

# **ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF NATIONAL ECONOMY EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (NEEDS) ON POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGER STATE**

**BY**

**NDAFATIMA ABUBAKAR  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
NIGER STATE POLYTECHNIC ZUNGERU**

**DANJUMA MAJIN  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
NIGER STATE POLYTECHNIC ZUNGERU**

**BABA NDANUSA ALHAJI  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE ADMINISTRATION  
NIGER STATE POLYTECHNIC ZUNGERU**

**ABDULLAHI ALIYU  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
NIGER STATE POLYTECHNIC ZUNGERU**

**SOLOMON YISA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
NIGER STATE POLYTECHNIC ZUNGERU**

**BAWA UTARE  
REGISTRY, NIGER STATE POLYTECHNIC, ZUNGERU.**

**ABDULRAHMAN SAIDU  
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES,  
NIGER STATE SCHOOL OF HEALTH, MINNA.**

## **Abstract**

*This study analyzes the impact of National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) is a medium type strategy but which derives from the country's long-term goals of poverty reduction, wealth creation, employment generation and value orientation. Data for the study were generated from the primary and secondary source with the instruments of questionnaire and interview employed. A sample of 179 respondents was selected through purposeful aid simple random sampling. Data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The X2 statistics was used to test the relationship between social charter of NEEDS and poverty reduction. It was revealed from the study that NEEDS has not positively impacted on the people in terms of employment generation; empowerment and infrastructure development. It was therefore recommended that in order to reduce poverty through NEEDS, SMEs should be developed to generate jobs, women and youth should be trained and have an access to credit facilities for empowerment, and electricity, roads, water supply should be improved to develop infrastructure.*

**Keywords:** NEEDS, poverty, employment, empowerment, infrastructure

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The social charter entails a contract between the individual and the government which recognizes his rights and responsibilities as well as promises to deliver to him the basic necessities for a decent human existence. These include potable water, food, clothing shelter and access to adequate nutrition; basic education, primary healthcare, productive assets, security and protection from shocks and risks.

The social condition in Nigeria, present a starting paradox, in spite of a robust endowment in natural and human resources, the level of poverty of her people stands in contrast to the country's vast wealth. For decades, the country has struggled with the issue of socio-economic development, which has remained in decline in the face of increasing revenue from crude oil.

The deepening incidence and dynamics of poverty in Nigeria have stratified and polarized the Nigerian society between the haves and the have-nots, between the north and the south, between the educated and uneducated; poor parent beget poor off-springs (creating a kind of dynasty of the poor), the resulting tensions and social conflicts have eroded the fabric that held society together. The resulting challenge of development is not only the need to reform the economy for enhanced economic growth but also how to empower the citizenry as a means of revitalizing the weakened social pillar NEEDs document: 004:95). Qualitatively, poverty in Nigeria has many manifestations and dimensions including joblessness, over indebtedness, economic dependence at adult age; lack of freedom and inability to provide the basic needs of life for self and family. In fact, as observed by Olaopa et al (2006:52), poverty affects many aspects of the human condition including physical, moral and psychological. People are considered poor when their measured standard of living is below a minimum acceptable level of poverty level known as poverty line (Ukpong; 1999:62).

Nigerian Government embarked on elaborate process of producing a Poverty Reduction strategy paper (PRSP) amidst various criticisms particularly is failure to address the long term economic development of the country, the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) was launched in 2004 as Nigeria's home grown poverty reduction strategy. NEEDS is a nationally coordinated framework of action in close

collaboration with the state and local governments, with their State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS).

This paper was set to investigate the impact of NEEDS on poverty reduction with focus on IGER State. The paper is divided into sections. Section one contains the introduction consisting of Background, statement of the problem. Research questions: objectives, hypothesis and scope and limitations. Section two reviewed literature on poverty, youth empowerment; development and NEEDS. It also contains the theoretical framework. Section three contains the methodology used, section four contains discussion of results and findings while section five conclude the paper with policy recommendations.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

NEEDS strategy of wealth creation and by implications, employment generation and poverty reduction is through the empowerment of the people and promotion of private enterprise. The NEEDs document asserts.

By allowing the private sector to thrive, NEEDS creates opportunities for employment and wealth creation. It empowers people to take advantage of these opportunities by creating a system of incentive that reward hard work and punish corruption, by investing in education, and by providing special programmes for the most vulnerable members of the society (National Planning Commission and Central Bank of Nigeria, 2005:6).

