices.
- Ibrahim, H. & Umar, H. S. (2008). Determinants of Poverty among Farming Households in Nasarawa State, *PAT 4* (1), 11-21
- Ijaiya, G. T., Ijaiya, M. A., Bello, R. A. & Ajayi, M. A. 2011. Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 2 (15), 147-154.
- Lamidi, K. O. 2019. Origin and Trajectory of National Youth Service Programmes in Africa: An Exploratory Review. *Africa: History and Culture* 4(1): 12-22
- Lamidi, K. O., Benson, K. S., & Adisa, A. L. 2018. Challenges of NYSC Community Development Service: Empirical Evidences from Southwestern Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development*. Canada. 11(1),13 - 19
- Morphy, R. 2008. Nigeria: Youth Unemployment, Poverty – a Time Bomb for Country. *Annual Socio-Economic Report*
- National Bureau of Statistics 2017. *Unemployment/Under-Employment Report for 4th Quarter of 2017*. National Bureau of Statistics, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Obadan M. I. 2001. Poverty Reduction in Nigeria: The Way forward. *CBN Economic & Financial Review*, 39 (4), 10-17
- Okoye U. C. & Onyukwu, E. O. 2007. Sustaining Poverty Reduction Efforts through Inter-Agency Collaboration in Nigeria, in K. Omeje (ed), *State, Society Relations in Nigeria: Democratic Consolidation, Conflicts and Reforms*. London: Adonis and Abbey.
- Olawoyin, K. W. & Lamidi, K. O. 2019. Investigating the ICT Usage on Transparency in the Governance Processes at the Local Level in Southwestern Nigeria. *Journal of Governance and Public Policy*, 6(2), 148 – 169
- Orji, J. I. 2009. An Assessment of Impacts of Poverty Reduction Programmes in Nigeria as a Development Strategy (1970-2005). An Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, St Clements University, Turks & Caicos Island.
- Shehu R., Abdullahi Y. Z. & Aliero H. M. 2012. Impact of IFAD Poverty Intervention Program on Rural Poverty Reduction in selected LGAs of Sokoto State. *Journal of Research in National Development*, 10 (2): 34-45
- Soludo, C. C. 2004. *Nigeria: National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)*. Abuja: National Planning Commission.
- Suich, H. 2012. Conceptual Framework: Poverty. Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA Directorate). <http://www.espa.ac.uk/files/espa/Povertyframework.pdf> retrieved on 30/01/2013.

- Umar, N. M. 2010. SMEDAN: Services and Policies for Supporting MSMEs In Nigeria: www.wipo-smes-las-10-www-138714.
- United Nations Development Programme 2010. *Nigeria: Human Development Report 2010*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- United Nations Development Programme 2015. Human Development Report: Work for Human Development. New York: UNDP. Retrieved from: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2015-report>.
- Victor, A. Y. 2018. Employment Crisis May Derail Nigeria's 2020 Target – FG, *Vanguard*. Retrieved from www.vanguardngr.com/2018/02/employment-crisis-may-derail-nigerians-2020-target-fg/
- Yahaya, K. A, Osemene, O. F. & Abdulraheem, A. 2011. Effectiveness of Microfinance Banks in Alleviating Poverty in Kwara State, Nigeria. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*, 11 (4), 12-23