

Assessing Sustainable Development Goals in Meeting Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria: *An In-depth Exploration of Nassarawa State*

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Abstract

The existence of poverty and inequality in Nassarawa State brings to fore the overarching demand on the government to deploy policies, plans and programmes that specifically target poverty reduction, close the inequality gap and generally improve the welfare and living standards of the citizenry. This study assesses Sustainable Development Goals in meeting poverty alleviation in Nigeria; with special reference to Nassarawa State. Using descriptive survey research design as the study methodology, primary and secondary sources of data were relied upon as questionnaire, and interview were used as primary instruments of data collections. Finding of this study revealed that the performance SDGs of the Nigerian economy during the twelve years of its Fourth Republic (May 2015-2024) is dissatisfying. The findings also indicate there is widespread feeling among policy makers and civil society that progress against poverty much has to be done by the Nigerian government for the SDGs be achieved. It is therefore recommended that there should be social inclusion, the commitment to future economic and technological progress under conditions of fairness, and equitable access to public services, and with the government counteracting social discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, and religion.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Poverty Alleviation Goal, Nassarawa State, Corruption, Discrimination.

Background of the study

Generally all over the world, issues relating to eradication of absolute poverty and hunger, reduction of infant and maternal mortality rates, achievement of universal primary education, promotion of gender equality and girl child education, combating of Human Immuno Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), malaria and other related diseases, enthronement of human rights and social justice, among others, have occupied a central position and the differences in approach among nations is a function of the varying socio-political and economic environments prevalent in those societies. These issues, when properly resolved and appropriate strategies adopted to make them feasible can bring about human development.

Human development in this situation is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potentials and bring about productive and creative lives in accordance with their needs and aspirations for the future (Omomowo, 2018; Ogunlana, 2019).

The above assertions imply that human development involves a process by which an individual or a society interacts with its environments (both physical and biological environments). This interaction results in the transformation of both the individual and his environment, producing a socially desirable enhancement, which benefits the entire society (Omoniyi, 2018). Thus, it aims at an unending improvement in the capacity of the individual and society to control the forces of nature as well as of humanity at large (Salihu and Gbolami, 2018; Abdulyakeen and Nurain, 2024). World leaders committed themselves to respecting “all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development” (Akpan & Isihak, 2020).

Nigeria, the most populous African country has more than 70 percent of its citizens living below poverty line. The Nigerian preliminary report on World Bank global consultation with the poor suggests the communities in Nigeria have a rich, complex and comprehensive experience of poverty, defining it using a range of material and non-material indicators. Increasingly, communities perceive poverty as an overwhelming denial of their right to a quality life that is enabling and empowering with characteristics of social exclusion, vulnerability, and insecurity (Akpan & Ishak, 2020), it is estimated by the United Nations that about 20% of African’s populations resides in Nigeria and that over 50% of African investments are in the country (Abdulyakeen, 2021).

Nigeria demographic and health survey (NDHS, 2023), attested to the contribution of poor nutrition and hunger on high toll rates of disability, morbidity and mortality in Nigeria. The body mass index also confirmed poor health indicator among women in relation to poor food intake. However, successive regimes in the country had rolled out various programs aimed at poverty alleviation, but these programs, despite the laudable objectives of their initiators were moribund by corrupt practice; some of the recent programs include DFRRI, FSN and most recently, poverty alleviation program. Given the poor socioeconomic conditions of the rural areas, one cannot overlook the dangers of poverty and the necessary need to reduce poverty which as a “monster” is affecting several millions of rural dwellers resulting in inequality, worsening economic conditions, lack of basic needs like education, electricity, and mass transit that are seen as luxury in the rural areas which gave rise to the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, the MDGs have no clear transformative vision because their major focus was towards alleviating the effect of poverty without capturing the required fundamentals in achieving a sustainable outcome, hence its replacement with SDGs, which are more inclusive and sustainable (Luna & Montaña, 2017). Thus, in 2015, the United Nation approved the 2030 sustainable development agenda to holistically address the social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainable development (Abraham & Pingali, 2017).