Empowerment policies would be on such vital areas as tackling social exclusion, housing, health care, education, skills acquisition, protecting the vulnerable and promotion of peace and security. The core of this strategy is to fight poverty, which the plan recognizes as being multi-dimensional. It does not only involve measures to improve incomes but also to tackle social and political factors that lead to poverty. Wealth creation is therefore intrinsically linked to the strategy of employment generation. To what extent this goal has been attained by NEEDs is a matter of conjecture. While Nigeria's wealth has risen within the period of NEEDs as a result of better oil prices in the international market induced by the Middle East crisis, favourable terms of trade and substantial debt relief granted by the Paris Club, it is not obvious that the average Nigerian benefited from this wealth increase within the period of NEEDS 2003-2007. Nigeria's Annual budget crossed the threshold of billions into trillions of Naira, but the Per Capital Income of Nigerians falls into the one dollar per head level of the poorest countries.

From the above, the pertinent research questions begging for answers are as follows:-

- I. To what extent have NEEDs generated employment to reduce poverty in NIGER State?
2. To what extent have NEEDs empowered women and youth towards poverty reduction in NIGER State.
3. To what extent have NEEDS developed infrastructure for poverty reduction in NIGER State.

## 1.3 Objectives of the study

The Central objective of this paper is to evaluate the relationship between the social charter of NEEDS and poverty reduction in NIGER State. However; the specific objective of this study are as follows:-

- I. To find out the extent to which the generated employment to reduce poverty in NIGER State.

2. To examine the extent to which NEEDS empowered women and youth towards poverty reduction in NIGER State.
3. To determine the extent to which NEEDS developed infrastructures towards poverty reduction in NIGER State.

#### 1.4 **Research Hypothesis**

The hypothesis formulated for this study is as follows:

Ho: There is no significantly relationship between the social charter strategies of NEEDS and poverty reduction.

#### 1.5 **Significance of the Study**

Several studies were conducted on the issue of poverty reduction or poverty eradication programmes. Some of those studies centred on the effectiveness of social policies on poverty reduction (Isah, 2008). Others were on the assessment of NAPEP either in terms of operations, or implementation strategies of management capacity (Asaju 2011, Lawai 2013).

Also some researches were carried out on the Millennium Development goals (Usman, 2011).

However, this study is unique with its focus on the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS). It would be significant to policy makers and administrators at all tiers of government. It is also hoped that its findings will be of immense contribution to researchers and academicians alike.

#### 1.6 **Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The research is on the assessment of the impact of NEEDS towards poverty reduction in NIGER State. The study is restricted to Lavun Local Government Area of NIGER State. The choice of Lavun Local Government is not unconnected to the fact that it is a rural area located in the northern part of NIGER State where poverty is glaring with high index.

NEEDS has four pillars or strategies, namely: reforming government and its institutions, growing the private sectors, implementing a social charter and value recreation. This study is limited to the strategy of implementing social charter, with emphasis on employment generation, women and youth empowerment as well as infrastructures development.

## 2.0 **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### 2.1 **Literature Review**

In this study related literature in poverty, employment generation, empowerment, development and micro credit.

There is no universally accepted definition of poverty. At same time, there is always the difficulty in deciding where to draw the line between the 'poor' and 'non-poor'. According to World Bank Report (2002), poverty is the inability to obtain a minimum standard of living. The report constructed some indices based on a minimum level of consumption in order to show the practical aspect of poverty. These include, lack of access to resources, lack of shelter, poor access to water and sanitation, vulnerability to shocks, violence and crime, political discrimination and marginalization. Similarly, the United Nations Human Development (UNHD, 2002) has introduced the use of such other indices such as life expectancy, infant mortality rate, primary school enrolment ratio and number of

person per physical to measure poverty in a country. Aluko (1993) refers to poverty as a lack of command over basic consumption needs.

There is an inadequate level of consumption such as rise to insufficient food, clothing and shelter. He further notes that the conventional notion depicts poverty as a condition in which people are below a specific minimum income level and are unable to provide or satisfy the basic necessities of life needed for an acceptable standard of living. This explanation however has, failed to provide the graphic picture of those who are poor, how to change their conditions and what to do. Providing more insight, Shaffer (CWO I), avers that the concept poverty, has undergone four changes over the past decade. First, there has been a shift from a physiological model of deprivation to a social model of deprivation. The social model is about incorporating issues of political and economic rights and social justice into the anti-poverty programmatic framework. Second, there has been renewed emphasis placed on the concept of vulnerability and its relationship to poverty. Fourth, the idea that poverty should be conceptualized as the violation of basic human rights has been painstakingly argued by UN system agencies.

