HUMANUS DISCOURSE Vol. 5. NO 1. 2024
ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

Social services delivery and poverty alleviation in Nigeria under former President Goodluck Jonathan (2009-2015)

Adegbite Simon Aboluwoye[1]
Department of Public Administration
Adekunle Ajasin University
Akungba-Akoko
Ondo State Nigeria

Moruf Ayodele Bello[2]
Department of Public Administration
Obafemi Awolowo University
, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
Osun State nigeria

Abstract

This essay describes President Goodluck Jonathan's initiatives to provide social services through infrastructure development and social transfers. It examines the attempts made by President Olusegun Obasanjo and General Ibrahim Babangida, the head of the Nigerian military, to provide social services in an effort to alleviate the terrible impacts of poverty on the general public. The two administrations devised tenable social service plans, but they were badly carried out, which prevented them from resolving the issue of poverty among the locals. This essay agrees that government initiatives to reduce poverty would be more fruitful if they focused on providing social services and making sufficient social transfers. Implementing these social services across the board faced a significant setback due to a lack of effective monitoring; it also argues that political interference, inadequate funding, corruption, and a lack of autonomy have been the fundamental challenges bedevilling the implementation of public service delivery in Nigeria; in addition, it is imperative that government address the challenges that are likely to impede effective social services; and finally, it concludes that government at all levels should demonstrate more commitment by putting in place a mechanism for effective monitoring of the implementation of social services delivery.

Key words: Poverty Alleviation, Poverty, Social Services, Social Transfers, Nigeria

Introduction

In order to overcome socioeconomic disparities in the distribution of social services among the populace, deliberate government engagement is necessary.

1 E-mail: adegbiteaboluwoye@yahoo.com (+2348031556421) ORCID NUMBER: 0000-0003-2894-2094
2 Email. ayobello@oauife.edu.ng (+2348034242262) ORCID NUMBER: 0000-0003-1506-8860

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

Social services are typically thought of as public utilities and social infrastructures that governments use to advance the wellbeing of citizens inside the state. Social services are defined in a variety of ways, and each description is based on the viewpoint of the academic. Scholars generally agree that it includes services necessary to advance people's welfare in a political context. Essential social services seem to be prerequisites for genuine development (Erondu & Oladejo, 2015)[3]. In this essay, social services are viewed as interventions meant to address the financial difficulties faced by the nation's most disadvantaged citizens. The term "poverty" lacks a widely recognised meaning because its impacts can be observed in all facets of human existence. Therefore, the simplest definition of poverty is the condition of being exceedingly impoverished and lacking the means to support oneself or take care of one's urgent needs. It has been said that poverty is a chronic problem that spreads the word about suffering and struggle. Poverty is difficult to deny because it is evident to everybody, as evidenced by ongoing destitution, hunger or starvation, and obvious suffering.

The inability to provide social services to the impoverished is the main obstacle to poverty and development (Berry, Forder, Sultan, & Moreno-Torres, 2004)[4]. There are two types of poverty, according to studies. There are two types of poverty: absolute and relative. The inability to provide for one's fundamental needs is what is meant to be described as absolute poverty. These individuals are those who struggle to meet their basic needs for housing, food, and shelter. Undoubtedly, the most poor area of Nigeria was in the north, with Sokoto State having the highest percentage at 86.4%. The poverty rate in the north-west and north-east of the country was 77.7% and 76.3%, respectively, while the rate in the south-west was 59.1%. Nigeria is home to some of the poorest people in the world with up to 63% of the population (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS2012)[5].

Significance of Study

This study shows how much President Goodluck Jonathan attempted to use social service delivery and poverty reduction initiatives to lessen the effects of poverty on Nigerians. The results hold great value for academics who are researching the evaluation of social services in Nigeria. It will offer the foundation for comparing the initiatives taken by different regimes in Nigeria to supply social services. The delivery of social services and government initiatives to alleviate the socioeconomic imbalance exacerbated by the high rate of poverty in the population are discussed in the paper. In essence, the study made use of secondary data.

Pre- President Goodluck Jonathan Administrations

3Erondu, C., &Oladejo, A. (2015). Social Services Provision and Community Development in Nigeria. Research on Humanities and Social Services, 5(10), 112-115.
4Berry, C., Forder, A., Sultan, S., & Moreno-Torres, M. (2004). Approaches to Improving the Delivery of Social Services in Difficult Environments. Budapest: UK Department for International Development.
5National Bureau of Statistics, (2012). 'The Nigerian Poverty Profile 2010 report', Abuja, Nigeria.

