

# Achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): An Assessment of Poverty Eradication in Nigeria

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## Abstract

*This paper focuses on the reasons behind Africa's failure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), specifically in relation to poverty eradication efforts in Nigeria. The MDGs were set by the United Nations in 2000 with the aim of addressing global development challenges by 2015. This analysis examines multiple dimensions that have impeded Nigeria's progress in poverty eradication. Firstly, it explores the nation's economic challenges, including dependence on non-diversified sectors, weak infrastructure, corruption, and inadequate governance. These factors have hindered economic growth and hindered the implementation of poverty reduction strategies. Secondly, social factors such as high population growth, gender inequality, and inadequate access to education and healthcare services have undermined efforts to alleviate poverty in Nigeria. Poverty and inequality have persisted due to insufficient investment in human capital development and insufficient access to basic social services. Additionally, political factors have played a detrimental role in Nigeria's struggle to achieve the MDGs. Inadequate political will, unstable governance, and ineffective policymaking have hindered the successful implementation of poverty eradication initiatives. To address these challenges and improve Nigeria's prospects for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is a need for comprehensive and coordinated efforts at all levels. In conclusion, the failure of Africa, particularly Nigeria, to achieve the MDGs within the set timeframe is attributed to a combination of economic, social, political, and external factors. Overcoming these challenges requires sustained commitment, collaboration, and evidence-based policies aimed at promoting inclusive growth, reducing poverty, and achieving sustainable development in Nigeria and across the African continent.*

**Key words:** Poverty, Poverty Eradication and Millennium Development Goals

## Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were a set of eight international development goals established by the United Nations in 2000 with the aim of improving the lives of people around the world by 2015. One of the key goals of the MDGs was the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, which was targeted through various measures such as ensuring universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

Nigeria, as a member state of the United Nations, committed to achieving the MDGs and made efforts to implement policies and programs to address poverty and improve the living conditions of its people. Despite its status as Africa's largest economy and a major oil producer, Nigeria has faced significant challenges in eradicating poverty due to issues such as high levels of corruption, inadequate infrastructure, poor governance, and a growing population.

Poverty is a global phenomenon that affects continents, countries and people differently. Feels people at different depths and levels at different times and at different stages of life. There is no nation which is completely free from poverty. The main difference is its intensity and frequency phenomenon (Akeredolu, 2005). Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America currently are the highest level of poverty and thus the lowest socio-economic level of development, frequent violence, excessive unrest and low living standards (World Bank, 1996). But the high level of poverty in Nigeria, which has become endemic, is coming alarming (Aluko, 1995). Poverty has placed Nigeria in one of these undesirable positions in the poorest countries of the world (Anyawu, 2007), so no government, organization or community or a family can effectively survive without one poverty reduction strategy or another Nigeria is not known to lack such efforts; among the 25 poorest countries in the world (World Bank, 2002).

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have obtained remarkable political dedication and feature given upward push to a robust consensus that poverty eradication ought to be the principal purpose of global improvement efforts. Indeed, it's far now broadly believed that at its core, improvement ought to be approximately development of human well-being, elimination of hunger, disorder and advertising of efficient employment for all Mohammed, 2006). lend credence to the foregoing after they counseled that a nation's first aim ought to be to give up poverty and fulfill the personal wishes for all its residents in a manner with the intention to now no longer jeopardize the possibility for the destiny generations to reap the equal objective. While poverty is accelerating at a superb speed, development closer to minimizing the risk is at a sluggish pace. Implementation of the partnership desires has lagged, and considerable development is plain best in debt discount. Despite the pledge made on the G-eight summit in Gleneagles in 2005 to double resource to Africa with the aid of using 2010, disbursements to the vicinity expanded with the aid of using best 2 in step with cent among 2005 and 2006 (Mohammed, 2006). These disasters of implementation are frequently attributed to susceptible dedication or ownership, specifically at the a part of growing united states policymakers who supply poverty discount a decrease precedence than boosting boom or assembly ill-described partnership goals for donor countries (Edoh, 2003). As a member of the United Nations, Nigeria keyed into the MDGS and ultimately produced a coverage file known as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) to similarly see to the success of the millennium improvement desires.