In his analysis, Hettner (2002) classified poverty into five types. First, absolute poverty that occurs when human beings live in a state of deprivation due to meager income or lack of access to basic human needs which include food, safe water, sanitation, health, shelter, education and information. Second, relative poverty that defines poverty from a comparative point of view (i.e. poverty is not absolute but relative). Relative refers to the position of household or individual compared. It is measured in three ways: through the low income family statistics, through income and through disposable income. Third, chronic/structural means that poverty is persistent or long term. Its cases are more permanent and depend on a host of factors such as limited productive resources, lack of skill for gainful employment, vocational disadvantage or endemic socio-political and cultural factors. Fourth, conjunctural transitory which means poverty is temporary or short-term and caused mainly by factors such as natural or man-made disasters- wars and environmental degradation or structural changes induced by policy reforms which result in loss of employment, loss in value of real income assets, etc. fifth, spatial/location that means depending on geographical or regional spread and incidence. It involves urban squalor/poverty typified by the existence of ghettos slums and shantytowns in metro political cities and characterized by environmental degradation, inadequate welfare services and social deprivations, low per capita income, over-crowded accommodation, engagement in informal business. Rural poverty characterized by poor conditions of living. Indeed, the UNDP had summarized these conceptions of poverty and described the extent of poverty around the world as pervasive. Today, more than one billion people - one person in five live in abject poverty (The Human Development Magazine, March 2003).

Obviously, poverty is a state where an individual is unable to cater adequately for his/her basic needs of food, clothing and shelter, nor meet social and economic obligations as a result of lack of gainful employment, skills, assets and self-esteem (Adebayo et al, 2006:8). In other words, poverty implies an observable disadvantage in relation to the local community or the wider society or nation to which a deprived individual, family, household or group belongs. In recent times, scholars have pointed out that there are reinforcing vicious circles that sustain and keep families, regions and countries poor and unable to contribute to national growth (Okoye and Onyukwu, 2007). In Nigeria, poverty has been on the increase: the situation has worsened since the late 1990s and can best be described as 'inflammatory' (Ukpere and Ugoh, 2009).

According to Webster (1998), empower means" (1) to give official authority or legal power to; (2) enable; (3) to promote the self actualization or influence". The strategy proscribed by the first definition can be quite effective provided that the party being empowered (that is, the "empowered") already has the competencies needed to achieve the desired outcome. The strategy does not work well when it is plugged into a developing competency in youth. For youth development, the third definition is more suitable (Pittman and Fleming, 1991).

Youth empowerment is an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority, and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people, including youth and adults (Vavrus and Fletcher 2006). Youth empowerment is often addressed as a gateway to intergenerational equity, civic engagement and democracy building. The Poor needs power to live a better life. According to Page & Czube (1999), "power is often related to our ability to make others do what we want, regardless of their own wishes. Since power is created in relationships, power and power relationships can change. Therefore, the youth may be empowered and changed. The concept of empowerment is therefore, really meaningful. Empowerment is a construct shared by many disciplines (Page & Czube 1999).

Plan Youth (2013), one of the world's oldest and largest international development agencies, stated that Empowerment is about enabling youth to realize their rights and become change agents in their own communities. Youth Economic Empowerment project increases economic opportunities for poor youth through financial literacy and skills training, as well as improving access to financial services. Writing for the World Bank, Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) described individuals and groups as empowered when they possess the capacity to make effective choices: that is. to translate their choices into desired actions and outcomes. A more recent formulation in the WDR 2012 offered a broader notion of agency which included control over resources, decision-making, freedom of movement, freedom from the risk of violence and a voice and influence in collective decision-making processes. Thus, economic empowerment means increasing one's possession of and control over economic assets. It can be achieved through different types of strategies that include microfinance, entrepreneurship training, livelihood approaches, financial literacy training, building savings, asset building and cash transfer programs, among others.

