

New Partnership for Africa's Development and Poverty Eradication in the Southeast of Nigeria, 2015-2020

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Abstract: *This study is centred on the impact of NEPAD and the quest to tackle poverty in Nigeria's Southeast geopolitical zone. There is no doubt that poverty is a dangerous weapon that hinders growth and development of a society. It has become a worrisome situation to the extent that series of attempts were made to put it under control. The study adopted a mixed design (involving historical and survey methods) and a documentary form of data collection. It was analysed using content analysis. It employed dependency theory as a frame of analysis. In response to the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that NEPAD Nigeria is a good initiative but not viable in organisation, funding, and leadership. The partnership is not viable as a roadmap for poverty alleviation in the Southeast. The study thus recommends that for the organization to be viable for poverty alleviation, state coordinators must receive funds and carry out programmes aimed at alleviating poverty in their localities. They need to be independent of state governors to function maximally.*

Keywords: Development, Initiative, Partnership, Poverty, Southeast

I. INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, the incidence of poverty has continued to rise despite the abundance of human and material resources. It has become a worrisome situation to the extent that series of attempts were made to put it under control. This study is centred on the impact of NEPAD and the quest to tackle poverty in Nigeria's Southeast geopolitical zone. There is no doubt that poverty is a dangerous weapon that hinders growth and development of a society. According to the National Bureau of Statistics in (2010) sixty percent (60%) of Nigerians are wallowing in abject and absolute poverty against fifty-five percent (55%) recorded in 2004. Worse still, the BBC News of (February 13, 2010) explains that the poverty level in Nigeria has risen to over seventy percent. The implication is that 100 million Nigerians despite economic growth now live on less than \$1 a day (<http://nbbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17015873>).

Despite Africa's human and material resources, it has remained a continent that harbours most of the poor countries of the world. Africa is the home of 34 out of 50 Least Developed Countries in the world and vast majority of the people live on less than \$200 dollars a year (Lawson, 2008). Furthermore, it is germane to note that 340 million Africans, which is half of the population, live on less than US\$1 per day (NBS, 2010). The precarious nature of life in Africa is indicated by the prevalence of poverty. Mortality rate of children under the ages of five (5) is 140 per 1000 and life expectancy at birth is only fifty-four (54) years. Fifty-eight (54) percent of African populations have access to safe water while illiteracy level for people over 15 years of age is 41 percent. Eighteen (18) mainline telephones are available for 1000 people (Burka; 2004). The fact that poverty is posing a great challenge to Africa has led the leaders of Africa into

searching for a new route which could lead Africa to development through poverty reduction. To address the scourge, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) was formed in 2001.

The essence of NEPAD is to provide the basic fulcrum that can guarantee Africa the basic structure through which development could be attained. This was a western ideology directed towards ensuring that Africa receives a face lift in the mist of all odds. Thus, to drive the programme forward, African leaders met and adopted a checkmating policy through African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The design was to aid in promoting the basic dreams of Africa surmounting the grip of poverty which has held it down over the centuries (Demé, 2006, p.14). In other words, it is incumbent on the states to provide the basic parameter on how to evaluate the process of development in Africa. How far this body has gone in addressing the scourge of poverty in Africa is a major task this study seeks to tackle. Thus, the study sets out to evaluate NEPAD programmes in the Southeast of Nigeria as an initiative and viable roadmap for alleviation of poverty.

II. METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL EXPOSITIONS

This study adopted mixed design involving both historical and survey method to interrogate the variables under study which include: X, independent and Y, dependent variables respectively. The historical method examined the narratives and outcomes while the survey made use of interview series to generate data and responses. This study is focused on the impact of NEPAD and the quest to tackle poverty in Nigeria's Southeast geopolitical zone. Documentary data were utilised and analysed using deductive argument and logic.