### **Statement of Problem**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were a set of eight global development targets established by the United Nations in 2000, to be achieved by 2015. One of the key objectives was poverty eradication, which aimed to significantly reduce extreme poverty and hunger worldwide. However, Africa, specifically Nigeria, failed to achieve these goals within the specified timeframe.

The problem to be assessed is why Africa, with a particular focus on Nigeria, was unable to achieve the MDGs in eradicating poverty. Despite efforts made by various stakeholders, such as governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations, the poverty rate in Nigeria remains high. This problem raises several crucial questions such as

what were the underlying factors that hindered progress towards poverty eradication, what specific challenges did Nigeria face, and how effective were the strategies and interventions implemented to address poverty in the country.

### **Objective of the study**

The objective of this study is to assess achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in relation to poverty eradication. The study aims to identify the key factors and challenges that hindered Nigeria's progress towards poverty reduction and evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and strategies. The study seeks to provide insights and recommendations for future initiatives and interventions that can be adopted to address the persistent poverty issues in Nigeria and potentially in other African countries as well.

### **Literature and Theoretical Review**

#### **Poverty**

Poverty is a condition of being in dire need of basic social amenities of life which make human to be in better life. Therefore, poverty is about the absence of the basic necessities of life for any person or a human group. While insecurity is a state of being subject to danger, or vulnerability.

In recent times, there is concern over the growing state of insecurity couple with corruption, kidnapping, armed robberies, cattle rustling and soon etc. In spite of the abundant resources, Nigeria is wallowing in poverty, penury, disease, unemployment that always accrues to the state of insecurity in the country.

The recent crisis arising from religion-political is not unconnected with this general hypothesis. To that, there is need for extensive research to look into the causes of all these in order to find solution to those problems.

This is due to the fact many human beings see it in exclusive perspectives. This connotes the truth that what can be termed bad won't be visible as bad through the opposite human beings. (Onokerhoraye, 2001). This is measured both at least glide of actual earnings in keeping with capita, or as a package deal of fundamental desires which can be qualified. Social Scientists however understand the want for broadening the definition of poverty. To this end, Kankwenda (2003) defines poverty as: A multidimensional phenomena inspired through a extensive variety of factors, those encompass bad human beings loss of get right of entry to to earnings incomes and efficient sports and to crucial social services. Poverty has diverse manifestations, which include loss of Income and efficient sources enough to make sure sustainable livelihood; starvation and malnutrition, unwell health; restricted or loss of get right of entry to to training and different fundamental services, growth morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and insufficient housing; dangerous environments, social discriminations and exclusion. It is likewise characterised through a loss of participation in choice and in civil, social and cultural life (Edoh 2003:68). To Adejo (2006) poverty may be manifested in poverty of history, poverty of mind and poverty of ideology. In any case the disadvantaged are typically the bad. These are human beings of inadequate earnings, insufficient meals intake, lack fundamental healthcare, lack safe haven and secure ingesting water, bad environmental cleanliness, lack get right of entry to to fundamental training and skills, blind to essential human rights, and get right of entry to to information. These but constituted the project and attention of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Through the MDGs the arena has unraveled the ugliness of world poverty and the fundamental equipment with which it can be tackled as contained withinside the 8- factor objectives. It has additionally furnished extra access factor to interact governments on sustainable improvement problems. In addition, it has aroused nearby and worldwide interest

in the direction of human centre improvement. Nigeria like different nations is positive that with the implementation of MDGs, poverty must had been contained in 2015.

### **Poverty eradication**

Poverty eradication is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive approach to address its root causes and achieve sustainable development. When discussing Africa's failure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly in Nigeria, several key factors need to be considered in understanding the challenges faced in poverty eradication.