In terms of employment generation and micro credit profiteers Adawo et al. (2012) examined issues relating to high unemployment rate in Nigeria. The study observed that labor force in Nigeria grew at more or less a steady rate of 0.3% every year while gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate grew at 3.5% over a period of 33 years. suggesting that the Nigerian economy experienced a jobless growth. The study also noted that the causes of unemployment in Nigeria include: poor infrastructure; non-diversification of the economy; insecurity and poor educational system that does not readily produce employable graduates. The study recommended that governments at all levels should partner with the private sector and diversify the economy in order to crate jobs. Danjuma and Bala (2012) explored role of governance in employment generation in Nigeria. The study employed primary data obtained through the issue of interviews. The findings of the study showed that unemployment rate in Nigeria had created tension and hatred between the haves and have not leading to communal clashes; resulted in the emergence of militants groups (like the Boko Haram sect and Niger Delta Militant), prostitution, armed robbery and child transfusing, constituting hiccups to

security of lives and properties. The study recommended that investment in education will help in skills development and training.

Adeyerni (2008) however, documents that despite decades of public provision and direction of provision of micro credit, policy reorientation and the entry of new players, the supply of microfinance in Nigeria is still inadequate in relation to demand. This suggests that 'there is some inefficiency in microfinance operations in Nigeria due to some institutional inadequacies such as undercapitalization, inefficient management and regulatory and supervisory loopholes.

Micro credit is crucial for the poor to create self-employment and reduce their poverty situation (Ahasan, 2005). Poor persons with access to credit can make investments in enterprises that bring them out of poverty (Shastri, 2009).

## 2.2 Concept of NEEDS

NEEDS is different from the other economic programmes that had come before it in many positive respects. National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy seeks to achieve poverty alleviation and economic revivalism by stimulating the well acknowledged creative energies of the vast majority of the population.

Obviously, there are four clear goals of NEEDS. They are:

- I. The creation of wealth
2. Generation of employment
3. Reduction of Poverty
- . 4. Re-orientation of value

The Strategies of NEEDS include the following:

NEEDS according to CISCOPE (Opcit) rests on four key strategies; reforming the way government works and its institutions; growing the private sector; implementing a social charter for the people; and re-orientation of the people with an enduring African value system as discussed below.

- (a) Reforming Government and its institutions: the goals are to restructure, down-size, re-professionalize and strengthen government and public institutions to deliver effective services to the people. It also aims to eliminate wastes and inefficiency, and free up resources for investment in infrastructure and social services by Government. A key aspect of the institutional reforms is to fight corruption, ensure greater transparency, promote rule of law and stricter enforcement of contracts. An explicit Service Delivery Programme to re-orientate government agencies towards effective delivery of services to the people is being introduced in government for the first time.
- (b) Growing the private sector: NEEDS is a development strategy anchored on the private sector as the engine of growth - for wealth creation, employment generation and poverty reduction. The government is the enabler, the facilitator, and the regular. The private sector is the executor, the direct investor and manager of businesses.
- (c) Implementing a social charter: NEEDS is about people, it is about their welfare, their health, education, employment, poverty-reduction, empowerment, security and participation. This is the overarching ultimate goal of NEEDS.

- (d) Value Re-Orientation: The key message of the NEEDS is that it is not business as usual". The privatization programme is designed to shrink the domain of the state and hence the amount of distributable rents which have been the haven of public sector corruption and inefficiency.

### 2.3 Theoretical Framework

#### (The Meta-theory of empowerment)

The theoretical framework adopted for this research work is the Meta-theory of empowerment developed by Elishewa Sadan and translated by Flantz (1997).

Empowerment creates a change in human behaviour and in the social structure. The potential for community empowerment exists in every environment, just as the potential for individual empowerment exists in every person. In *every* process of individual empowerment there also exists a potential for community empowerment, and every process of individual empowerment there also exists a potential for community empowerment, and *every* process of community empowerment creates an environment that facilitates individual empowerment and at the same time also shapes and determines its form.

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

The relevance of the Meta-theory of empowerment to this study can be seen as thus from the fact that NEEDS at the individual level seeks to give voice to the voiceless, increase their control capabilities and facilitate their transition from the state of powerlessness to self actualization. At the group level NEEDS has created community empowerment. Thus, in the empowerment process such as contained in the strategies of NEEDS the people in the rural community are expected to learn, take on socially valued roles such as participating in rural appraisal for prioritizing community interests, exercise of social skills and exertion or interpersonal influence to take responsibility and to acquire political efficiency. These abilities which NEEDS seeks to introduce to beneficiaries of its programmes will greatly contribute to the joint goals of empowering themselves as individuals and as a community.

Communities through its empowerment and development strategies are to have better control particularly over the environment thereby enhancing desired social progress. Thus, NEEDS activities in rural communities are coordinated by appointed professional officials who seek to guide and help the rural communities to achieve the translation of NEEDS theoretical prescriptions into concrete practical realities. The meta-theory, therefore, presents empowerment as a process of transition from a state of powerlessness to a state of relative control over one's destiny.



