



Value Orientation And Poverty Alleviation Policies For National Development In Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Every society has a specific characteristic of its people that distinguish the inhabitants from other society. The Nigeria value system reflects on beliefs, standards and principles about the rights and wrongs in the society. Value dictates the choices that individual makes and in turn influences the behavior in the society. The value system of any human society determined the level of development too. Like most aspects of culture, the value system is non-material. The Nigerian traditional values system before colonialism reflects on dignity of labor, patriotism to one's community, courage and self reliance. It is therefore imperative to draw the flashlight on the orientation of the value system vis-à-vis the decadence in the society to curb the menace. This is obvious and necessary as values lay foundation for priorities and prevalent attachment to cultures and experiences hence cause an encroachment on how we live, think and react to situation.

Keywords: Poverty alleviation, Value orientation, self alliance

INTRODUCTION

Value orientation is one of the most important features or characteristics of personality, attitude and social reality of human beings. In other words, it has significant impact on all aspects of human activities for alleviation of poverty. This implies that the concept is a subsystem of consciousness that are recognized as strategic goals in life and general worldview of attitudes and behavioral exhibitions (Schunk, Pearce, 2012; Sandri, 2013). Determination of value orientations and alleviation of poverty implies individual and group commitment to certain universal goals as a means of life-activity that is vital and inevitable in the space of global millennium challenges. By implication, value orientation is synonymous with ethical and moral principle that is universally accepted by the generality of the society or large group of people living in a particular district and has from a long usage obtained the force of law.

In other development, poverty is a global problem that affects socio-economic and political aspects of lives across the globe. Poverty is most peculiar in developing countries of Latin America, Asia, Africa and Nigeria specifically. Studies revealed that Nigeria is the richest and most populated country in Sub-Saharan Africa with an estimated 170 million people, but the alarming magnitude of poverty in the country has reached a worrisome dimension as ignorance, unemployment, malnutrition, malady and inadequate access to credit scheme are apparent among the citizens (Bakare & Edozie, 2015) cited in (Umar, Mohamad, and Ratnaria, 2016).

Many factors were identified in literatures as responsible for the failures of the poverty reduction programs in the country. These include: inadequate political will to provide holistic approach to the policy on poverty reduction, inconsistency in the macroeconomic policies, political instability, especially during the military era, corruption, inadequate effective coordination and harmonization among the three tiers of government, politicization of poverty alleviation programs and lack of targeted settings at the ministries or agencies responsible for the implementation of the programs as well as exclusion of the targeted poor geographical environment during agenda setting (Jacob & Onwughalu, 2015). All efforts to tackle poverty through various strategies yielded insignificant results. All indicators attested that in spite of the huge resources invested in combating the phenomenon were unsuccessful.

Consequently, for innovation and dynamic attitudinal behavior to ascertain expectations and needs of the society, value orientation becomes an essential tool for alleviation of poverty in Nigeria. Inadvertently, it has to be the process of systematic training in order to transfer knowledge and skills necessary for societal values.

Value orientation plays a crucial role not only in the formation of personality, but also serves as specific valuable benchmark for every human activity. The state of the society and the dynamic changes to a large extent depend on the extent of conscience and attitude of the people to embrace a specific skill necessary for self alliance.

Statement of the Problem

Value orientation is an important feature of human being, a characteristic that expresses meaningful attitude to the social reality. This system determines the motivation of human behavior and its significant impact on all aspects of activities. The problems of value orientations is that its occupy an important and central position in philosophy, sociology, psychology, pedagogies respectively hence making certain activities more stressful and more complex in nature. In this case there are varieties of values that need to be brought to focus for its utility but because of human nature and its value judgments in different order, initiation of value orientation therefore become more problematic with its imposing challenges. The study therefore intends to examine value orientation and poverty alleviation policies for national development in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine value orientation and poverty alleviation policies for national development in Nigeria. Specially, the objectives reflect on: issues of value orientation, review of poverty alleviation programmes and its challenges.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Various scholars of diverse disciplines have tried to explore the concept of poverty reduction and by extension empowerment as it connects personal and social life of the individuals and societies at the spectrum of micro and macro levels. Sociologists have particularly taken it as a challenge to explain such connectivity. The Meta-theory of empowerment developed by Elisheva Seedam and translated by Flantz (1997) cited in Adam (2014) drew inspiration from the interdisciplinary and multidimensional theory particularly 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 or achieving better control over the environment as well as 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. In other words, the theory of empowerment attempts to convincingly integrate the micro and macro levels in order to make clear the interrelations among individual, community and professional empowerment.