- i. **Governance and Political Instability:** In Nigeria, ineffective governance and political instability have hampered poverty eradication efforts. Corruption, weak institutions, and inconsistent policies have led to mismanagement of resources and hindered the implementation of poverty reduction strategies.
- ii. **Economic Inequality and Lack of Inclusive Growth:** Despite Nigeria's rich natural resources, there is a significant gap between the rich and poor. Unequal distribution of wealth, limited access to economic opportunities, and inadequate social safety nets contribute to the persistence of poverty.
- iii. **Conflict and Security Challenges:** Nigeria has faced various internal conflicts, such as Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast, which have disrupted economic activities, displaced populations, and hindered development efforts. These conflicts exacerbate poverty and hinder progress towards achieving the MDGs.
- iv. **Limited Investment in Human Capital:** Insufficient investment in education, healthcare, and social infrastructure has hindered poverty eradication efforts. A lack of access to quality education and healthcare perpetuates a cycle of poverty, limiting opportunities for individuals to escape their circumstances.
- v. **Environmental Challenges:** Nigeria, like many African countries, faces environmental issues such as climate change, deforestation, and land degradation. These challenges can adversely affect agricultural productivity, food security, and livelihoods, exacerbating poverty in rural areas.

### **Poverty Eradication in Nigeria**

Eradicating poverty in Nigeria is a complex and multi-faceted challenge that requires a comprehensive approach. To effectively address poverty in Nigeria, it is essential to focus on various factors such as improving access to quality education, creating economic opportunities, enhancing healthcare services, promoting gender equality, and implementing social safety nets for vulnerable populations.

Investing in education is crucial as it helps individuals acquire skills and knowledge needed to secure better-paying jobs and break the cycle of poverty. Providing vocational training programs and promoting entrepreneurship can also empower individuals to create their own livelihoods.

Additionally, improving healthcare services can enhance productivity and reduce healthcare-related expenses for individuals living in poverty. Promoting gender equality by ensuring equal access to resources and opportunities for women can contribute significantly to poverty eradication.

Implementing social safety nets such as cash transfer programs and food assistance can provide immediate relief to those living in poverty and help them meet their basic needs. Furthermore, promoting sustainable economic growth through investment in infrastructure,

agriculture, and small businesses can create employment opportunities and improve living standards for the population.

Addressing corruption, enhancing governance, and promoting transparency are also critical in creating an enabling environment for poverty eradication efforts to succeed. Collaboration between the government, civil society, private sector, and international partners is essential to effectively tackle poverty in Nigeria.

By adopting a holistic approach that addresses the various dimensions of poverty, Nigeria can make significant strides towards eradicating poverty and improving the well-being of its population.

**To address these factors and improve poverty eradication, it is crucial to focus on several key areas:**

- i. **Good Governance:** Strengthening governance structures, promoting transparency, and combating corruption are essential for effective poverty eradication strategies.
- ii. **Inclusive Economic Growth:** Implementing policies that promote inclusive growth, equitable distribution of resources, and opportunities for all segments of society is crucial. This includes investment in sectors that create jobs, fostering entrepreneurship, and improving access to financial services for marginalized communities.
- iii. **Conflict Resolution and Security:** Addressing security challenges through a comprehensive approach, including social, economic, and political initiatives, is vital to create a stable environment for poverty eradication efforts.
- iv. **Human Capital Development:** Allocating resources to improve access to quality education, healthcare, and social services is essential in breaking the cycle of poverty and enhancing the capacity of individuals to contribute to the country's development.
- v. **Environmental Sustainability:** Incorporating environmental considerations into poverty eradication strategies, promoting sustainable agriculture, and investing in renewable energy can help mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and protect vulnerable communities.

It is important to recognize that poverty eradication is a long-term endeavor that requires commitment, collaboration, and sustained efforts from governments, international organizations, civil society, and local communities. By addressing these key factors and implementing comprehensive strategies, Nigeria, and Africa as a whole, can make significant progress towards achieving poverty eradication.

