

# New Partnership for Africa's Development and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *The situation in Nigeria is worrisome when the rate per capita income, illiteracy and standard of living of most Nigerians remain very low. The narrative of poverty has over the decades, remained one of the endemic obstacles to the social wellbeing of the people of Africa - undermining their happiness, social peace, unity, development and general progress. As such, this study, examines NEPAD towards ensuring sustainable development in Nigeria. It employed causal design, utilising documentary evidence as a method of data collection and was analysed qualitatively. The study summarised that due to the excruciating effect of poverty in Africa, especially Nigeria, the emergence of NEPAD is seen as a desired key that will unlock the problems. Thus, it discovered that the adoption of NEPAD's strategy has not done much in promoting sustainable development in Nigeria. It thus, recommends that the organization must embark on poverty alleviation programmes with full records and physical evidences of activities in skill acquisition, financial empowerment and production to show poverty alleviation proofs. Also, NEPAD needs to be restructured in a manner that every fund meant for it, whether national or international, enters its account.*

**Keywords:** Poverty, NEPAD, Development, Nigeria, Partnership

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty has over the decades, remained one of the endemic obstacles to the social wellbeing of the people of Africa - undermining their happiness, social peace, unity, development and general progress. Consequently, leaders of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) saw the need for a common vision and committed cooperation among member states as a way to tackle problems associated with poverty and development in the continent. They realised the pressing responsibility to eradicate poverty and place African countries on a path of sustainable growth and development. For them, the need to participate actively in the world economy and body politics is of paramount importance and to achieve this, African integration and partnership with the outside world is apt.

In this direction, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), during its 37th Summit in July 2001, formally adopted the strategic framework document that merged the Millennium Partnership for Africa Recovering Programme (MAP) and the OMEGA Plans for Africa's Development to establish New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) which was ratified by the African Union (AU) in 2002 (Department of International Relations and Cooperation, 2004). Thus, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a socio-economic programme of the African Union (AU) designed to address challenges facing the African continent - issues such as the escalating poverty levels, underdevelopment and the continued marginalization of Africa in the global arena which needed a new radical intervention were emphasized. Spearheaded by African leaders, NEPAD aimed at developing a new vision that would guarantee Africa's renewal in order to (a) eradicate poverty (b) place African countries both individually and collectively on a path of sustainable growth and development (c) halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy and (d) accelerate the empowerment of women (Department of International Relations and Cooperation, 2004).

It is on this note that Agbu (2005) concurs that NEPAD is a comprehensive and integrated initiative for the revival of Africa through a constructive partnership between Africans themselves and between Africa and the world. NEPAD is anchored on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalized world, having the primary objectives to eradicate poverty, promote sustainable growth and development; integrate Africa in the world economy, and accelerate the girl child education and empowerment of women. The underlying principles were good governance, democracy, human rights and conflict resolution; and the recognition that maintenance of these standards are fundamental to the creation of an environment conducive to investment and long-term economic growth. NEPAD seeks to attract increased investment and capital flows and funding, providing an African-owned framework for development as a foundation for partnership at regional and international levels. Despite the above aims/objectives and strategies of NEPAD, poverty remains an obstacle in Africa, in reality.

The situation in Nigeria is worrisome when the rate per capita income, illiteracy and standard of living of most Nigerians remain very low. In some cases, these development yardsticks are in the retrogressive direction resulting in underdevelopment. Increase in inflation has contributed to the poverty status also most Nigerians are unable to have or acquire the usual basic needs due to Naira's loss of value or devaluation of naira which has for some decades now remained degraded. NEPAD Nigeria may have claimed some

achievements but the questions on the lips of most NEPAD evaluators are, “why has poverty continued despite NEPAD’s claimed achievements? Why are these achievements elusive in visibility and unable to eradicate or alleviate poverty from a realistic point of view? Why are Nigerians still very poor to the extent that migration for greener pastures among Nigerians to Europe, America and even some African countries is on the increase? To that extent, this study examined the role of NEPAD in ensuring sustainable development in Nigeria.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

**Development:** According to Rodney (1972, p.9) Development in human society is a many-sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being...A society develops economically as its members’ increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment. This capacity for dealing with the environment is dependent on the extent to which they understand the laws of nature (science), on the extent to which they put that understanding into practise by devising tools (technology), and on the manner in which work is organised. Taking a long-term view, it can be said that there has been constant economic development within human society since the origin to win a living from nature.