Concept of Poverty Alleviation

Zupi (2007) stated that poverty has been seen as a dynamic process rather than a static phenomenon, one that captures the various forms of deprivation in the well-being of the nation. It 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. The concept of poverty is also linked to distribution in terms of economic distance that is inequality. However, it is argued that distribution alone cannot identify the ability to achieve a decent level of living. Distribution must be regarded as an important correlation but different concept to poverty. As a general rule, a better distribution will be more pro-poor but opposed the view that poverty and inequality are correlated. Castel (1996) defines poverty as a static or dynamic concept. The definition of poverty as a cycle projects with its dynamic nature of marginalization and social exclusion has remained indisputable.

Issues of Value Orientation for Poverty Orientation

Value re-orientation is simply a re-evaluation and re-assessment of a particular issues, events and situation for restitution. It is to check value-worth and quality that meets the need of the individuals and the society. For instance, there is a common experience and idea that education has gone off-course in Nigeria and the values expected has lost hence it needs to be repositioned. This implies that there is need to redeem education in Nigeria through value re-orientation that will create an avenue to lessen the space of poverty. Orientation is to bring back the lost values in the system of education in Nigeria. A periodic evaluation of our societal norms or values will help to keep the system on track. The mere mention of value orientation depicts that the value expected to be infused into our lives as an ethical behavior and for actual emancipation from the poverty devastation is not the reality on ground. Value orientation is to make moribund activities functional again, in terms of knowledge and skills for national development.

Value-orientation impinges on cultural behavior, tendency for the revamping our discrepancies in our work-life, behavioral tendency in our community, mode of interaction and valuation of dignity of labor, capacity to embrace job responsibility, elimination of adversity towards religious bigotry, ethnicity and discrimination based on the tribalism. These are the indices for national economic and other positive developments.

Thus, advocating for Value orientation is an affirmation that our ways of life known in the past has eroded down. Therefore, there is need to develop a strategy and means of returning to value based attitude for alleviation of the poverty. Three major components of value orientations are: inputs into the system, expected outcomes and ultimate outcomes. This implies that everyone has taken value-based inputs into the system. The values have to be those that would bring development and advancement of in the economic development. This is mandatory because there are expected outcomes from every person who live in a community or society such as: patriotism, loyalty, politeness, kindness, tolerance, acceptance, courage, friendliness, trustworthy and dependability. As conceived by Ikonne (2012) some of the expected outcomes also reflects on competence, diligence, discipline, orderliness, integrity, selflessness, cooperation, interest in development, growth and advancement.

Furthermore, value-orientation is expected to produce men and women of high esteem and understanding of what their society holds as an ethic. Different people hold different values in a particular behavior or thing, but the society expects value that will make every member of the society more functional and productive. More so, the nation in turn expects its educational system to turn out products that are knowledgeable, skillful and contribute to national growth. Value is the worth education offers to its learners.

The significance of value orientation is observable and measured in terms of economic growth, health improvement and employment as well as general improvement in all aspects of life of the individuals, communities and larger societies. Value education in this category depicts more than pursuing a certain aspect of national development. It is wholesome and requires harmonious development of the physical, mental, and spiritual powers.

Review of Poverty Alleviation Programs in Nigeria

Different interventionist programs have been established for the alleviation of poverty. The high incidence of poverty has made poverty alleviation intervention plans fundamental. The programme therefore has always been initiated and focused on growth, revamping and reconstruct the economy (Mustapha, 2014).