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

Individual empowerment if acquired in the course of active participation in social change process in groups and organization turn to have special value for both the individual and the environment within which it is taking place. In another vein, community empowerment develops a sense of responsibility, commitment and ability to care for collective survival, as well as skills in problem solving and political efficiency to influence changes in the environment relevant to their quality of life. Finally, empowering the professional practice will facilitate improved intervention by empowerment and development organizations such as NEEDS for sustained individual.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

Data for the study were generated from both primary and secondary sources. The instrument of primary data utilized in the questionnaire and interview: while the instruments of secondary data employed include published and unpublished text materials as well as the internet.

In terms of population and sample size of the rural residents in the area constitute the population for the study. A total of 179 respondents from the eleven (11) districts in Lavun local government area was sampled for the study. Interview schedule was used in collecting data from the respondents. Some socio data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive tools used include frequently tables and simple percentages while the chi-square statistics was adopted for inferential analysis.

The survey research method was adopted and the five point likert scale was used in show the coded responses of respondents.

### **4.0 DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of the respondents:**

The result of this study reveals that a majority (40.2%) of the respondents had their ages between 28-37 years (table I). A majority (64.8) of the respondents was married, 30.7% were single and 4.5% were divorced.

This shows that there are predominantly more married people in the communities than those who are not married or divorced. About 39.7% of the respondents had received OND/NCE education and 22.9% had Degree/HND and 14.5% had received only primary/secondary education. Yet 22.9% had received no form of formal education. It may be concluded that of the people who had received formal education, 31.8% were civil servants and 7.8% students. An overwhelming 38.0% of the respondents were farmers while 18.4% were self-employed and 3.9% are unemployed.

**Table I: Distribution of respondents by their socio-economic characteristics Aged Distributions of Respondents**

Age	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
18 – 27	34	19.0
28 – 37	72	40.2
38 – 47	60	33.5
48 and above	13	7.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Survey Research 2022*

#### Marital status respondents

Variables	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Married	116	64.8
Single	55	30.7
Divorced	8	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Survey Research 2022*

#### Educational qualification of Respondents

Variables	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Degree/HND	41	22.9
OND/NCE	71	39.7
Sec/Pri.	26	14.5
No. formal Education	41	22.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Survey Research 2022*

#### Occupation of respondents

Age	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Civil servant	57	31.8
Farmer	68	38.0
Student	14	7.8
Self-employed	33	18.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Survey Research 2022*

#### 4.2 Micro-Economic Targets of NEEDS

NEEDS sets clear but ambitious micro economic targets for Nigeria. Real Gross Domestic product grew 8.6% in 2003; it was expected to grow five percent in 2004, six percent in 2005 and 2006 and seven percent in 2007.

In the generation of employment, NEEDS committed all stakeholders, particularly the Federal Government to create a minimum of one million new jobs from 2003 to 2004 and two million yearly from 2005 to 2007.

In the re-orientation of values, Nigeria expected tourist visitors every year in number by 10 percent year on year up to 2007.

Table 2: Selected targets Under NEEDS

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Macroeconomic targets					
Real GDP (Growth rates %)	8.6	5	6	6	7
Oil sector (% growth)	15	0	0	0	0
Non oil sect (% growth)	5.83	7.27	8.54	8.34	9.52
Percentage reduction in poverty (5)	-	5	5	5	5
Minimum no. of new jobs created (millions)	-	1	2	2	2
Growth in real per capital consumption (5)	11	2	2	2	2
Inflation rate (5)		10	9.5	9.5	9.5
<b>SECTORIAL TARGETS</b>					
Growth in agriculture (%)	7	6	6	6	6
Manufacturing capacity utilization (%)	-	7	7	7	7
Tourist visitors to Nigeria (annual growth rate %)	53	-	-	-	-
Social services	-	10	10	10	10
Education					
Adult literacy rate (%)	57				65
Health					-
HIV/AIDS prevalence Rate (%)	6.05				5
Immunization coverage (%)	39				60
Access to safe water (%)	64.1				70
Infrastructure					
Power generation (MW)		4,000			10,000
Roads (Rehabilitation & new roads)	3,000	3,500			4,000

*Sources: NEEDS: Nigeria Grand Reform Agenda*

### 4.3 Employment Generation

NEEDS recognizes not only the urgency of the unemployment situation but also that there will be a large expected job creation effects of the reform programme but also recognizes the need for direct and specific steps to facilitate individual empowerment particularly among the youth and other vulnerable groups. Tables 3 and 4 below show projected sources and means of employment generation under NEEDS as well as targeted instruments for the empowerment of the most vulnerable.