Nevertheless, despite the SDGs target year of 2030 which is fast approaching, in 2018 to date, Nigeria has overtaken India to become the country with the highest number of people living in extreme poverty (Akpan & Isihak, 2020). Hence, unless the country invests concerted efforts in combating poverty, achieving the SDGs in 2030 will be quite elusive 2030 sustainable development agenda to holistically address the social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainable development (Abraham & Pingali, 2017).

Statement of the Problem/Gap

The existence of poverty and inequality in Nassarawa State brings to fore the overarching demand on the government to deploy policies, plans and programmes that specifically target poverty reduction, close the inequality gap and generally improve the welfare and living standards of the citizenry. With proper planning and strategic efforts within the short-to-long term, these objectives can be achieved. This implies that much has to be done by the Nigerian government for the SDGs to be achieved. The performance of SDGs in the Nigerian economy during the nine years of its Fourth Republic (May 2015-2024) is dissatisfying. The annual average

growth of real GDP was estimated at approximately 3.5% while the importance of other sectors is quickly declining (Abdulyakeen, 2023). In specific term, the performance of the manufacturing sector is weak and fast declining while the rate of inflation increased from 6.6% in 2015 to 6.9% in 2000. It increased to 18.9% in 2001 but later stood at 14% in 2003 (Luna and Montano, 2017). Consequently, the level of gross external reserves remained relatively buoyant, growing from as low as \$5.4 billion in 1999 to \$9.4 in 2000, and later increased to \$10.4 billion in 2001. It fell to a level of \$7.3 billion in 2002 (Ogunlana, 2019). Conversely, massive external debt-service payments have continued to drain the Nigerian economy.

Nassarawa State has evolved over the years across all facets of human development. It is blessed with a relatively young population, fairly modernized infrastructure and a vast amount of human and natural resources. With additional impetus, the State is set to emerge on the pinnacle of Nigeria's development. While some successes have been recorded both in human capital and infrastructural development in the past, the Government of Nassarawa State in Nigeria has demonstrated political will and commitment towards accelerating sustainable development at the sub-national level to ensure that no one is left behind as the State is inclusively transformed. An In-depth Exploration of Nassarawa State will examine the relevant data and information gathering in this survey would provide a comprehensive analysis for identification and targeting of the state.

Objectives of the study

The objective of this study is to assess the level of attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and its impact in Nassarawa state of Nigeria. Specifically, this study intends to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To assess the impact of Sustainable Development Goals on poverty reduction in Nassarawa state.
- ii. To investigate the challenges of Sustainable Development Goals on poverty reduction in Nassarawa state; and
- iii. To proffer policy strategies needed to achieve Sustainable Development Goals on poverty reduction in Nassarawa state

Literature Review

Conceptual Definition of Poverty

Onibokun and Kumuyi (2006) viewed poverty as a way of life characterized by low calories intake, inaccessibility to adequate health facilities, low quality of education, inaccessibility to various housing and societal facilities. Poverty is seen as humiliating dependence, a state of deprivation, lack of basic necessities of life, inability to satisfy the basic requirement for human survival and inadequate satisfaction of basic needs of life.

However, World Bank (2000) inductively gave a more comprehensive definition of poverty as; the lack of what is necessary for material well-being especially food, but also housing, land and assets. In order words, poverty is the lack of multiple resources that lead to hunger and physical deprivation. Such necessary materials or factors include; purchasing and consumption power, availability and access to good/qualitative education, health care delivery, basic infrastructures and welfare facilities. In this direction, when a major proportion of the population of any country experiences insufficient access to these materials, we have mass poverty.

