

## IMPACT OF ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMME ON DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS OF NIGERIA

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### Abstract

The study investigated the impact of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) among rural population in Mangu Local Government of Plateau State, Nigeria. The objective of the study was to investigate the impact of government's poverty intervention programmes especially National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in the study area among others. A sample size of 500 was adopted for the study. The respondents were selected using systematic sampling technique. Questionnaire, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were used to collect data from the respondents. The data were analyzed using different statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics among others. The findings showed that NAPEP has little positive impact on the well-being of the labour force due to alleged high rate of corruption among leaders and leakage of benefits to un-intended beneficiaries. In addition, the findings showed that poverty has serious setback on the development of the study area and by extension rural areas of Nigeria. Recommendations were made for policy makers and implementers to empower rural areas to enhance their development.

**Keywords:** Impact, Poverty, Development, Rural Areas, NAPEP, Labour force

### Introduction

Efforts at improving the rural areas of Nigeria predated the independence of the country since 1960. The major efforts made in the pre-independence, according to Omale and Molem (2003), were in the area of farm settlement schemes. The aim was to bring scattered small communities together so that they could take advantage of economies of scale in farm inputs, agro-services, marketing, etc. These schemes recorded little or no success because those that were to be affected were not involved at the planning stages. Since then, a number of government programmes have been put in place to improve basic services, infrastructure and housing facilities for the rural population, extending access to credit, farm inputs and creating employment. These efforts can be classified into the Pre-Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) Era; SAP Era and the Democratic Era.

During the pre-SAP era, government only showed concern for poverty reduction indirectly through the launching of many programmes. These programmes had positive effects on poverty reduction although the target population for some of the programmes were not specified explicitly as poor people or communities (Ogwumike, 1995). The programmes included the River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA), the

Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP), the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS), the Rural Electrification Scheme (RES), the Rural Banking Programme (RBP) and Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) set up in 1977 among others. However, most of them could not be sustained as many of them failed due to diversion from the original focus, lack of political will and commitment, policy instability and insufficient involvement of the beneficiaries in these programmes (Anyanwu, 2004).

During the SAP Era (1986-1998), conscious policy effort by government towards poverty alleviation began were made. The severe economic crisis in Nigeria in the early 1980s worsened the quality of life of most Nigerians. The government made determined effort to check the crisis through the adoption of SAP. According to Anyanwu, (2004), the implementation of this policy further worsened the living conditions of many Nigerians especially the poor who were the most vulnerable group. Consequently, the government designed and implemented many poverty alleviation programmes between 1986 and 1998 such as- the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Better Life Programme (BLP) set up to enhance the quality of life of rural women, among other

objectives. Poverty in Nigeria is a rural phenomenon and the rural women are worst hit by the dreadful scourge of poverty; this is due to lack of basic skill and education necessary for gainful employment. Based on available evidence, Ogwumike (1998) concluded that the BLP made tremendous impact with regard to poverty alleviation. However, the success of the programme was short – lived. Other programmes included, The People’s Bank of Nigeria (PBN); Community Banks (CB); Family Support Programme (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP); National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP), and the Strategic Grains Reserves Programmes (SGRP), among others., All these were established by different administrations in the country to address various manifestations of poverty such as unemployment, lack of access to credit, and rural and gender dimension of poverty (NPC, 2004).

With the democratic government in 1999, measures were adopted to streamline poverty – related institutions, review past poverty alleviation programmes and harmonized sectoral effects. Major factors hindering the success of government efforts to reduce the level of Poverty were identified to among others to include; Poor coordination, Absence of a comprehensive policy framework, Excessive political interference, Ineffective targeting of the poor, leading to leakage of benefits to unintended beneficiaries, Overlapping functions, which led to institutional rivalry and conflicts among others (Ogwumike, 1998; 2002 and Egware, 1997). This review resulted into a more focus anti- poverty programme- National Poverty Alleviation programme by the Obasanjo administration which was transformed into National poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). NAPEP is the repository of knowledge, data and information on all poverty eradication activities in the country; and the major institutional arrangement to ensure social protection for the vulnerable groups such as the rural poor, women, youth and children in Nigeria (NAPEP, 2007). The first attempt of the programme was the creation of 200,000 jobs across the country at a rate of 5,000 jobs per state with Abuja and Lagos sharing 20,000. A total sum of 10 billion naira was voted for this job creation

scheme (Olorunnimbe *et al.*, 2008). According to Adejugbe (2004), the state and local governments were by passed in the implementation of the programme. The rural areas were not beneficiaries of this programme as it was concentrated in the urban areas (state capitals).