The Fourth National Development Plan appeared to be precise in the specification of objectives that are associated with poverty reduction hence, emphasizing increase in real income of the average citizen as well as reduction of income inequality. During this era, many of the programs were put in place by the government either wholly or in association with international agencies.

The policies basically includes: Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE), Green Revolution, Low Cost Housing, River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA), National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), Agricultural Development Program (ADP), Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Strategic Grains Reserves Program (SGRP),

Rural Electrification Scheme (RES) and Rural Banking Program (RBP) (Chukwuemeka, 2009). Most of these programs were designed to take care of such objectives as employment generation, enhancing agricultural output and income, and stemming the tide of rural – urban migration, which no doubt affected poverty reduction.

Another strategic approach was the initiation of National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP). The program serve as a central coordination point for all anti-poverty efforts from the local government level to the national level and the programme was executed with the sole purpose of eradicating absolute poverty. According to Elumilade, Asaolu and Adereti (2006), NAPEP has been structured to integrate four sectoral schemes which include: Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS) and Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS).

On the whole, these schemes were designed to spearhead government's ambitious program of eradicating absolute poverty with a take-off grant of N6 billion approved for it in 2001. The difference between NAPEP and past poverty reduction agencies is that it is not a sector project implementation agency but a coordinating facility that ensures that the core poverty eradication Ministries were effective. It would only intervene when necessary, under its secondary mandate which gives it the right to provide complementary assistance to the implementing ministries and parastatals nationwide. Although, NAPEP appears to be well crafted, but the prevalence of poverty in Nigeria and the various dimensions it has taken is on the increase.

Another is the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) that rest on four major strategies. First, it aims at reforming government institutions by fighting corruption, ensuring transparency and promoting rule of law and strict enforcement of contracts. Another strategy is to grow the private sector as the engine of growth and wealth creation, employment generation and poverty reduction. Third, it seeks to implement a social charter with emphasis on people's welfare, health, education, employment, poverty reduction, empowerment, security, and participation. The fourth key strategy is value reorientation (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004).

NEEDS has its equivalent at the state and local government levels hence tag as: State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (LEEDS) respectively . The implementation also stresses collaboration and coordination between the federal and state governments, donor agencies, the private sector, civil society, NGOs and other stakeholders. As a home-grown strategy, NEEDS has been described as the Nigerian version of the Millennium Development Goals.

Challenges of Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria

Worldwide, more than one billion people live in abject poverty and about 70 percent of Nigerians are poor, it is based on this development that the Federal, States, local Governments, and Non-governmental organizations in Nigeria. After the Structural Adjustment Program, various policies were devised to eradicate poverty, but certain political, social, religious, economic and cultural barriers crippled these efforts and therefore, poverty remains a serious social evil in the Country. Therefore the menace of poverty is a known fact as this has resulted to malnutrition, ignorance, and inadequate access to credit services, unemployment, youth gang and low life expectancy. These programs had in turn yielded fruitless results due to several reasons:-

Politics of poverty alleviation: One of the main reasons for the failure of poverty alleviation programs is the policy instability and frequent launching of new programs. Studies have indicated that policies in Nigeria are either imported or superimposed from international donor agencies, namely, the World Bank, international Monetary etc (Dauda, 2016). The paradox is that those saddled with the duty of implementation are non-poor and holders of political power. Therefore, other reasons for the malfunctions of these programs are political instability, inadequate policy continuity. For instance, in 2007, the government launched a program called the Seven Point Agenda purposely to address food security, wealth creation, provision of energy and power, transportation, security, land reforms and education but did not achieve any remarkable success (Abiuro & Adefeso, 2016).