On another note Rosekerley (2016) notes that development is a tri-dimensional concept. It has a utilitarian or consummatory dimension, which connotes increase in the quality of usable items available to man in the society. It also has a behavioural or rational dimension when it defines the nature of the relation among man in the society. To him, development is the combination of mental and social changes among the population, which decides to increase its real and global products, cumulatively, and in a sustainable manner development is a long participatory process of social change in the society whose objective is the material and social progress of the majority of population through a better understanding of their environment (Rosekerley, 2016).

Development is a term, which is not to be limited to mean economic development, economic welfare or material wellbeing; development in general includes improvement in economic, social and political aspects of the society The dimensional aspect of development is the institutional or structural and legal framework, which circumscribes the behaviour of men, and streamlines their relationships, which they individually or collectively seek to gain greater access to material things of value in the society. Fundamentally, development is therefore made of three components (Lubaale, 2015).

- The control of economic resources for the benefit of all
- The use of cultural values to promote growth, pride and dignity
- The liberation of individual groups from the stronghold of material imperialism.

Chavismen (1984) views development as the process of societal advancement, where improvements in the wellbeing of people are generated through strong partnerships between all sectors, corporate bodies and other groups in the society. It involves economic, socio-economic and political issues and pervades all aspects of social life. When we talk of sustainable development, it’s a situation where basic operating structures and processes that would ensure the continuous development of a nation have been established and are working efficiently.

In this regard, all societies have shown the capacity for independently increasing their ability to live a more satisfactory life through exploitation of the resources of nature. The fact that human society is organised in-group necessitates that the process of material improvement and societal progress can only be achieved through collective effort, hard work and perseverance. This is true of Africa, because we were developing along our own way, we were producing guns- Awka made through blacksmithing, we fabricate tools, we were even refining oil in our local technology, we fabricate tools, we built war weapons, for example, Biafrans weapon of mass destruction also known as Ogbunigwe-flying rockets etc.; but with our contact with the white, everything became a fluke chasing after western technology (kearney, 1972).

In essence, strengthening people’s capacity to determine their own values and to organise themselves to act on these, is the basis of development. To that Nwoye (2000, p.40) opines that development is essentially about women and men becoming empowered to bring about positive changes in their lives, about personal growth together with public action; about both the process and the outcome of challenging poverty, oppression and discrimination and about the realization of human potential through social and economic justice. Above all, it is about the process of transforming lives and transforming societies along positive course of action.

Therefore, the question is not whether people participate in development, but how these can further be improved. It is on this that Rostow (1960), suggests five stages that can see an under developed society to an industrial stage, they include:

- a. Traditional society
- b. Precondition for take-off
- c. Take off stage
- d. Drive to maturity
- e. Age of High mass consumption

For a clearer comprehension of the above, Rostow was of the view that in a traditional society, production functions are limited and the pre take off stage is where the society is getting ready to take off. It is a society in transition. In a take off stage, the society is becoming economically independent as independent industries begin to emerge.

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One of the principal tricks of development necessary for a take-off was the mobilization of domestic and foreign savings in order to generate sufficient investment to accelerate economic growth. This is what drives a society to maturity. At this stage, a society develops the capacity to apply the fruits of modern science within its boundaries in order to attain a stage of high mass consumption, which invariably is a welfare society. It is on this that Abah (2000) x-rays development at the societal level to imply the following:

- a. Increased capacity to regulate internal and external relations;
- b. Increase in ability to guard national independence,
- c. Self-sufficiency in food production;
- d. High level of employment;
- e. Equalization in the distribution of Social Science;
- f. Self-reliance (in the area of domestic products);
- g. Independent control of the economy;
- h. Equalization of Economic opportunities;
- i. Ability to solve internal problems;
- j. Greater share of international Trade and
- k. Education that promotes skill manpower.

In sum, development means to improve, to make programs, change for the better, high income or better standard of living, increase in the quality of goals and services available to the people, the quality of the social lives and material advancement, which enables them to gain greater control of their environments. It is also a dynamic and continuous process, which appears in all segments.