Table 3 projected sources and means of employment generation under NEEDS

Sources of growth	Projected means of employment generation
Agriculture and rural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- productivity enhancement for peasant farmers</li> <li>- new jobs in the rural areas arising from improved rural infrastructure</li> <li>- increased employment from commercial agriculture</li> </ul>
Manufacturing and SMEs	Increased production through co-ordinated programme between the federal and state governments Federal/state collaboration in the development of industrial clusters and parks
Solid minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- prospective new investments will result in increased mining and exploration activities</li> <li>- improvement of infrastructure at mining sites</li> </ul>
Information and communications telecommunication	- expansion of telecom industry and the coming on board of the second national carrier will generate more direct and indirect employment
Services (especially tourism)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increases in distribution trade as a consequences of growth in the productive sectors and services</li> <li>- the new focus on tourism will also lead to more direct and indirect employment e.g. the Obudu cattle ranch</li> <li>- growth in the entertainment industry especially export of home video is expected to lead to increased employment in the sector</li> </ul>
Oil and gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the enforcement of the local content policy will lead to more jobs in the sector</li> <li>- envisaged growth in the gas sector</li> </ul>
Power	- increased participation of independent power providers (IPPS) will expand productivity and lead to greater
The social services (Education)	- the commencement of UBE and the increasing growth of private provision of education and skill training
Works and housing construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- use of public works in the construction of roads and other public utilities especially by state and local government</li> <li>- new and continuing boom in housing construction all over the country will continue to generate huge employment</li> </ul>
Intervention schemes	Micro credit and concessional credit to provide start up capital for new business will generate new jobs

*Source: Survey Research 2022*

Table 4: targeted instrument for the empowerment of the most vulnerable

Vulnerable group	Instruments/interventions
Rural poor	Access to credit and land” participation in decision making; agric extension services; improved seed, farm inputs and implements strengthen of the traditional thrift/savings/insurance schemes (susus)
Urban poor	Labour intensive public works schemes: affordable housing water and sanitation skill acquisition/entrepreneurial development: access to credit. Scholarships and adult education
Women	Affirmative action (proportionate or 30% representation) in all programmes: education, adult education; scholarships; access to credit and land; maternal and child health
Youth	Education: entrepreneurial development skill acquisition and access to credit; prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and other STDs
Children	Children’s parliament; juvenile justice administration: UBE girl child education; care of orphans and vulnerable children (HIV/AIDS affected children) prevention and treatment of childhood diseases.
Rural communities	Social infrastructure water, rural roads; electricity; schools, health facilities, communications

Sources: *NEEDS: Nigeria grand reform agenda*

#### 4.4. Assessment of the impact of NEEDS on Poverty Eradication

Table 5 below shows the responses of respondents on the relationship between elements of NEEDS social charter and Poverty reduction in Lavun Local Government Area.

Table 5, Respondent Opinion on Social Charter of NEEDS and poverty Reduction

S/no.	Elements of social charter of NEEDS	Strongly agree	Agreed	Under	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1.	NEEDS created the enabling environment for employment using specific sectoral programme for the private sector to prosper	40 (22.3)	20 (11.2)	9 (5.1)	70 (39.0)	40 (22.3)	179 (100%)
2.	NEEDS provided the avenue for acquisition of relevant skills for the citizen to be self employed	30 (16.8)	10 (5.6)	5 (3.9)	100 (55.8)	34 (18.)	179 (100%)
3.	NEEDS collaborated with state (SEEDS) to promote the promote the programme of integrated of rural development	50 (27.9)	20 (16.2)	7 (3.9)	60 (33.5)	42 (23.4)	179 (100%)
4.	NEEDS ensured the promotion of women access to microfinance and all poverty alleviated strategies with the view to reduce poverty	27 (15.0)	22 (12.3)	-	80 (44.6)	50 (27.9)	179 (100%)
5.	NEEDS enhanced empowerment of women through sustained advocacy of education so as to reduce	10 (8.6)	8 (4.4%)	2 (1.1)	100 (65.8)	59 (32.4)	179 (100%)

	women vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other STDs						
6.	NEEDS promoted targeted youth employment in other to empower them	30	10 (4.3)	1 (0.5)	70 (39.19)	68 (37.19)	179 (100%)
7.	NEEDS developed infrastructures in the community	2 (1.1)	3 (1.7)	3 (1.7)	100 (55.8)	69 (38.5)	179 (100%)
8.	Based on NEEDS social strategies poverty is reduced in the locality	10 (4.3)	7 (3.9)	7 (3.9)	100 55.8	50 (27.9)	179 (100%)