None of these programmes had significant sustainable positive effects on the study area or anywhere in Nigeria, and hence the concern. Furthermore, at the moment NAPEP is centralized. The execution of its objectives has not been realistic as it is too “top-bottom” in approach. The concern of this paper is to among others investigate why the impact of the government anti-poverty programme is not felt in the study area.

#### **Study Area**

Mangu Local Government is located between latitude 9° 00' N and 9° 45' N and Longitude 9° 05' E and 9° 15' E. It shares boundary with Bauchi State in the north east, Jos- East Local Government in the North, Barki Ladi Local Government in the west, Bokkos Local Government in the south west, and Qu’anpan Local Government in the South and Pankshin Local Government in the east. It has a total land area of about 2,413km<sup>2</sup>. The area is one of the largest Local Government Area in Plateau State. It had a population of 184,892 in 1991 (NPC, 1998) and 294,931 in 2006 (NPC, 2007). The sex structure of the population reveals that 145765 are males while 149168 are females. It is the third largest local government after Jos north and Jos south in terms of population. The study area has two chiefdoms; the Mwaghavul chiefdom which is inhabited by the Mwaghavul people and the Pyem chiefdom-dominated by the Pyem people and other tribes such as Rumada, Afizere, pyemgiji and Birom among others.

The major occupation of the inhabitants of the study area is agriculture; the crops they grow include maize, guinea corn, millet, acha (*digitaria exilis*), Irish potato, sweet potato, cocoyam, yam, rice, beans, and soya beans among others. Vegetables such as onion, cabbages, tomatoes, egg plant, carrots, and pepper are also grown for commercial purposes especially in the dry season. Some economic trees such as mango, citrus, guava, banana, palm tree and olive trees are grown, eucalyptus trees are planted around settlements and open land for timber and fuel wood purposes. Rearing of animal such as cattle,

sheep and goats is also common in the study area. Due to low yields from the farm, most of the population are into dual/multiple occupations to supplement what is earned through the farming.

Such other occupations include, petty trading, different form of craft work- such as mat and basket weaving, blacksmithing, pottery, especially by the women among others.



Figure 1 Mangu Local Government Area showing settlements  
Source: GIS Lab University of Abuja (2010)

### Methodology

The Mangu-Local Government Area of Plateau State is made up of 11 districts. These districts comprise of over 260 settlements. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 25 of the settlements.

The first stage involved random selection of the districts to take care of the geographical spread of the settlements. The selected districts and number of settlements in each district is shown in the Table 1 below.

The second stage involves an alphabetical listing of all the 130 settlements in the selected 6 districts after which 25 settlements were selected. The systematic sampling technique was used in selecting the first 24 settlements in the first 5 districts above. The first settlement was selected randomly using the table of random numbers. Subsequently, an interval of 5 was maintained (that is each fifth settlement was selected). The 25<sup>th</sup> settlement was selected purposively being the only tin mining settlement in the area.

The third stage involve a listing exercise of households in each of the 25 settlements considered above from which a total of 500 household heads were selected using the systematic sampling technique representing about 15% of the household heads population in the study area. The first household head was picked randomly in each of the 25 settlement after which an interval of 5 was maintained (that is, every fifth household head was selected). Questionnaires were then administered to each of the 500

household heads to obtain the information required for the study. Other instruments used in collecting data from the respondents in the study area – Included in-depth interviews with head of each settlement being the custodian of the people and Focus Group Discussions with at least 8 members in each of the selected community. The Focus Group Discussions were held with one female group and one male group in each of the 25 settlements.