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

In this section, the administrations of President Olusegun Obasanjo and General Ibrahim Babangida will be discussed as references. From 1985 until 1992, Nigeria's military government was led by General Ibrahim Babangida. Nigeria's civilian leader during the inauguration of the country's fourth republic was President Olusegun Obasanjo. Between May 29, 1999, and May 29, 2007, he served in this capacity. Nigeria's economy was considered to be among the fastest growing, with a growth rate of 7.4%. In an economy that is experiencing rapid expansion and has an abundance of both natural and human resources, a significant portion of the population—63%—lives on less than $1 per day. Odiji, Nwoke, and Adeseke (2016)[6] argued that the GDP rarely accurately depicts the economic suffering of Nigerians, that Nigeria was not improving economically.

Most Nigerians make less than one dollar ($1) per day on their own. Nigeria is now regarded as one of the world's most backward developing nations in terms of social, economic, and technological aspects due to widespread poverty. Consequently, a sizable portion of Nigerians continue to live in poverty, lack proper access to essential social services, and are unable to take advantage of the majority of government initiatives aimed at reducing the country's poverty. One important factor contributing to poverty in Nigerian society, according to reports, is unemployment. At that time, the International Labour Organisation (2012)[7] estimated that the young unemployment rate worldwide was 11.28%.
Nigerian poverty is still quite high even after the country's economy grew during the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan. President Goodluck Jonathan made the decision to confront Nigeria's poverty head-on after realising how widespread it was. Prior to President Jonathan, the government implemented a number of social programs to lessen the impact of poverty on the nation. Social services are deliberate initiatives designed to lessen the impacts of poverty and advance economic equity for all. It makesreference to the various programs the government has implemented to mitigate the impacts of poverty and promote happy lifestyles for all citizens.According to Adelodun (2002)[8], poverty alleviation is the process of reducing the pain, suffering, and erosion of human dignity that accompany it to a level that can be tolerated through the establishment of supportive environments, broad economic empowerment, skill development, and capacity building. This implies that reducing poverty is a strategy of achieving social and economic development that improves the standard of living for the typical Nigerian.

Goodluck Jonathan's predecessors had launched many social service programs aimed at reducing poverty. In order to deter rural-to-urban development, Babangida established the Directorate of Foods, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure

6Odiji, O., Nwoke, O., and Adeseke, A (2016). The You Win Entrepreneurship Programme and National Development in Nigeria. International Journal of Economic Development Research and Investment, 7(1). pp. 15-16
7International LabourOrganistion (ILO), (2012). Global Employment Trends for Youth 2012."
8Adelodun, S.O. (2002). Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria: The Role of National Directorate of Employment. In V.A. Adeyeye; J.O. Yusuf (eds.), Nigeria's Lead Issues in Poverty Alleviation, (pp. 219-232). Abuja: ACDR.

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

(DFRRI) in 1985 with the goal of improving rural areas to the comfort of the rural residents. There has always been a growing need for social services in rural areas. The program's main goal was to draw people to rural areas in order to promote agricultural development. The goal of Military President Babangida's 1986 National Directorate of Employment project was to provide the vast majority of young people without jobs with a variety of skills that would enable them to become self-sufficient.The purpose of the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) was to reduce poverty. In order to support small and medium-sized businesses, the program dedicated cash to the manufacture of soap, garri, poultry, and animals (Abdu, 2014)[9].

Furthermore, the Fourth Republic's implementation of President Obasanjo's National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) aimed to improve the standard of living for the majority of Nigerians. Its goal was to reduce the gap in wealth between the rich and the poor. However, it is regrettable that these programs did not have a significant impact on reducing poverty (Umar, 2015)[10]. For the following reasons, the prior initiatives were unable to stop or prevent poverty in Nigeria:

a) The welfare benefits provided by the programs did not reach the real impoverished members of society.
b) The political elite appropriated the programs' benefits for their own pals and associates.
c) Without giving enough thought to the legitimacy question, each leader sought to promote populism through their own agendas.