### **Why has Nigeria failed to eradicate poverty?**

It is disheartening to note that the Nigerian government has not achieved these objectives of the policy document. Statistics show that Nigerians (especially the common man on the street) do not have access to clean drinking water, primary health care and the rate of unemployment is increasing day by day. This paints an abnormal picture of the failure of NEEDS as a poverty reduction policy. As part of the NEEDS policy, the government established the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) to address poverty issues. But since its inception, NAPEP had nothing tangible to show for its existence. NAPEP, an agency set up by the government to fight poverty through empowerment rather than focusing on its mission, is now under controversy. This prompted the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to initiate an inquiry into the performance of the agency since its inception (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2003). The general impression is that NAPEP has failed the country because poverty is still high. It was gathered that the agency received a total of 11.8 billion naira but has nothing to show for it (Edoh, 2003). Even local governments in

cooperation with state governments is not helping matters. There have been reported cases of misuse and dissipation of budget allocations meant to effectively address some of the problems arising from poverty in the country. The MDGs therefore could not solve Nigeria's poverty challenges, but many factors made them seriously difficult. Which made it very impossible to achieve those goals

### **Achievements of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were created to address various global challenges including poverty, education, gender equality, and healthcare. In Nigeria, significant progress was made towards achieving the MDGs.

1. **Poverty Reduction:** Nigeria made strides in reducing poverty rates, with a notable decrease in the percentage of people living in extreme poverty.
2. **Education:** Efforts were made to improve access to education for all, leading to an increase in primary school enrollment rates and improvements in literacy rates.
3. **Gender Equality:** Progress was made in promoting gender equality, with initiatives to empower women and girls through education, economic opportunities, and legal reforms.
4. **Healthcare:** Advances were made in improving healthcare services, leading to decreased child mortality rates, increased access to healthcare facilities, and better management of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria.
5. **Sustainable Development:** Nigeria took steps towards environmental sustainability and economic growth, laying the foundation for long-term development.

While Nigeria made significant achievements in the MDGs, there were still challenges and areas needing improvement. The successes of the MDGs have laid the groundwork for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to build on the progress made and address the remaining challenges.

### **Theoretical Approach/Paradigm**

This paper is anchored on a major development paradigm known as “Grants action strategies on development”. Grant (1995) at the World Summit for Social Development stated that there is a very important need for organizations to translate words into deeds. The crucial factor in translating words into deeds has to do with planning, advocacy, and sustained efforts of many within government and without, who believe in the goals, and are ready to work to achieve them. He further declared that the question of implementation, of making declarations and resolutions (such as the Millennium Development Declarations), calls for the practical ways and means to translate such larger development consensus into a larger reality.

Grant identified development action strategies which can be applied to translate words into deeds to include:

- i. The breaking down of broad goals and objectives into doable and measurable propositions.
- ii. The securing and sustaining of the greatest possible political commitment at the highest possible political level
- iii. The development of expertise and resources of the United Nations and its agencies and of bilateral assistance programmes, in close support of agreed goals. This will include close monitoring of progress, followed up when necessary by increased support.

In the words of Grant, it is the doable propositions or goals that have been at the heart of development achievement; (in this case, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria).

### **Methodology**

Achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): an assessment of poverty Eradiation Nigeria it is crucial to consider several methodological aspects. The data collection method of this study uses secondary sources such as collected data National Statistics Office, National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), Central Bank Nigeria, library archive, magazines and Nigerian newspapers and from various collected data international research organizations such as the Global Poverty Ranking Index (GPRI), Human development index (HDI), multidimensional poverty (MPI), the World Bank and the United States United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

### **Results**

The achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is a significant global initiative aimed at addressing critical development challenges. In the case of Nigeria, assessing the progress made towards poverty eradication as outlined in the MDGs is crucial for understanding the country's socio-economic development.

To evaluate the impact of MDGs on poverty eradication in Nigeria, various indicators such as income levels, access to basic services, education, healthcare, and other socio-economic factors need to be analyzed. It is essential to assess whether the goals set under the MDGs have been met, what progress has been made, and identify any remaining challenges.

Key factors that can influence the success of poverty eradication efforts in Nigeria include government policies, institutional frameworks, resource allocation, international partnerships, and the active involvement of various stakeholders. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are essential to track progress, measure impact, and make necessary adjustments to strategies and interventions aimed at poverty reduction.

In summary, assessing the achievement of poverty eradication in Nigeria in the context of the Millennium Development Goals provides valuable insights into the country's progress towards sustainable development and highlights areas that require further attention and action.