**Table 1 Selected districts and Settlements**

District	No of settlements	No of settlements Selected	Household heads Population in the 25 selected settlements	No of Respondents
Langai	21	5	521	78
Kombun	30	7	857	129
Pushit	19	4	547	82
Chakfem	17	4	536	80
Ampang-West	16	4	675	101
Mangu	27	1	202	30
Total	130	25	3,338	500

**Result and Discussion**

In order to determine the impact of this programme (NAPEP), on the study area, it was necessary to test the popularity of the programme among the labour force. The responses of the respondents revealed that 56.4% of the sample labour force have heard about the government anti-poverty agency- NAPEP. About 43.6% stated that they have never heard about the programme and its activities. Out of the 56.4% respondents who stated that they are aware of the existence of NAPEP in the country, only 2.9% reveal that they have benefited from any of its packages. This negligible number of the population said they benefited small loan from Grant Micro Finance Bank and Nigeria Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NCRDB) both located

in Mangu town. They however, admitted that the amount of loan collected was too small to create any meaningful impact on their well-being. Majority 97.1% of the sample population stated that they have never benefitted from any of NAPEP anti-poverty packages.

One of the primary aims of NAPEP is to empower the poor to have a voice and therefore a way of expressing their ideas. Unfortunately such aim is far from being achieved in the study area as rural labour force continued to be impoverished. A number of reasons were identified for the inability of anti-poverty programme of the government (NAPEP) to improve the well-being of the rural communities in the study area. These reasons among others are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Respondents reasons for their inability to benefit from NAPEP in the Study Area

Reason	Kantoma	Ampang west	Kombun	Langai	Pushit	Chakfem	All settlements							
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%							
-Corruption of leaders	10	33.3	44	47.3	38	29.9	41	53.2	19	23.5	34	42.5	199	41.4
-poor management	10	33.3	18	19.4	13	10.3	13	16.9	9	11.1	12	15.0	75	15.6
-diversion of benefits meant for rural areas to urban areas & for personal use.	6	20.0	13	14.0	27	21.4	6	7.8	21	25.6	16	20.0	96	20.0
-the programmes are enjoyed in the urban areas only.	2	6.7	8	8.6	8	6.3	9	11.7	8	9.8	7	8.8	58	12.1
-in accessibility to those packages	2	6.7	7	7.5	37	29.4	1	1.3	24	29.3	9	11.2	48	10.0
Others.	-	-	3	3.2	3	2.4	1	1.3	-	-	2	2.4	1	1.0

Corruption and mismanagement which characterized previous programme resulting in their collapse/failure were identified as major hindrance to the success of this programme. About 41.4% of the 488 sample population stated that they could not benefit from that programme because the leaders are corrupt and prevent the benefits from reaching them in the rural areas. This breakdown shows that 33.3% are from Kantoma, 47.3% in Ampang-west, 29.9% from Kombun, 53.2% Langai, 23.5% from Pushit and 42.5% of the proportion of this labour force comes from Chakfem. Mismanagement of the whole programme resulted to the leakages of benefits to unintended beneficiaries which accounted for 15.6% of the respondents' response. Settlement by settlement analysis of this response reveals that 33.3% are from Kantoma, 19.4% from Ampang-west, 10.3% from Kombun, 16.9% are from Langai, 11.1% from Pushit and 15% comes from Chakfem. Diversion of benefits meant for rural areas to urban areas and also for personal use by this leaders constitute 20.0% reasons why the rural population has not benefited from NAPEP. This

breakdown also shows that 20% and 14% of the response comes from Kantoma and Ampang-west, 21.4% and 7.8% are from Kombun and Langai while 25.6% and 20% of these respondents are from Pushit and Chakfem respectively. Over concentration of the programme mostly in urban areas, inaccessibility of the packages by the rural population among others constitute 23.1% as reasons for the inability of the programme to impact or achieves its goal of improving the well-beings of the rural populace in the study area. Variation exist in the response across the districts with Kombun and Pushit with the highest responses of 29.4% and 29.3% respectively, while the least responses of 6.7%, 7.5%, 1.3% and 11.2% come from Kantoma, Ampang-west, Langai and Chakfem.

**Measures to Improve NAPEP for Better Performance**

The Table reveals that 28.7% of the respondents are of the view that there should be a coordinating unit in each of the major villages in the rural areas.