Goodluck Jonathan's Administration

On May 5, 2010, following the passing of President Umaru Yar'Adua, Goodluck Jonathan was sworn in as the new leader of Nigeria. Under Jonathan's leadership, two initiatives to reduce poverty are evident. They are the Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (Sure-P) and the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWin) (Akpedji, 2015)[11]. Thus, the purpose of this study is to evaluate these two initiatives for reducing poverty that were implemented by the former administration of President Goodluck Jonathan between 2010 and 2015.

Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (Youwin)

President Jonathan created the YouWin program in an effort to reduce the country's poverty rate. The Youwin program is a collaborative effort by the Ministries of Women's Affairs and Social Development, Youth Development, and Finance that provides assistance to youth. This extensive program aims to

9Abdu, H. (2014). Millennium Development Goals and Poverty Reduction: Context, Challenges and Way Forward, Current Issues in Development, Office of Research and Development, University of Jos, 2(1). pp.35.
10Umar, S.U. (2015). Women and Poverty in Nigeria: Agenda for Poverty Eradication, Developing Country Studies, 5(3), 122-126.
11Akpedji, G. (2015). You WiN Awardees Protest Non Payment of Second Third Trenches, Guardian Newspaper, http://www.ngrguardiannews.com.

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

encourage the enormous number of unemployed youths to launch their own enterprises (Bello & Aboluwoye, 2022)[12]. The main goal is to create jobs by inspiring Nigeria's young, hard-working citizens to write a business plan that the federal government will support and fund. The program seeks to accomplish the following particular goals:

a. To solicit innovative concepts and inventions from young Nigerians aspiring to university, polytechnic, technical, or other post-secondary education and business ownership.
b. To provide a one-time equity reward to 1,200 selected prospective entrepreneurs to support the initiation or expansion of their business ideas and lower startup costs.
c. To generate 80,000–110,000 new jobs for Nigeria's youth unemployment rate throughout the course of the three years that the three cycles will be implemented.
d. To provide up to 6,000 young people who are spread across Nigeria's geographical zones and aspire to launch their own firms with business training.
e. To encourage Nigerian businesses that are already in operation to expand, specialise, and create spin-offs.
f. To broaden young entrepreneurs' exposure and provide them with access to a large professional network in the business world.

Former President Goodluck Jonathan gave explanations for the program's creation during the opening speech of the third iteration of the YouWiN program. According to him, the project was created in response to his administration's determination to take decisive action against Nigeria's increasing rate of youth unemployment. In 2011, the country's youth unemployment rate was a startling 35%, based on his theory (Olaniyi & Aroge, 2014)[13]. The YouWiN initiative was created as a result to assist young people in finding jobs for both themselves and other individuals. Nonetheless, candidates were advised to abide by the following guidelines:

a. "YouWiN" is not a loan; rather, it is a grant because it is an equity contribution to businesses;
b. Award recipients will be paid based on the needs of the business and particular milestones mentioned in the business plan;
c. Despite not having to register to apply, award recipients must register with the Corporate Affairs Commission before receiving funds;
d. Before receiving funds, award recipients will open accounts with any participating commercial bank using their registered companies; and,
e. Before receiving funds, award recipients must sign a grant agreement with the YouWiN managers.

YouWiN and Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria

12Bello, M. A. and Aboluwoye, S. A. (2022). Social Intervention Scheme in Nigeria: Mode of Implementation of Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme.
13Olaniyi, F.O. and Aroge, S.T. (2014). Poverty Alleviation Strategies in Nigeria: The Missing Link of Adult Education. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 5(23), pp. 25-27.

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

The YouWin programme was implemented in three batches. The first group was started with the intention of educating the young people who aspire to be entrepreneurs about the importance of creating jobs in order to end the nation's unemployment and poverty. Sensitisation included the idea that government funding would go towards rewarding and realistic business initiatives. Recall that the program is a public-private endeavour designed to provide funds for any young Nigerian who aspires to become an entrepreneur.
The YouWin concept is straightforward and appealing: it was designed to support young, gifted entrepreneurs by offering them financial grants, technical support, and mentoring to help them become employers of labour. The program's second iteration focused exclusively on women between the ages of 18 and 45, benefiting over 1200 participants. The third iteration catered to both genders and benefited over 2500 youth. All told, the program awarded non-refundable take-off grants ranging from ₦1m to ₦10m to the 3900 awardees (Nwosu & Ugwuerua, 2014)[14]. The third edition, seemingly the last one, was distributed by President Muhammadu Buhari's administration. Apart from the monetary rewards granted to the victors, more than 18,000 youthful entrepreneurs were trained in various management and business-associated topics intended for small and medium-sized enterprises. These youthful entrepreneurs worked in a variety of fields, including agriculture, services, and bogus manufacturing. An average of 10 employees were employed by 2,390 of the recipients, according to the statement. Consequently, 40,108 jobs were determined to be the predicted best performance of all winners. A considerably smaller number of jobs than expected were created by the entire initiative, which appears to have consumed more than ₦11,121,031,260 billion. The 40,108 jobs were not enough to meet the aim of between 80,000 and 110,000 jobs (Odiji, 2016)[15]. The initiative failed to reach its goal, hence it did not significantly contribute to the creation of jobs. 52.58 million people in Nigeria were employed full-time, out of an estimated 170 million people living there.