Theoretically, the study utilized dependency theory as the framework of analysis. Prebisch argued that developing countries exported primary commodities to developed countries who then manufactured products out of those commodities and sold back to them. He contended that the value added to raw materials through manufacturing, always cost more than the primary commodity used to create those products. He, therefore, concluded that poorer countries under this economic relations, could never earn enough from their exports to pay for their imports. The theory is of the view that resources flow from the periphery of poor and underdeveloped states to the wealthy states, which enriches the latter at the expense of the former. Dependency theory further explained that the economies of Third World societies are integrated into western capitalist systems leading to dependency and exploitation.

III. POVERTY AS A NARRATIVE IN NIGERIA – NEPAD AS A STRATEGY

NEPAD in the South-East has agricultural production and skill acquisition as expected means of alleviating poverty but lack physical structures and funding for actualization (Olagunju, 2005). Agriculture, the study argued, was the foundation for sustainable development in Nigeria but it lacked attention in the South-East. There are varieties of food crops growing in the region. Cassava, rice, palm products, and yam are good exportable crops but they were not given mechanized attention to suit export and enhance export diversification and industrialization. For instance, South-East farmers mainly grow cassava for subsistence or food purposes rather than as exportable products (Iheke, 2008). Poverty cannot be alleviated in the South-East and Nigeria in general without agricultural growth (Ijeoma, 2004). Even agricultural growth is not enough guarantee for such reduction because a primary product without industrial support is likely to experience under profitability and product waste. The present nature of NEPAD’s existence in the South-East is not compliant with achieving its goals. Based on the above facts, attempt to reduce or alleviate poverty in the South-East or anywhere in Nigeria should be a very serious exercise that enjoys maximum commitments and sincerity of purpose by all stakeholders for the objectives to be achieved. Major stakeholders of development in the region and Nigeria in general must take the bull by the horn or take radical steps in developmental strides. Agriculture provides great opportunities in food, employment, income, raw materials, foreign exchange and the protection of the ecosystem (Ezeamu, 2013). South-East is a fertile environment for agricultural production in terms of soil types, weather and crop-survival.

The United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s) identified best practices for poverty alleviation (Millennium Project, 2005):

1. Rural development to increase food output and income through increased investment to increased rural access to transport, information and reliable communication, safe drinking water, sanitation, modern energy, and reliable water for agriculture.
2. Urban development to promote jobs, upgrade sums, and develop alternative to new slum formations for example through supporting poor people’s own efforts to build decent new housing. To include local government, NGPOs, women organisations 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 conversation, by investing in improved resource management to reduce environmental degradation.
7. Building national capacities in science, technology and innovation (Garba, 2006 p8).

NEPAD in the South-East is far from the above ‘quick win’ and ‘best practice’ and very far from alleviating poverty. For an individual to be free from poverty he has to earn reasonable income that can take care of his basic needs. Income is only valuable to the extent it can increase the ability of an individual to pay his bills (Setaya, 1989). To this end, for NEPAD to alleviate poverty, it must increase the income of the targeted population who in turn takes care of their basic needs.

IV. PROBLEMS THAT UNDERMINED NEPAD EFFORT ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN NIGERIA

Despite what NEPAD may have claimed to have achieved in terms of alleviating poverty, evidence one ground shows that the partnership is facing major obstacles in the discharge of its duties. This sub chapter examined major hindrances that undermined NEPAD efforts to alleviate poverty in the Southeast. They are: (a) legal handicap (b) Financial Dependence and (c) lack of quality personnel. The three formed the basis for other resultant challenges facing the partnership.