Table 3 Measures suggested respondents to Improve NAPEP for Effective Performance

Suggestion	Kantoma		Ampang west		Kombun		Langai		Pushit		Chakfem		All settlement	
		%		%		%		%		%		%		%
-NAPEP should be rural based	6	20.0	31	33.3	38	30.2	23	29.9	17	20.7	32	40.0	140	28.7
-Awareness campaign to educate the rural population on the programmes.	8	26.7	10	10.8	20	15.7	16	20.8	19	23.2	22	27.5	99	20.3
-Corrupt leaders should be dealt with.	10	33.3	19	20.4	16	12.7	6	7.8	12	14.5	8	10.0	76	15.6
-God fearing leaders should be appointed to coordinate the programme.	3	10.0	18	19.4	8	6.3	10	13.0	2	2.4	6	7.5	53	10.9
-The rural population should be involved in running the programme for it to be successful in the rural areas.	1	3.3	6	6.5	16	12.7	7	9.1	7	8.5	4	5.0	34	7.0
-Diversion of the benefits to urban areas & personal use should be avoided.	2	6.7	6	6.5	24	19.0	9	11.7	12	14.6	4	5.0	56	11.5
-Others	-	-	3	3.2	4	3.2	6	7.8	13	15.9	4	5.0	30	6.1

This is to cut all bottle neck and allow the rural populace have direct access to the packages of the programme. Variation exists in the proportion of the respondents across the settlements with the highest response of 40% from Chakfem and the lowest response of 20% from Kantoma. It also shows that 33.3% and 30.2% are from Ampang-west and Kombun respectively while 29.9% and 20.7% come from Langai and Pushit. About 20.3% advised that vigorous awareness campaign to the rural communities to educate the populace on the programmes of NAPEP and how they can access it, is very important and necessary. About 26.7% and 10.8% of such responses come from Kantoma and Ampang-west .fifteen point seven percent and 20.8 come from Kombun and Langai while 23.2% and 27.5% are from Pushit and Chakfem respectively. Furthermore, if the programme is to be successful in the rural areas, corruption must be wiped away. Most a times, a well articulated programme fails to achieve its goal of touching the life of the common man because of excessive corruption of the official/leaders. Therefore 15.6% are of the view

that corrupt leaders should be appropriately sanctioned to serve as deterrent to intending ones. The response varies across the settlements with Kantoma having a high response rate of 33.3% followed by Ampang-west with a response rate of 20.4%. In Kombun and Langai the proportion of the respondents is 12.7% and 7.8% respectively. While in Pushit and Chakfem, the proportion is about 14.5% and 10% respectively. About 10.9% believed that if God fearing and leaders of integrity are charged with the responsibility of running the programme of NAPEP, there will be transformation of the rural population. About 7.0% and 11.5% respectively suggest that rural population should be directly involved in running the programme (some of the leaders should be among the people in the rural areas) and diversion of the benefits of the programme meant for the rural areas to the urban areas and for personal use should be checked. Excessive political interference among others is seen as a major hindrance towards achievement of NAPEP objectives in the rural areas and therefore should be checked and allow the coordinators the free hand to operate. The

respondents believe that adherence to these suggestions will enhance NAPEP programme thereby bringing about the development of rural areas of Nigeria.

The responses of the study population on the development of the rural community were collected, analysed and presented in Table 4 below.

**Effects of Poverty on Rural Development**

Table 4 Effects of Poverty on Rural Development in Mangu L.G.A.

Effects	Kantoma	Ampang west	Kombun	Langai	Pushit	Chakfem	All settlement
-Brings total backwardness to the community.	5	26	38	17	17	23	135
-Backwardness in education/increase illiteracy rate.	8	19	32	21	14	17	102
-causes rural urban migration of the youths.	5	5	14	11	7	6	54
-Brings untold hardship to the community.	5	7	15	11	4	14	49
-Reduces life expectancy of population/increase mortality rate.	3	16	8	11	17	3	60
-increase crime rate in the community.	4	18	12	5	16	15	77
-others	-	2	7	1	7	2	11