### **Discussion of finding position**

There are several factors contributing to Africa's difficulties in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), specifically when it comes to poverty eradication in Nigeria. It is important to note that the MDGs, established by the United Nations in 2000, aimed to address poverty, education, health, and environmental sustainability by 2015. While progress has been made in some areas, Africa as a whole and Nigeria in particular have faced challenges in meeting these targets.

One of the key reasons for Africa's struggle with poverty eradication is the longstanding issue of governance. Many African countries, including Nigeria, have experienced political instability, corruption, and ineffective institutions. These factors hinder effective policy implementation and resource allocation, resulting in limited progress towards poverty reduction goals. The lack of good governance undermines the efficient use of resources and hampers the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs.

Additionally, economic challenges have played a significant role. Africa, including Nigeria, has faced a range of economic issues such as limited diversification, overdependence on

natural resources, and vulnerability to external shocks. These factors have resulted in inadequate job creation, income inequality, and limited access to economic opportunities for the majority of the population. Insufficient economic growth and development have hindered poverty reduction efforts.

Furthermore, social and environmental factors have contributed to the struggle in achieving the MDGs. In Nigeria, for example, factors such as rapid population growth, inadequate access to quality education and healthcare, gender inequality, and environmental degradation have all posed challenges to poverty eradication. These issues require comprehensive and sustainable solutions that address the root causes of poverty and empower marginalized communities.

International factors also play a role in Africa's difficulties in achieving the MDGs. Limited access to technology, foreign aid, and investment, as well as unfair trade practices, has hindered Africa's development efforts. Global economic and political systems often disadvantage African countries, making it harder for them to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

In conclusion, Africa's struggle to achieve the MDGs, specifically in poverty eradication in Nigeria; can be attributed to a combination of factors. These include governance challenges, economic constraints, social and environmental issues, and external factors. Addressing these obstacles requires transformative policies, improved governance, sustainable economic development, investment in human capital, and equitable global partnerships. Efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide an opportunity to build on the lessons learned from the MDGs and work towards a more inclusive and prosperous Africa.

### **Findings**

The achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria has shown some progress in addressing poverty eradication. Various findings indicate that there have been improvements in certain indicators related to poverty reduction, such as access to education, healthcare services, and overall living conditions. However, challenges still remain, particularly in regards to income inequality, unemployment rates, and regional disparities in development progress. It is essential for policymakers and stakeholders to continue monitoring and implementing strategies to further advance the goals of poverty eradication in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion**

Perhaps, no problem receives greater global attention today like poverty. In Nigeria poverty appears to be the greatest degrader of the Nigeria economy with serious economic and social consequences. Although several regimes had initiated several policy responses in the past to address the poverty scourge in Nigeria. These policies and efforts failed to yield the desired results of alleviating poverty because they were only declarative without concerted effort and lacked the required political will among several other reasons. Though the MDGs provide a platform for addressing the poverty issue once again, the situation from the Nigerian perspective indicates that there are still glaring constraints and challenges such as corruption, infrastructural inadequacies and others. Energy for instance that is required by industries which should be used to drive the economy is still unreliable, undependable, epileptic and in some cases non-existent, the inability of the government to address effectively the power sector problems certainly have negative consequential effect on the economy and on poverty reduction.

## **Recommendation**

Based on the assessment of poverty eradication in Nigeria and the reasons for Africa's failure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the following recommendations can be made:

- i. **Strengthening Governance and Institutional Capacity:** Enhance transparency, accountability, and good governance practices at all levels of government. This includes ensuring efficient and effective implementation of poverty reduction programs and policies.
- ii. **Targeted Poverty Alleviation Programs:** Implement targeted programs that address the specific needs and challenges faced by different regions and demographics within Nigeria. Such programs should focus on providing access to basic services, healthcare, education, and skills training to the most vulnerable groups.
- iii. **Enhancing Agriculture and Rural Development:** Invest in agricultural development and provide support to smallholder farmers. This should include improving access to credit, modern agricultural techniques, infrastructure, and markets. It is also important to promote diversification and value addition in the agricultural sector to create employment opportunities and reduce rural poverty.

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