The National Bureau of Statistics reports that the jobless rate has been rising gradually since the fourth quarter of 2015. The percentage of jobless persons in the labour force was reported to have increased, standing at 351,015 as of the third quarter of 2015. By the end of 2016, it was estimated that 28.58 million Nigerians will be unemployed. The labour force experienced a 7.0% increase in underemployment; however, this figure does not include them.
Not much progress was made in creating jobs with the YouWin program, even with the enormous sums of money spent on it. As a result, there was little impact seen in the field of reducing poverty.

The implementation of the programme however suffered some set-backs. The monitoring of the utilization of the grants given to the beneficiaries was limited to only the organizations approved by the ministry of finance. Out of about

14Nwosu, O.C. And Ugwuerua, E.(2014). Analysis of Subsidy and Re-Investment Programme (Sure-P) and Youth Empowerment in Nigeria 2012-2014. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 9(12), 25-32.
15Odiji, O., Nwoke, O., and Adeseke, A (2016). The YouWinEntrepreneurshipProgramme and National Development in Nigeria. International Journal of Economic Development Research and Investment, 7(1). pp. 15-16.

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

2500 awardees, only 60 awardees' enterprises were marked for assessment with 54 successfully assessed across the six geo-political zones in the country.

Subsidy Re-Investment and Empowerment Programme (Sure-P)

The Sure-p was launched in 2012. The programme emerged out of the series of events with resultant removal of subsidy on the premium motor spirit (PMS) by the federal government of Nigeria on Jan 1st 2012. The Sure-P was a set of special social interventions aimed at promoting growth, poverty reduction, and fighting unemployment through substantial investment infrastructure and social welfare of the people. The subsidy removed from the petrol was to be ploughed back into the economy to development the dilapidated infrastructures and empower the citizens. The goal of the plan was to guarantee that the federal government used its share of the savings from the withdrawal or reduction of gasoline subsidies to lower Nigeria's youth unemployment rate by reinvesting the subsidies. According to the Federal Government's SURE project (2011:6)[16], the goals of the programme are in accordance with the justifications put up by the government to eliminate the fuel subsidy. These include:

(a) To lessen the immediate effects of the removal of fuel subsidies on all Nigerians, but especially on the country's weakest and most vulnerable citizens. This holds true for both the immediate and long-term consequences of the elimination of subsidies.
(b) In order to spur economic growth and realise the vision 20:2020, which is a component of the administration's reform plan, to expedite economic transformation through investments in vital infrastructure projects.
(c) To establish the groundwork for the effective growth of a national safety net programme that is continuously aimed at the poor and most vulnerable. This programme will encompass public works and employment schemes, health programmes for mothers and children, mass transit initiatives, and programmes for the acquisition of skills necessary for vocational training.
Following the launch, the programme has achieved in terms of rehabilitation of roads across the country. Examples are the Abuja-Abaji-Lokoja express way, Benin- Ore, Owena-Akure-Owo express way. The Lagos-Kano rail line rehabilitation was also made possible through the Sure-p.

Apart from infrastructural development, Sure-P contributed immensely towards job creation. It is not out of points to state that most of the jobs created for teeming youth were consequential of the infrastructural projects. No fewer than 12,500 youths were engaged in the maintenance of almost 40 federal highways nationwide under the Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA) public works projects. Many jobless youths participated in the various activities geared towards the federal road maintenance. Similarly, under the community social, women and youth empowerment programme, more than 120,000 jobs were created for youths, women and physically challenged nationwide.

16Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment (SURE) Programme Document (2011). National Planning Commission Abuja.