Fig 1: Interview Responses to the Challenges that Undermined NEPAD Activities in the Southeast

Respondents	Legal handicap	Financial Dependence	Lack of Quality Personnel
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A	Legally handicapped	Highly dependent on the president, governors & donors	Need to improve manpower quality
B	Legally handicapped	Highly dependent on the president, governors & donors	Need for cooperation from civil society groups & other stakeholders
C	Legally handicapped	Highly dependent on the president, governors & donors	Lack of professionals & civil society
D	Legally handicapped	Highly dependent on the president, governors & donors.	Staff strength needs to be improved.
E	Legally handicapped	Highly dependent on the president, governors & donors	Lacks manpower due to poor funding.
F	Legally handicapped	Highly dependent on the president, governors & donors	Staff is demoralized.
G	Legally handicapped	Highly dependent on the president, governors & donors	No money to improve staff strength.
H	Legally handicapped	Highly dependent on the president, governors & donors	Staff not encouraged due to poor funding.
I	Legally handicapped	Solely dependent on governments and donors	No coordination of staff due to poor funding

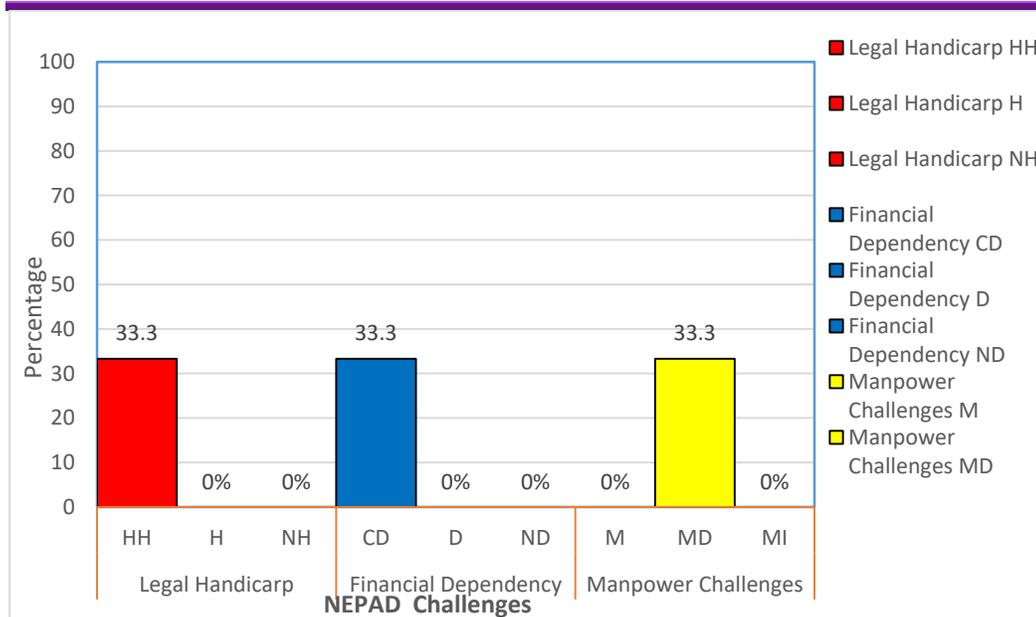
Source: Created by the researcher, 2018

Fig. 2: Summaries of Interview Responses to the Challenges that Undermined NEPAD Activities in the Southeast

Legal Handicap		Financial Dependency		Manpower Challenges		Total
Highly handicapped	9	Completely dependent	9	Major	0	18
Handicapped	0	Dependent	0	Moderate	9	9
Not handicapped	0	Not dependent	0	Minor	0	0
Total	9	Total	9	Total	9	27

Source: The researcher, 2018

Chart 1



HH – Highly handicapped, H – Handicapped, NH – Not handicapped, CD – Completely dependent
 D – Dependent, ND – Not dependent, M – Major, MD – Moderate, MI – Minor