There are different forms of poverty such as financial and material poverty, moral and physical poverty as well as social and mental poverty including financial poverty is the inadequacy of money or cash to meet basic daily needs. Material poverty is centered on the drought of those physical materials lacking to make things comfortable (Wali & Sanusi, 2017; Ozden & Chinedu, 2017). Moral poverty expresses a state of moral vacuity. A state of behavioural defectiveness where a man cannot bring himself to act right. Physical poverty emphasizes lack of physical strength to do things the way you would have loved to do them. Physical poverty emphasizes lack of physical strength to do things the way you would have loved to do them. Mental poverty is (a state) of mental impairment. It is a state whereby a man lacks adequate response or stimulus

to environmental variation. Of all the forms of poverty expressed above, none has enslaved Nigerians and hold them hostage as financial and material poverty (Salihu &Gbolami, 2018; Okunola, Umar &Hassan, 2019).

Poverty can be located within the context of contradiction between the resources available to an individual and the demand and condition of his/her environment. Poverty is a dreaded condition of absence of capacity to maintain, at least, basic level of decent living. It is a hydra-headed condition which tends to restrict people from socio-economic opportunities. As a complex and multi- dimensional phenomenon, poverty goes beyond the condition of lack of resources. It extends to social inequality, insecurity, illiteracy, poor health, as well as restricted or total lack of opportunities for personal growth and self-realization.

Sustainable Development

Though sustainable development in one of the most discussed concepts in contemporary development debate with specific emphasis on poverty eradication, a clear cut conceptualization remain particularly problematic. This (amongst others) is because its earliest connotation or usage was restricted to its ecological dimensions, with emphasis on the physical environment. The Brundtland Report (1987, p.7) defines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Onah &Vincent (2005) in an x-ray of the above definition, identifies the non-depreciation of the natural capital stock as explicit in the definition of sustainable development. Be that as it may, it is clear in the Brundtlands conceptualization of sustainable development that the core issue for consideration in sustainable development is the persistence and continuity of development. It underscores the need to factor in, the wellbeing of succeeding generations in the development plans. It also lays very strong burdens on the equitable management and judicious use of resources in a bid to achieve the goals of development.

Implicit in this view therefore is the fact that policy and action (institutions) are major vehicles for the realization of sustainable development. Such policies are made with posterity adequately factored in. Hence, Ndubisi (2002) while considering conditions for sustainable development focuses on institutions of government, and contends that the government of the day must necessarily come up with policies and legislations that address the issue of poverty today and not forgetting the future. But Onah &Vincent (2005) drawing inspiration from Brookfield (1991, p. 32) went beyond policy and institutions when they said “the overall success of sustainable development is consequent upon a strong civil society”. This position underscores the need to incorporate the knowledge of the local people in to the process of development as they are principal stakeholders. The consummate goal of sustainable development therefore “... is the lasting improvement in the quality of life and not just short-term improvements that disappear rapidly at the end of the project circle” (Ulluiwishewa, 1993, p. 20).

SDGS and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

Eradicating poverty remains one of the major challenges within the globe. The aim of achieving this poverty reduction was not fully achieved during the MDGs implementation. After obligating to SDGs, different countries in the world started to demonstrate these goals into their development planning for effective implementation.

The goals become the goal that countries across the globe put efforts towards actualizing. Nigerian government started to integrate them into its development planning for effective implementation. Some of its general commitment towards achieving the goals include the effort made at the legislative level to facilitate the process of SGDs by establishing two committees in the national assembly: There is a Senate Committee to ensure appropriate allocation of funds for the SDGs and there is also a committee on the same subject matter in the House of Representatives; Establishing the office of the senior special assistant to the president on SDGs, which is a legacy of MDGs that has the responsibility to oversee poverty reduction programs; and Inter-ministerial committee on SDGs established to see the smooth interface between the agencies, departments, and ministries (Nayyar, 2012).