*Source: Survey Research 2022*

From table 5 above, items 1-3 relate to employment generation, Items 4-6 relate to empowerment, 7 relates to infrastructure development while item 8 relates to poverty reduction. Response to item 1 shows that 110 respondents representing 61.4% rejected the view that NEEDS created the enabling environment for employment using specific sector programme for the private sector to prefer. Similarly, in item 2, as high as 134 respondents representing 73.9% claimed that NEEDS did not provide the avenue for acquisition of relevant skills for the citizens to be self-employed. Responding to item 1, 102 respondents representing 55.9% believed that NEEDS in collaboration with SEEDS do not promote the programme of integrated rural development. Analysis of these three items indicates far performance of NEEDS in terms of generating employment. Responses from items 4-6 in the above table, indicate that 130 respondents representing about 71 % claimed that NEEDS has not ensured promotion of women access to micro finance; 159 respondents representing 88.8% also claimed that NEEDS has not expound women to reduce their vulnerability to diseases; also 138 respondents representing 77% attested that NEEDS has not empowered the youth as well. To this end, analysis of items 4.6 also shows few impacts of NEEDS in terms of empowerment of women and youth.

It is also revealed from the above table that as high as 169 respondents representing 94.4% claimed that NEEDS has not developed rural infrastructures. Based on all these negative impacts, as high as 150 respondents representing 82.5% claimed that NEEDS has not reduced poverty in Lavun Local government.

#### **4.5 Statistical Test of Hypothesis**

The null hypothesis for this study is stated as thus:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the social charter strategy of NEEDS and poverty reduction in LAVUN local government.

From the above hypothesis the dependent variable is poverty reduction while the independent variable is NEEDS. Data relating to empowerment (item 5) in table 5, and data relating to poverty reduction (item 5) in table 5, and data relating to poverty reduction (item 8) in the said table 5 were cross tabulated to produce the chi-square output in table 6 below.

**Table 6**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	571.893	16	.000
Likelihood ratio	509.87	16	.000
Linear-by-linear association	235.739	1	.000
No. of valid cases	179		

a. 12 cells (48.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .16.

b. Source: Survey Research. 2017

From the computed output above, hypothesis testing procedures are presented below:

Calculated value: which is Pearson Chi-Square from the table above is equal to 571.893.

Degree of freedom (df) = 16

Level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) = .05

Critical or tabulated value at 16 (DF) and 0.05 ( $\alpha$ ) value is equal to 26.296.

**Decision Rule**

Accept null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) against the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) if  $X^2$  calculated value is less than  $X^2$  critical (tabulated) value.

Reject null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) in favour of alternate hypotheses if otherwise.

From the above, the calculated value is greater than critical value as such, we reject the  $H_0$  and conclude that there is a significant relationship between NEEDS social charter strategies and poverty reduction. This means that the more NEEDS generate employment, empower people, develop infrastructures, definitely, poverty will be reduced but if otherwise occur, poverty will be on the increase.

**4.6 Findings of the Study**

From the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data, as well as the statistical testing of hypothesis, the following findings were observed.

- (1) In terms of employment generation NEEDS has not created enough job to reduce poverty. NEEDS promised creating about 7 million jobs but the truth is that most policies pursued by the government within the period were anti employment, rather than employment generation. Thousands of people became jobless as a result of policy of downsizing and night sizing under NEEDS. Also people lost their jobs as a result of decaying and privatized industries.
- (2) On the issue of empowerment of the people by NEEDS, the situation portrays a rhetoric use of words only rather than real action. Women and youth empowerment was used as a political patronage to party thugs. The reality is that majority of the rural poor do not benefit from the empowerment strategies, the women and youth were not kept away from the vulnerability side of HIV/AIDS, STDS and drug abuse.
- (3) The issue of infrastructure development as projected by NEEDS failed to achieve much input. Electricity which coincidentally was a major policy choice of the government rather than show improvement, seemed to have declined

tremendously. Beside power, roads, transport, and water supply are not readily accessible by the people.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper examined and assessed the impact of National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) on poverty reduction in Nigeria, with focus on Lavun Local Government Area of NIGER State. The truth and reality on ground is that NEEDS has not really done better in the actual implementation of its strategies especially the social charter implementation. Obviously those that benefited from the programme are not really the poorest people. Most rural dwellers are not even aware of its operation as such they do not benefit.