Legal Handicap

NEPAD was adopted at the 37th Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2001 in Lusaka, Zambia and ratified by member states in 2002. The partnership is based on the above legal framework to operate in Nigeria because Nigeria is a bonafide member of the African Union (AU) and a major initiator of NEPAD. Apart from the above instrument establishing NEPAD, Nigeria did not make further legal provisions to make the partnership an Act of National Assembly to give it more impetus for self-sustenance as a development outfit. Rather, Nigerian Government left the agency at the mercy of the Presidency and willful donors for its operation. As such, NEPAD, Nigeria suffers weak legal standing and operates based on the dictates of the incumbent president. It cannot act independently from the Presidency and this makes it vulnerable and a victim of presidential politics. Though investigation shows that a bill to improve its legal and financial status is in the Senate for deliberation but until the bill is passed, signed into law and implemented, legal and financial conditions of the partnership is in a sorry state. A body with such serious developmental responsibility should enjoy reasonable autonomy to function effectively. The involvement of governors at the state level further subjugated the partnership at the grassroots to the whims and caprices of the state government and their agents. This deprived the state coordinators the powers to utilize the fund. Funds allocated to the partnership through state government do not get to the coordinators especially now that they are also made Special Assistants to the governors on NEPAD. This made the governors to see the coordinators as their errand boys instead of coordinators of such important international developmental organization.

9 out of 9 of the interview respondents held that the organization was highly handicapped in terms of law establishing it. ‘Handicap’ scored zero while ‘not handicapped’ scored zero. The result is a demonstration of high degree of financial handicap undermining the operations of the partnership.

Financial Dependence

NEPAD’s dependence on governments and foreign donors to finance its operations do not go down well with timing and meeting up with targeted goals. The body’s operations are depended on responses from the president, the state governor and donors. Though the agency prepares a budget of what it tends to do for the year and submits same to the presidency, there is no direct funding from Federal Allocation Account. Rather, its budget is attached to the Presidency and any allocation to that effect goes to the Presidency from where the agency is financed. The agency does not have the authority to question how the President allocates the fund – whether what is allocated to it is commensurate with the approved budget and fund released to the presidency for NEPAD activities. One of the respondents explained that change of government is a major setback to NEPAD operations. It is not surprising because a new president may not want to continue from where his predecessor stopped. This is particularly if the new president or his representatives are corrupt. It is worse when the government belongs to a different political party. The above situation can also breed internal corruption and mismanagement of fund released.

9 out of 9 interview respondents as shown on fig 8a (table) and 8b (multiple bar chart) informed the researcher that the

organization is completely dependent on governments and foreign donors as it does not generate funds internally. 'Dependent' and 'not dependent' scored zero each as no response was done in their favour.

Lack of Quality Personnel

Sub chapter 4.1.1 above showed the organizational structure of NEPAD, yet manpower in such structure in the Southeast is inadequate in number, funding and quality. All interview respondents faulted the state of the staff. They indicated that the partnership lacks professionals and civil society to strengthen its manpower. Though national staff sometimes go for seminars and workshops, such trainings were not extended to the Southeast staff to enable them acquire the necessary knowledge for effective performance of their duties. NEPAD needs professionals in different aspects of its operations but such professionals are lacking in NEPAD's work force. The few available ones cannot provide enough manpower needed for effective achievements of the objectives and goals of the partnership. The organization needs quality personnel that are capable of defending it against embezzlement of funds meant for the organization.

This challenge according to the interview resulted from lack of funds; otherwise, the organization could have employed the required manpower and improved itself. With the present financial status, such actions are neither possible nor sustainable. In line with the above view, 9 out of 9 interview respondents agreed that manpower challenge was moderate. 'Major' and 'minor' scored zero each. This showed that there were moderate manpower problems the organization could have handled if funding were made available to it.

V. IMPACT OF NEPAD ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTHEAST NIGERIA

Poverty has been the concern of the government at all levels. NEPAD wanted to eradicate poverty but are mobilizing every resource to make this dream a reality. With strong and meaningful institutional framework this could be achieved, knowing that poverty is tackled multi-dimensionally. For instance, Nigeria had initiated several poverty eradication programs hitherto the government of the former president Obasanjo. Despite the plethora of poverty alleviation programmes which past governments had initiated and implemented, by 1999 when the Obasanjo administration came to power, World Bank's report indicated that Nigeria's Human Development Index (HDI) was only 0.416 and about 70% of the population was vegetating below the bread line (Ugwu, 2003, p.1). He argued that as the poverty eradication measures of the federal government were unable to make much positive impact on poverty, he was optimistic that NEPAD could eradicate poverty efficiently in the southeast geopolitical zone looking at the scope of its operation.