**Concern of Nepad in Nigeria:** The New partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is yet another initiative by African Heads of States and Governments intended to reverse for good, the beggary and highly embarrassing image of the continent through a sustained engagement with the developed world. The initiative seeks a new global partnership based on shared responsibility and mutual interest through the instrumentality of political democracy and economic development on the continent. It is concerned to institute a people centred development via market-oriented economies capable of holding their own ground into a global village. NEPAD is in search of building blocks to lay the foundation for a new politico-economic order, one able to permanently reverse the old cliché that "Africa is rich but Africans are poor" (Amuwo, 2009). He argued that NEPAD needs to consider in the first instance Africa's relations with the west in terms of slave trade, colonialism and neo colonialism. He stressed that these are the factors which helped to weaken the strength of Africa in the comity of nations.

Today, going by the report on the poverty profile of Nigeria as presented by the senior special adviser to the president Dr Magnus Kpakol, the total of 4.4 million people of the south-eastern Nigeria's population are living on less than 1\$ per day. This represents the 26.7% of the entire population of the zone ([www.thenigerianvoice.com](http://www.thenigerianvoice.com)).

NEPAD therefore has resolved to undertake the following measures to curb the menace of poverty in Africa and Nigeria in particular.

- ❖ To provide a focused leadership by prioritizing poverty reduction in all the programmes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, as well as national macroeconomics and sectoral policies.
- ❖ To give special attention to reduction of poverty among women.
- ❖ To ensure empowerment of the poor with poverty reduction strategies.
- ❖ To support existing poverty reduction initiatives at the multilateral level, such as the comprehensive development framework of the World Bank and the poverty reduction strategy approach linked to the debt relief initiatives for highly indebted poor countries (HIPCS).

In his own case, Simbine (2002) noted that NEPAD's poverty eradication mechanism in Nigeria could work efficiently if there is the involvement of the women of the zone. He maintained that the NEPAD document amongst its long-term goals seeks to promote the role of women in social and economic development but fails to explicitly show an understanding of the peculiarity of the issues confronting Nigerian women and how it hopes to achieve the onerous task of women development. NEPAD has failed to observe that its authenticity and sustenance depends amongst others on the acknowledgement of the role of women in shaping and moulding the future of Nigeria's populace. He further stated that it is imperative that the gender question relative to the women of the zone should be exhaustively discussed and analysed for astute development. This is when one considers the role of women in development. Nwanolue (2004) noted that the formation of NEPAD reflected that it was not civil society driven but political. He argued that most Africans and Nigerians in particular were not made part of the formation therefore categorized the formation and activities as NEPAD for Africa and not NEPAD by Africa. He sees NEPAD for Africa simply as a situation whereby the western capitalist economies have formulated sharp imperialistic measures and sold it to Africa, to help perpetuate the dependence of Africa on their economy. He lamented that the industrialized partners have refused to finance the NEPAD initiative therefore making it impossible for NEPAD to thrive in Nigeria. This was exemplified when we understand that over 70 percent of African leaders were not informed about the formation of NEPAD (Obi & Obikeze, 2005). It is worthy of note here that the focus areas of NEPAD, which include governance, peace, security, economic development, and human resources development, are all consistent with the programmes of the Canadian International Development Agencies (CIDA). As a result, one will look at it as an alien agenda. All these made some African scholars

look at it with indifference and wondered how it could make a notable impact in eradication of poverty in Nigeria. The indifference therefore has dealt a very serious blow on the actualization of the NEPAD dreams.

### 3. NEPAD AND THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

**Poor sensitization:** It was discovered that even up till date, the knowledge of NEPAD is still vague to the people, when NEPAD has lived above half of its life span; the knowledge of NEPAD among the people is still very little even among the elite of the zone (NEPAD dialogue, 2005). How then could people benefit from something they know nothing about? A research conducted by Guardian newspaper in 2002 proved this fact. According to the research which reflected all the six geopolitical zones of the country, 50% of the respondents said that they are not aware of the existence of NEPAD, 35.5% claimed to have heard about NEPAD, while 14.1 percent declined comment with 0.4% invalid response (Obi, 2002, p.9) The dearth of knowledge about NEPAD in Nigeria is worrisome, knowing that former president Obasanjo of Nigeria was the foremost salesman of NEPAD. Though, the survey was conducted in 2002, but today in Nigeria, the story is still the same as most people have not become aware of NEPAD and their efforts in poverty eradication especially in Nigeria.