The Table shows, that out of the 488 population sampled, 27.7% stressed that poverty brings total set back to the development of the community. Poverty makes it impossible for the people to indulge in any self help project, because they do not have the means to do so. A detail observation of this figure reveals that 16.7%, 28.0%, 30.2%, 22.1% are from Kantoma, Ampang-west, Kombun and Langai while 20.7% and 28.8% come from Pushit and Chakfem respectively. Poverty brings backwardness in education and increase illiteracy rate among the people. This opinion constitutes 20.9% of the sample population. The data also reveals that whereas this response is high in some communities, it is low in others. For example 27.3%, 26.7% and 25.4% come from respondents in Langai, Kantoma and Kombun while 17.1%, 21.2% and 20.4% are from Pushit, Chakfem and Ampang-west. When the people are poor, children are withdrawn from school because their school fees cannot be paid. Denying the children of education implies that you are preparing a future generation that has no hope and focus. Without education, most people cannot find income generating work nor can they develop

an ingenuity to create wealth. Poor people often forego schooling in order to concentrate on making a minimal living. Government often neglects the provision of good and public schools, especially in the rural areas. This seriously induced poverty in the rural areas as initiative to develop a tangible business is absent. About 11.1% of the respondents believed that poverty brings about rural-urban migration of the youths who constitute the cream of the labourforce of the community.

This situation is common in almost all the communities in the study area. The breakdown of this response shows that 16.7% and 14.3% are from Kantoma and Langai, 11.1% and 8.5% are from Kombun and Pushit respectively, while 5.4% and 7.5% come from Ampang west and Chakfem areas. About 10.1% of the active population sampled, stated that poverty brings about untold hardship to the population. The distribution shows that, 17.5% and 16.7% of this response comes from Chakfem and Kantoma while the least response of 4.9% comes from respondents in Pushit. About 12.3% of the respondents lamented that poverty reduces the life span of the people and

brings about increase in mortality rate in the community. About 20, 7% and 17.2% of the respondents are from Pushit and Ampang-west while 3.8% and 6.3% respectively are from Chakfem and Kombun settlements. About 15.8% of stated that poverty increases the rate of crime in the study area. Lack of resources to meet the basic needs of the people can push the population into committing various crimes as they may do anything to survive whether it is lawful or not. Such crimes as burglary, robbery, prostitution, violence among others, are serious effect of poverty. Nineteen point five percent, 19.4% and 18.8% of these respondents that expressed this view are from Pushit, Ampang-west and Chakfem. About 13.3%, 9.5% and the least (6.5%) are from Kantoma, Kombun and Langai. It leads to disunity, crisis/conflict, low productivity and a number of other problems. This position was expressed by 2.3% of the respondents. The breakdown shows that 2.2%, 5.6% and 1.3% of these respondents come from Ampang-west, Kombun and Langai while 2% and 2.5% are in Pushit and Chakfem respectively.

### **Conclusion/Recommendation**

The paper attempts an assessment of Government anti-poverty programme-NAPEP in particular in rural areas of Mangu local government council. The study concludes that even though most of the rural population in the study area, have heard of the existence of NAPEP, they have never benefitted from its programmes/packages. This is attributed to the wide spread corruption and mismanagement of the programme by the coordinators.

Consequently, this further aggravates the level of poverty in the area which also affects the entire developmental process of the areas.

From the above conclusion, the following recommendations are drawn:

1. The execution of NAPEP objectives has not been realistic as it is too top-bottom in approach. This no doubt affect it success in the study area and most rural area in the country. Therefore, for it to be successful especially in the rural areas of this study, its implementation should be decentralized to reflect a "bottom- top" approach.
2. Setting up of coordinating units in major villages in the rural areas, will no doubt cut all

bottle necks and allows rural population have direct access to benefits of the programme.

3. The poor always ends up being victims of any political and religious disturbances. For any poverty intervention programme to be successful, the atmosphere of economic and political tranquility must be guaranteed. It will be pointless eradicating poverty in one region and at the same time creating one in another area. Peace is an inevitable tool for progress in any given society.. The selfish politicians who eat and live fat on these crises should be identified and appropriately sanctioned. The government should make every effort to promote peace in these communities.

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