When one considers the Nigeria's poverty profile, it is easily noticed, that there is a pronounced regional difference in poverty rates. In 1980, 38 percent, 36 percent, and 32 percent of the people in the Northwest, Northeast and North central lived below moderate poverty line respectively. According to the report, only about 13 percent of the people of Southeast, Southwest, and South-South respectively lived below the poverty line in 1980.

By 1985, poverty has become pervasive in all zones with the north zone maintaining a higher share of poverty. Head count indexes varied from 30.4 percent in the south east to 54.9 percent in the north east. By 1996 also, poverty became intensified but varied its distribution among zones. Poverty headcount varied from 68 percent in the Northwest and South-East respectively to 67 percent in each of North East, South West and South-South. The least was North Central with 66 percent (Ogwumike, 2002) This shows that the South East is not even safe haven.

According to the APRM country Review Report (2008), a review of the various MDGs implementation processes across Nigeria suggests that poverty remains an endemic problem in Nigeria. Per capita income fell significantly to about US \$300 between 1990 and 2000, but rose to US\$752 in 2007 and this situation made no difference as 53.6 percent of Nigeria still suffers hunger, diseases and poverty. Today 54.4 percent of the country's population, representing 76,161,972 million Nigerians is relatively poor while 35 percent of them are extremely poor (National Bureau of Statistics Abuja, 2008). It is worthy of note that among the population that live in poverty, 78% of them live in rural areas while about 67% of them are women. Among these people are the rural dwellers of the Southeast geo political zone of Nigeria. In 2019, 40% of 201 million Nigeria still live below the country's poverty line of 137,430 Naira (\$381.75) per year (Worldbank 2020). The situation in the southeast Nigeria is worrisome considering the report on poverty level by Nigeria bureau of statistics (NBS). The southeast performed badly and below expectation, an estimated 43% if 50 million southeast citizens are classified as very poor (Business day 2020).

Critical factors responsible for these are rapid population growth or over population, use of inappropriate technology, low growth rate of the economy, prevalence of inappropriate resource allocation, particularly in public sector and low rate of investments. The interaction of these variables placed a large segment of the population, into a vicious cycle of poverty. The available statistics placed Nigeria amongst the 25 poorest countries in the world (Garba, 2006, p.1).

However, according to Maduagwu (2000) poverty can be reduced drastically if the prevailing social and political and economic conditions are conducive for investment. The 1999 World Bank report prompted the government to review the existing poverty alleviation schemes with the view to harmonizing them and improving on them (Olumilade,

Asaolu, & Adereti 2006, p.8). In pursuance to this poverty eradication objective, NEPAD noted that one of the major challenges facing Africa and indeed Nigeria has been to tackle hunger and malnutrition which is a factor of poverty. About one third of the region's population is undernourished, with a large number of them being the young children, who lack micronutrients such as iron vitamin A, iodine and folic acid in their diet. The young suffer from lack of nutrition and anaemia, while the same problem in women contributes significantly to maternal morbidity and mortality and to the low birth weight of infants (NEPAD, 2004, p.14). This has not made them take giant efforts in tackling poverty.

Micronutrient deficiency can cause irreversible damage to health such as blindness, contribute to maternal death during childbirth and to child death as a result of common childhood illnesses. In most cases, micronutrient deficiencies cause child weakness, undermining education and productivity with increasing susceptibility to illness. This creates a vicious cycle of malnutrition, disease and educational underdevelopment.