**Lack of proper participation:** NEPAD has not been able to mobilize participation from the stakeholders, the non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the civil society organizations. This is why most stakeholders looked at NEPAD and its activities with disregard. They were not able also to work closely with relevant organs for support and assistance.

**Lack of political will:** The states of the South East were unable to integrate the NEPAD programmes into their state development policies. For instance, the government of Anambra state in pursuance of ANIDS programmes has not incorporated NEPAD programmes into her action plans. The same is with other states of the South East (Uduka, 2005).

**Lack of funds:** It has been noted earlier that what NEPAD expected from donor agencies for its annual programme was US \$64 billion but this fund was not forthcoming. The individual countries now have the option of funding NEPAD in their respective countries. Financing of NEPAD was also very vague in the NEPAD document. Part of this proposition as was explained by Ogunkelu (2002) was that “individual country’s budget should fund programmes in line with NEPAD initiatives while these countries integrate it. In other words, the funding is not collective funding, and not foreign assistance. The financial weight of implementing NEPAD programmes now becomes another burden to the states in Nigeria. One now wonders how the state could invest their budget in NEPAD while they have not effectively paid their staff and financed their annual budgets. Poor funding has greatly militated against the smooth operation of NEPAD activities in southeast Nigeria.

**Donor Scepticism:** Most of the expected donors to the NEPAD fund were reluctant to make good their financial commitments to NEPAD. This was the major reason why the NEPAD operators were looking forward to the states for the provision of fund for its operation. This according to Nwonwu (2006, p.19) was a factor of African’s past record of financial mismanagement. In the light of the new agenda, the development partners formulated alternatives to loans and grants and adopted different policy instruments. As a risk minimizing measure, they resorted to the use of trade and investment to foster sustainable development through deregulation, removal of controls and creating a favourable investment climate. Concurrently, the developed countries continued to subsidize their farmers. These subsidies make African products uncompetitive in the international commodity market.

Talbot (2002) argues that the support of US farm bills to farmers’ amounts to US \$180 billion over three years, while the EU’S annual support to farmers’ amounts to US \$100 billion. The United States subsidizes each farmer by an average of US \$21,000 per annum while European Union provides about US \$16,000 per farmer; this is many times the annual per capital income of a farmer in Africa. This single action on subsidies makes Africans to be suspicious of the kind of partnership which Africa could get from the developed countries.

### 4. A DRIVE TOWARDS ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

NEPAD is also basically seen as an African-led strategy for sustainable development and poverty reduction in Africa. It recognizes Africa’s responsibility to create conditions for development by ending conflict, improving economic and political governance and strengthening regional integration. However, NEPAD is premised on the principles of good governance as a basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and economic development (Olaniyan, 2005). It is also premised on African ownership, African control of the projects and programmes, with African leaders accepting openly and unequivocally that they will play their part in ending poverty and bringing about sustainable development in the continent (African Forum,2003). The partnership is very important in the growing of the African Union (AU) and the mechanism for review which provides the means of monitoring progress towards good economic, cooperation and political government in Africa including challenges (Kusa, 2006).

The overriding goal of NEPAD is to end Africa’s poverty and underdevelopment and to place the continent on a path of durable growth and development. NEPAD also embraces the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted in September 2000 by all governments of the world as a blueprint for building a better world in the 21st century (Petros,2006). These include the following:

- a. Reduction by half of the population of Africans living in poverty by the year 2015.
- b. Enrolment of all children of school age in primary schools by 2015.



- c. Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women by eliminating gender disparities in the enrolment in primary and secondary education by 2005.
- d. Reduction of infant and child mortality ratios by two-thirds by 2015.
- e. Reduction of maternal mortality ratios by three-quarters by 2015.
- f. Access for all who need reproductive health services by 2015.
- g. Implementation of national strategies for sustainable development by 2005 in order to reverse the loss of environmental resources by 2015.