Corruption and mismanagement of resources devastated the fund allocated for these programs. There were persistent wasteful public investment and pitiable policy initiatives on poverty reduction and inequality. Corruption has been observed to be a significant factor leading to increased crime rate and unemployment in Nigeria. Social evils in the aspects of violence, terrorism, insurgencies, communal and inter-religious conflicts are very prevalent. Other reasons for unsuccessful poverty alleviation strategies include the presents of unrest in the Niger Delta and youth uprising.

Economic factors also contributed to this problem due to fall in the prices of petroleum products which is the country's main sources of revenue. The country experiences budget deficits to finance the fight against poverty. In addition the high population growth experienced in the country with about 173 million people, inadequate skills and vocational education policies also contributed to failures of these policies (Olotu, Salami, & Akeremale, 2015). These conditions are further aggravated by the poor condition of public infrastructure which hampers the implementation of poverty alleviation programs in the country. Moreover, this has also led non diversification of the economy and a neglect of Agriculture which provides employment for over 70 percent of rural dwellers in Nigeria.

Further reasons that contributed to the failure of poverty alleviation strategies in Nigeria is inadequate coordination and collaborations between the government, private sector and civil society organizations. The preceding policies on poverty reduction approaches in Nigeria were weakened due to predominance initiated, designed and implemented by the government as inputs from other non-public sectors are neglected (Oshewolo, 2010).

Empirical Studies

Bello et al, (2010) cited in Osmond (2015) examines poverty situation in Nigeria by employing the data of economic growth and millennium development goals (MDGs) expenditure. The methodology employed was panel data analysis consisting of pooled model, fixed-effects, random-effects and weighted least square. The results revealed that, a unit increase in per capita GDP led to 0.6 percent increase in poverty. Similarly, a unit increase in MDG expenditure resulted in 11.56 units increase in relative poverty in the pooled model. The study concluded that economic growth and MDG spending has not substantially reduced poverty over the sample period.

Atoloye (1997) in the study strategy for growth-led poverty alleviation in Nigeria, asserts that rapid and sustained economic growth utilizing a new industrial strategy calls for proficient use of the natural advantages of modern infrastructure, which further serves as a poverty reducing strategy, noting that economic growth can only progress in a stable macroeconomic environment and with the right combination of factors of production. According to the study, economic growth cannot be sustained if it gives rise to trade deficit that cannot be financed. Thus, poverty becomes accentuated when current resources are being used to finance obligations. The study tries to establish link between heavily indebted countries and high poverty level, suggesting further that income that would have been spent on the provision of basic infrastructure are used to service external debts.

Maduagwu (2000) in the study alleviating poverty in Nigeria were of the view that both foreign and domestic investment will enhance economic growth and development, but other essentials factors are required to achieve the goal of economic growth and development such as rule of law, and provision of infrastructure. The study stressed that rule of law is essential because it ensures life and personal security. It also provides a stable framework of rights and obligations which can help to reduce political risks to investors and to cut down transportation costs. According to the study, business does not thrive in an environment of unchecked abuses of political power, unchecked violence by security personnel, and unchecked corruption. Corroborating 1997, World Development report which concluded that no market can exist without effective property rights, and that effective property rights depends on fulfilling the following three conditions; protection from theft, violence and other acts of perditions; protection from arbitrary government actions ranging from unpredictable, ad hoc regulations to outright corruption that disrupt business activities and a reasonable fair and predictable judiciary.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study, it was concluded that value orientation is a veritable medium of initiating ideas, knowledge and skills that will revamp our economic measures. In other words, individual ethical and behavioral tendencies have to be repositioned through orientation. This implies that everyone has to understand the value-based inputs that can be infused into the system. The values have to be those that would bring development and advancement in the economic development for alleviation of poverty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- National Orientation Agency should embark on re-orientation campaign and enlightenment on the effect of debased values in the country.
- There should be collaboration between government and universities on the best practical approaches to alleviate poverty in Nigeria.
- The programmes should target poverty-ridden local communities where the challenges are enormous.
- There should be proper demographic data so that the beneficiaries will be those initiated for the programme.
- Attention should be given to continuous preservation of the traditional values and practices.

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