Ending micronutrient deficiency therefore, can provide the foundation for the elimination of poverty and for sustainable economic development in Africa and in Nigeria's southeast in particular. 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 the Nigeria's southeast environment?

This question takes us to a review of the areas of NEPAD's plan of action which it believed could fight poverty in 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 resources development, science and technology; and health and infrastructure 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 and in some of the action plans have commenced. Noteworthy is that most of this activities have not come across the states of the southeast, which is the area of our concentration not minding that the zone presented a very good ground for the actualization of NEPAD goals.

African socio economic development is mainly agrarian and about 70% of the labour force (and 80% of its poor people) are directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture, people in rural areas depends on agriculture for their livelihood (NEPAD, 2004). Therefore, agriculture still remains the main stay of the economy of the states of the south east geopolitical zone if Nigeria, yet current estimate indicates that some 28% of the population is hungry (Iheke, 2008, p.1).

Olagunju (2005) pointed out that NEPAD mentioned agriculture in principle but has little practical structure in place to actualize their dream. He argued that the agricultural sector is an engine room for sustainable growth of Nigerian economy, but NEPAD neglected agriculture as a poverty fighter in southeast Nigeria. He maintained that the high population growth rate which leads to increase in the demand for agricultural products, natural and human disasters such as floods and land degradation as well as communal conflict in some part of the zone contribute to this alarming situation and this has continued to perpetuate the vicious circle of poverty.

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 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 of southeast Nigeria 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 products 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 products which will be great 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, despite opportunities presented to NEPAD in this direction; this opportunity is yet to be fully tapped.

Ijeoma (2004) noted that between 1998 and 2000, more than a quarter of the population of Africa was chronically undernourished (202 million people) in sub-Saharan Africa, it is expected that the number of undernourished people will increase from 180 million in 1995/97 to 184 million by 2015. This stands in sharp contrast to NEPAD's goals of eradicating hunger and poverty by 2015. Poverty reduction in Nigeria and indeed southeast Nigeria will not be possible without rapid agricultural growth, Ijeoma noted. Nigeria spends billions of dollars, importing sugar for soft drinks and feed stock (Anuforo, 2005, p.13). He noted that this can only change when NEPAD has decided to take the bull by the horn and take a revolutionary step at the production of sugar/glucose from cassava. Looking at the abundant opportunities provided by Agriculture in the areas of food, employment, income, raw materials, foreign exchange and protection of the ecosystem, NEPAD's inability to invest more in it as an alternative to poverty eradication, is capable of slowing down the pace of NEPAD's actualization of the poverty eradication objectives. It should be pointed out here that the environment of southeast geopolitical zone presented a good ground for the actualization of NEPAD's poverty eradication objectives.

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 the 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 to include HIV/AIDS awareness.
8. Funding to finance community-based slum upgrading and embark on building on idle public lands for low cost housing.

9. Providing access to electricity, water, sanitation for all hospitals, 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 the office of the adviser to the presidency 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 on 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, upgrade slums, and develop alternative 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 group 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.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

AND

From the above study, it shows that there is a persistent increase in poverty level despite NEPAD's acclaimed responsibility to alleviate poverty in the Southeast of Nigeria, this was the major trigger of this study. The researcher also found out that leadership challenges associated with the organisation was as a result of lack of autonomy because of the above dependence. Otherwise, the organization could improve itself if it has autonomy to finance itself. In response to findings of the study, the researcher concluded that NEPAD Nigeria is a good initiative not viable in organisation, funding and leadership. The partnership is not viable as a roadmap for poverty alleviation in the Southeast. Only Imo State has identifiable office. Only Imo State in Owerri embarked on training of persons for skill acquisition yet, they were unable to empower the trainees to engage on meaningful productive activities. No agricultural production credited to NEPAD is traceable anywhere in the Southeast. Though some respondents claimed to have trained some people but there is no physical or documented evidence to support their claims.

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