NEPAD aims at complementing its food security and production effort through the promotion of various programmes which is aimed at wiping out poverty in Africa. One pertinent question is; to what extent has NEPAD been affected by Nigeria's environment? This question takes us to a review of the areas of NEPAD plan of action which it believed could fight poverty in the southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Since its inauguration in Africa in 2001 and its domestication in Nigeria in 2003 respectively, NEPAD has pursued her agenda using some principles. The review helps us understand how NEPAD has been affected by the environment and how the poor has benefited from NEPAD in the geo-political zone.

The programme clusters of NEPAD have been grouped into five:

- a. Political, economic and corporate governance
- b. Agriculture, Trade and market access
- c. Environment, population and urbanization
- d. Human resources development, science and technology
- e. Health and infrastructural development

Our most important area of concentration is agriculture, trade and market access, environment, population and urbanization. Other areas are human resource development, science and technology; and health and infrastructural development. These areas, impact directly on the poverty situation of the people. The component of each of the selected clusters were being expanded and elaborated while many initiatives have been developed from them. In addition, various action plans have been prepared in the specific sectors, based on the clusters, while implementation of the projects in some of the action plans have commenced. Noteworthy is the fact that most of these activities are not visible in the states in Nigeria, which is the area of our concentration not minding that the zone presented a very good ground for the actualization of NEPAD goals.

To effectively eradicate poverty therefore, the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) established a formula. This formula which is tagged "Quick Wins" has a lot of policies and programmes which a country or organization should pursue if such country or organization is desirous of fighting poverty. The Quick wins include.

1. Eliminating school and uniform fees for children of the poor.
2. Providing poor farmers with affordable soil nutrients and nitrogen.
3. Regular annual de-worming of school children in affected areas to enhance educational and health outcomes.
4. Training villages in health, farming and infrastructure to ensure basic expertise and service in rural communities.
5. Tackling the menace of malaria in affected areas, to improve the quality of health and education among children.
6. Eliminating user fees for basic health services.
7. Expanding sex education, including HIV/AIDS awareness.
8. Funding to finance community-based slum upgrading and embarking on building idle public land for low cost housing.
9. Providing access to electricity, water, sanitation for all hospital, schools, and other social service institutions, using off grid diesel generator, solar panels and other technologies.
10. Reforming and or expanding laws to protect the disadvantaged members of the society, especially the poor women and girls etc.
11. Establishing or strengthening of the office of the adviser to the president or prime minister on science and technology to consolidate the role of science in National Policy making.
12. Involving women in formulating and monitoring MDG-based poverty reduction strategies.
13. Community level involving in planting trees to provide soil nutrients fuel woods, shade, fodder etc. (Millennium Project, 2005).

However, aside from the quick wins", the UN millennium project has streamlined the quick wins into seven investments and policy clusters which is the key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG'S) and identified them as "best practices" to poverty eradication. These include;

1. Rural development, to increase food output and income through increased investment to increased rural access to transport, information and reliable communications, safe drinking water, sanitation, modern energy and reliable water for agriculture.
2. Urban development, to prompted jobs, upgraded slums, and developed alternatives to new slum formations, for example through supporting poor people's own efforts to build decent new housing. To include local government, NGOs, women organizations and other civil groups in forming policies, to promote ownership.
3. Improving health system, to ensure universal access to essential services.
4. Improving the quality of education and human capacity, by ensuring universal primary, expanded post primary and expanded higher education.
5. Promoting gender equality, by investing to overcome pervasive gender bias.
6. Environmental conservation, by investing in improved resource management to reduce environmental degradation.
7. Building national capacities in science, technology and innovation. (Garba, 2006, p.8)

These are the sure steps towards genuine poverty eradication in any country as identified by the Millennium Project 2005. The ability of NEPAD to adhere to the "quick wins and best practices"; will to a large extent indicate that her seriousness in poverty eradication is not in doubt.

It is from the organogram that one can easily see that NEPAD-Nigeria with APRM seeks to move from national to state then to local level in a bid to addressing the effects of poverty. This has manifested through various ways which include:

- Promote acquisition of skills
- Human development
- Capacity building
- Development of Infrastructure and ICT
- Health
- Transport
- Sanitation
- Urbanization

The implication of the above is that there is nothing NEPAD does not touch; everything concerning life is what NEPAD stands for. Even the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS) and the rest of them are all part of NEPAD. They are domesticated arms of NEPAD. Anything that will reduce poverty in our region is what NEPAD has come to promote. Interestingly, world bodies have signed on into the covenant as a platform for meaningful development and for them to partner with NEPAD in developing our area.