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

ISSN 2787-0308 (ONLINE)

In the same vein, thousands of graduates benefited from the Graduate Internship Scheme that equipped the youths with various skills for employment. The graduate internship programmeemployed 3000 graduates. During the internship, the graduates received monthly allowance ₦30,000 per month each to take care of themselves. The Sure-p through the maternal and child health strategy saved the lives of many children and mothers. The programme recorded high success in the area of employment at the health sector. As at October 2014, Sure-P had employed more than 12,000 health care workers under the Maternal and Child Health Care Programme. Almost 2811 midwives, 3133 community health extension workers (CHEWS) and 5966 female village health workers were all employed under the Maternal and Child Health Care Programme of the Sure-P (Kumolu, 2014)[17].

In essence, the Sure-P contributed to the achievement of the Millenium Development Goal 4 and 5 through the reduction in maternal and new born mortality and mobility in Nigeria (Vanguard, 2014).Sure-P invested heavily in the area of jobs creation than the YouWinprogramme. Within the first six months of its commencement, Sure-P had spent more than ₦70b on wide range of projects. Without mincing words, Sure-P actually contributed to the reduction of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria through skills acquisition and infrastructural development. Job training has long been part of poverty fighting programmes. The Sure-P fought poverty in Nigeria than the YouWinprogramme and the preceding programmes in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Social services should be considered as a bridge for promoting socio-economic equality and poverty reduction in the country. However, social services delivery in Nigeria had been bedeviled by inadequate funds, corruption, political interference and lack of autonomy. Lack of effective monitoring and lack of commitment have prevented the efforts of government in delivering social services from actualizing the goals of poverty alleviation in the country. The aforementioned challenges have continued to hamper significantly the social services and social transfers that could have reduced the level of poverty to the endurable minimum. It is imperative for the government to put in place adequate national policy, social protection and programme frameworks that recognise the poor and vulnerable households

17Kumolu, C. (2014, September 14). When SURE-P Saves Mother and Child. The Vanguard News. http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/09/14/when-sure-p-saves-mother-and-child.html.

© humanusdiscourse@gmail.com , http://humanusdiscourse.website2.me

References

Abdu, H. (2014). Millennium Development Goals and Poverty Reduction: Context, Challenges and Way Forward, Current Issues in Development, Office of Research and Development, University of Jos, 2(1). pp.35.

Adelodun, S.O. (2002). Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria: The Role of National Directorate of Employment. In V.A. Adeyeye; J.O. Yusuf (eds.), Nigeria's Lead Issues in Poverty Alleviation, (pp. 219-232). Abuja: ACDR.

Akpedji, G. (2015). YouWiN Awardees Protest Non Payment of Second Third Trenches, Guardian Newspaper, http://www.ngrguardiannews.com.

Bello, M. A. and Aboluwoye, S. A. (2022). Social Intervention Scheme in Nigeria: Mode of Implementation of Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme.

Berry, C., Forder, A., Sultan, S., & Moreno-Torres, M. (2004). Approaches to Improving the Delivery of Social Services in Difficult Environments. Budapest: UK Department for International Development.

Erondu, C., &Oladejo, A. (2015). Social Services Provision and Community Development in Nigeria. Research on Humanities and Social Services, 5(10), 112-115.

International LabourOrganistion (ILO), (2012). Global Employment Trends for Youth 2012."

National Bureau of Statistics, (2012). 'The Nigerian Poverty Profile 2010 report', Abuja, Nigeria.

Nwosu, O.C. And Ugwuerua, E.(2014). Analysis of Subsidy and Re-Investment Programme (Sure-P) and Youth Empowerment in Nigeria 2012-2014. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 9(12),* 25-32.

Odiji, O., Nwoke, O., and Adeseke, A (2016). The YouWinEntrepreneurshipProgramme and National Development in Nigeria. International *Journal of Economic Development Research and Investment, 7(1). pp. 15-16*

Olaniyi, F.O. and Aroge, S.T. (2014). Poverty Alleviation Strategies in Nigeria: The Missing Link of Adult Education. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 5(23), pp. 25-27.

Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment (SURE) Programme Document (2011). National Planning Commission Abuja.

Umar, S.U. (2015). Women and Poverty in Nigeria: Agenda for Poverty Eradication, *DevelopingCountry Studies*, 5(3), 122-126.

Kumolu, C. (2014, September 14). When SURE-P Saves Mother and Child. The Vanguard News. http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/09/14/when-sure-p-saves-mother-and-child.html.