The impact of NEEDS on generating employment, empowering people or developing rural infrastructures as far as this study is concerned is only a wishful thinking. In view of this, the following recommendations were offered;

1. In order to really reduce poverty by generating adequate employment, there is need to provide for a sustainable small and medium enterprises with stable public power supply as well as established serviced industrial estate.
2. To empower women and youth, there is need for training and available access to credit facilities. This is because, total commitment of women and youth to development strategies will not only engage them in positive economic and rural development but could definitely dissuade them from violent activities and crisis.
3. There is the urgent need to developed and improve infrastructures. Power supply should be regular and effective, transportation, water supply and good roads should be provided.



## REFERENCES

- Ata A. (20 II) Assessment of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). in the Eradication of Poverty and Hunger in Nigeria. Kogi State University, Journal of Public Administration, Volume I No May 20 II.
- Adawo A.M, etal. (2012) "is Nigeria's unemployment problem unsolvable?" Current Research Journal of Social Sciences, 4 (6) 389-395.
- Adeleke T.A. etal. (2013) Assessment of subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) Intervention towards managing youth economic empowerment programme in Niger State LIJaMASS volume 6 (I & 2) December 2013.
- Aluko, S. (1993) Poverty: Its Remedies in Nigeria. Ibadan: The Nigerian Economic Society
- Francis, P. and Nweze, N. (2003) 'A Review of Poverty Data, and Assessment of Policies and Institution Addressing Poverty Reduction in Enugu State'. A DFID Consultant Report, 2003.
- Hettne, B. (2002) "Poverty and Poverty Reduction". Retrieved on 03/10/11 from <http://www.archieves/articles.com>
- Ikejiani-Clark and Ezech, C. (2008) "The State; Multipartyism and Democratization in Nigeria", 1999-2007, in Journal of Political Economy, vol;-2 Nos. 1&2.
- Nwanolue, B.a.G. and Iwuoha, V.C (2012) "The Nigerian Civil Service and Promotion of Sustainable Human Development: A critical Analysis". Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review, Vol. I (9).
- Nwanolue, B.a.G. and Iwuoha, V.c. (2012) "From Monopolism to Competitionism: A Market Analysis of the Performance of the Nigerian Postal Service, 1985-20 II", European Journal of Business and Management, Vol. 4 (7).
- Nwanolue, B.a.G and Iwuoha, V.c., (2012) "The Perspectives and Structural Contradictions of the Nigerian Postal Service: A Neoliberal Approach", Journal of Management and Corporate Governance, Vol. 4 (I).
- Obi, E.A. and Iwuoha, V.c. (2009) "Restructuring the Dialectics of Fiscal Federalism in the Nigerian democratic Experience", ESUT Journal of Political Science. Vol. 3 (3).
- Okitikpi, c. (1996) "My Mission in Lagos". Newswatch, March 6.
- Okoye. U.c. and Onyukwu E.a (2007) "Sustainable Poverty Reduction Effort through Inter-Agency Collaboration in Nigeria", in K. Omeje ed. State-Society Relations in Nigeria Democratic Consolidation, Conflicts and Reforms. London: Adores Abbey Publication.
- Oyasarnni, a. et al (2008) "Evaluation of the Concept, Implementation and Impact of Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Nigeria" in Cent re for Gender and Social Policy Studies. Ile Ife: Obaferni Awolowo University Press.
- Paul Y. Mbaya (2007) A hand book of Development Planning Experience and Perspectives in Nigeria Published by: Compaq Publishers Limited Maiduguri. Pp. 187-194
- Shaefer, B.D. (2001) "Multilateral Economic Development in Sub-Saharan Africa". Retrieved on 03/10/1 I from <http://www.heritage.org>
- Ukpere, W.I and Ugo, V.c. (2009) "Appraising Poverty Alleviation Programme in Nigeria". Retrieved from <http://www.dk.cpu.ac.za/bus-paper11301103110.11>
- Ukwu, I. U et al (1998) 'Enugu State Poverty Report'. Inst itute for De3vclopment Studies, University of Nigeria Enugu Campus. Report prepared for United at Naions Development Programme.
- Ugwuanyi (2012) "Human Capacity Enhancement in Nigeria: An Evaluation of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in Enugu State, 2001-2001" (unpublished)