The essence of the above is to critically address the various manifestations and forms poverty has taken. In other words, it would be germane to look at the various approaches taken by NEPAD to reduce the scourge of poverty in Africa, Nigeria and South Africa in particular. Thus, it is by this conceptual premise that NEPAD as a philosophy and a strategy revolves around four key elements:

- The restoration and strengthening of the state in Africa;
- Strengthening inter-African cooperation anew;
- Restoring and maintaining a functional partnership with the industrialised countries and multilateral institutions (which they dominate)
- Building and maintaining a functional partnership with the industrialized countries and multilateral institution, (which they dominate).

To that end, it requires that African states should be Afro-centric about NEPAD in the first instance. At a minimum, this requires credible internal African efforts to restore the African states.

##### 5. NEPAD'S EFFORTS TOWARDS PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

An analysis into the MDG quick wins' formula has indicated that NEPAD has not adopted quality programmes which could effectively eradicate poverty. A focus group discussion using the formula put together by the United Nation's (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDG) as the sure ways of poverty eradication revealed this. Discussion made with the selected target group revealed that NEPAD had not really used the respective formula. The discussion which took the units of the formula beat by beat revealed as follows:

1. Elimination of school and uniform fees for the children of the poor: There is a widespread of private, mission and public schools in the areas of the study but NEPAD has not been able to eliminate school fees or uniform fee for any school under the study

let alone eliminating uniform fees. The availability of Primary and Secondary school education is common in the area but the individual families cater for their children and ward. There is no record of subsidy in the fees payable by the primary and secondary schools. It is worthy of note that it is only on the current regime of the Governor of Imo State, His Excellency Rochas Okoroocha that free primary and secondary education was introduced in Imo State. Anambra and Enugu States respectively still pay for their children in the nursery, primary and secondary schools.

It is interesting to note that most primary and secondary schools in the area receive their lessons under trees and in open fields based on the dilapidation in these schools. The result of this is that children of school age are seen loitering the street and claiming that they are out of school as their parents cannot afford school fees.

2. Provision of credit facility, affordable soil nutrients and Nitrogen to farmers: This research has shown that the Southeast geopolitical zone has a population that is mostly agrarian. It was discovered that most of the farmers engage in subsistence farming. The most important challenge being faced by these farmers is the lack of credit facility and improved farm input. The availability of fertilizer and other farm inputs like improved seedlings is not assured to these farmers. NEPAD as an agent of poverty eradication has not done anything towards the provision of these farm incentives. Lack of credit facility to farmers has even made the farmers to continue with subsistence farming. This made it impossible for farmers to escape from the shackles of poverty and hunger.

Olagunju (2005) argued that the agricultural sector is an engine room for sustainable growth of Nigerian economics, but NEPAD neglected agriculture as a poverty fighter in southeast Nigeria.

High population growth rate which leads to increase in the demand for agricultural products, natural and human disasters such as drought, floods and land degradation as well as civil conflict in some parts of Africa contribute to this alarming situation and accounts for high imports and dependence on food aid, food insecurity and poverty (NEPAD, 2004). NEPAD is aware of this fact but still neglects agriculture.

Cassava has been identified as a very powerful poverty fighter by driving down the price of food to millions of consumers. In Nigeria for instance, during the diffusion of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), high yielding Tropic Manix Selection (TMS) Cassava variety from 1984-1992, inflation adjusted cassava prices which fell sharply by 40% from the price level (Iheke, 2008) Nigeria is the largest producer of cassava in the world. Its production is currently put at about 34 metric tons a year (FAO, 2008). Cassava is mainly produced by subsistence farmers in rural communities and is primarily produced for food especially in the form of Garri, Fufu with little or no use in the agro-business sector as an individual raw material. The crop can be processed into several secondary product of industrial values such as chips, pellets, flour adhesives, alcohol and starch, which are essential raw materials in the livestock, feed, alcohol, ethanol, textile, confectionary, wood, food and soft drink industries. Cassava is also tradable in the international markets. Cassava is noted as the cheapest source of calories of all staple foods in Africa, because it is easy to grow (Iheke, 2008).

The international institute for tropical Agriculture (IITA, 2002) noted that cassava is widely grown in Africa by large numbers of small holders across several ecological zones because it is a robust crop that can be grown under stress conditions. The Nigeria experience illustrates measures that will drive down the cost of production, harvesting, processing, and marketing of cassava product. This will achieve great things in transforming cassava to generate income for millions of farmers, processors, traders, and industrialists while cutting the price of millions of consumers. NEPAD'S policy towards this direction would have been ideal in eradicating poverty in southeast Nigeria surprisingly, nothing was done in this direction. Opportunities provided by Agriculture in the areas of food, employment, income, raw materials, foreign exchange and protection of ecosystem is therefore neglected. The NEPAD's inability to invest in it as an alternative to poverty eradication amounts to gross inadequacy. One will therefore wonder at this point what instrument that is available to NEPAD for poverty eradication in the southeast of Nigeria and what the poor has gained from the initiative.

3. Regular annual de-worming of school children to enhance educational and health outcome: Research has shown that NEPAD has not found it necessary to de-worm children. This has greatly hampered educational and healthy life attainment for children in this zone. In the southeast geopolitical zone, Guinea worm has been a problem to most communities especially Ebonyi State, but guinea worm eradication has not made the list of NEPAD's priority.

4. Training villages in health, farming and infrastructure to ensure basic expertise and service in rural communities: It has not been recorded that NEPAD has any vocational training institute in Nigeria. It has not even partnered with the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). This is a specialized governmental organization whose goal is to train unemployed youths in skill acquisition. It has not partnered with any group to conduct this training. It is when these youths are trained that NEPAD can rightly say that it has engaged in human resources development.

5. Eliminating user fee of all health basic facility and tackling malaria to improve quality of health and education among children: In all the health care facilities in the zone, user fee has not been eliminated and NEPAD is not in the fight against malaria. It is the Government, and the WHO that are in partnership to eradicate the menace of malaria in the zone. This they do through the distribution of insecticide treated mosquito nets.

6. Provision of electricity, water, sanitation for all hospitals, schools and other social service institutions using off grid diesel generator, solar panel and other technologies: The problem of power supply has continued to cripple many businesses in the Southeast

but nothing has been done to remedy the situation. It is true that the government through its reform agenda has promised to increase the power generation but NEPAD has not done anything in this direction in the zone.

7. Expansion of sex education, HIV/AIDS awareness, reforming and expanding laws to protect the disadvantaged members of the society especially women, girls and children: In Nigeria, the problem of child trafficking is still prevalent, child labour and other cultural practices which are against good conscience and justice still exist. NEPAD has no record of her activities which is aimed at controlling these anomalies.

8. Community level involvement in tree planting to prevent land degradation, provide soil nutrients, fuel wood, shade, fodder etc. NEPAD has no programme of tree planting. There is no gain saying the fact that soil erosion has been the problem of all the states of the Southeast zone. Trees can be planted to prevent soil erosion, provide nutrient to the soil, and provide medicine especially through the medicinal trees. It also provides fuel and fodder for the animals but NEPAD has not done anything to this direction. The research went further to check whether NEPAD has applied the principles of best practices in their bid to eradicate poverty in the Southeast geopolitical zone.

#### 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to findings of the study, the researcher concludes that NEPAD Nigeria is a good initiative not viable in organisation, funding and leadership. Coordinators are made appendages to state governors as their Special Assistants. This does not give room for independent implementation of NEPAD programmes. The organization has moderate number of staff that may not be considered inadequate because of its activities. The organization's problems are foundational. It started from poor legal background resulting in dependency, embezzlement, inadequate funding, inactivity and general inefficiency. As such, the study recommends that:

1. The organization must embark on poverty alleviation programmes that start and accomplish with full records and physical evidences of activities in skill acquisition, financial empowerment and production to show poverty alleviation proofs.
2. NEPAD needs to be restructured in a manner every fund meant for it, whether national or international, enters its account.
3. National Headquarters of NEPAD should look into the problem of Nigeria. They seem not to be conversant with the true situation of things there.

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