To address goal 1 of SDGs, which is “no poverty”, several strategies were adopted by the Nigerian government to help in reducing poverty in the country. For instance, the Federal Government of Nigeria established the National Safety Investment Program (NSIP) to address hunger and poverty in the country in 2016, allocating \$1.3 billion of its budget to the institution of the first phase of its social safety nets system (Osondu- Oti, 2020).. The program was established deliberately as an effort to accomplish the goal, where the vulnerable and the poor are targeted. The packages under this safety program include Cash Transfer which reached approximately 300,000 poor and vulnerable household; N-Power Program that also empowered 500,000 youths within the age bracket of 18-35; and the National Home Grown School Feeding Program which provided to 9.9 million within 33 states and also empowered 107,862 cookery staff across the states. Poverty eradication remains a global challenge. Though there is a rapid achievement in combating poverty in countries like India and China, African country such as Nigeria’s war against poverty is proven very difficult (Osondu- Oti,2020).

Poverty and Inequality in Nassarawa State

In 2019, the National Bureau of Statistics classified 40.1 per cent of Nigerians as poor (NBS, 2019). In other words, on average, 4 out of 10 Nigerians have real per capita expenditures below N137, 430 per year. This translates to over 82.9 million Nigerians who are considered poor by national standards. It should be noted that this figure excludes Borno State (NLSS, 2018-2019), where 62.31 per cent of the total population (3,585,131 as at 2019) were classified as poor. This implies that over 2.2 million persons are considered poor in Nassarawa State. Furthermore, while depth of poverty or poverty gap of 20.03 per cent exists in the State, the level of economic inequality is of the magnitude of 31.54 per cent (NLSS, 2018-2019). This is equally indicative of the existence of poverty and inequality in the State.

Poverty and inequality rates over time are obtainable from previous official poverty studies and reports. It is pertinent to note that NLSS 2018-19 is not technically comparable to any of the previous years’ reports: it is not possible, for instance, to compare poverty levels between 2003-04, 2009-10 and 2018-19. This is largely due to the varying and dissimilar methods of data collection employed. The 2019 study is accordingly treated as a case study and any comparisons with previous poverty studies should be treated with caution. The existence of poverty and inequality in Nassarawa State brings to fore the overarching demand on the government to deploy policies, plans and programmes that specifically target poverty reduction, close the inequality gap and generally improve the welfare and living standards of the citizenry. With proper planning and strategic efforts within the short-to-long term, these objectives can be achieved.

Challenges of SDGs in Meeting the Extreme Poverty Goals in Nassarawa State

- (a) **Lack of awareness and adequate Information:** Based on the countdown 2023 survey carried out in Nassarawa, it revealed that about 60% have heard about the SDGs and mostly from TV and radio outlet. But only 25% could say what the SDGs are about and still could not list them. As such knowledge of the SDGs in terms of the details of their objective are low at least in Nassarawa not even relate it with other L.G.A. communities and villages. Similarly knowledge of the projects being implemented is low since only 100% could mention projects implemented in their areas. More so participation of respondents in implementation of the SDGs in terms of initiation of country projects is also very low. No respondents mentioned been involved in any SDGs project.
- (b) **The position of the poor to environmental decision making and implementation**
The poor, who are most dependent on natural resources and mostly affected by environmental degradation, do not have the information or the access to participate in decision making and policy development. The poor depend on natural resources for a healthy diet; clean water, energy and medicine. For the majority of Nigerians live in rural areas, the only source of drinking water is the flowing streams and river. They

also depend on bush burning for their animal hunting which serve as a diet for their daily meals. In the exploration of water resources like the fish, poisonous chemicals are used for these activities. Of Course, they are only trying to enhance their living condition without regards to the long term effects of such on the environment and general development of their society.

(c) Lack of Statistics or Data

SDGs attempt to achieve poverty alleviation goals in Nassarawa state are faced with the problem of lack of data. Data are very important in planning and execution of projects. In Nigeria, there is inadequate record keeping or poor information technology. It is against this background that, some of the resources provided are over utilized because the population there is under-utilized due low production. The National Planning Commission that is charged with the responsibility of planning in Nigeria must wake up in collaboration with other like agencies like national population commission to provide reliable data as they will help developmental planning and direction of policies like SDGs.

(d) Political climate

Another main problem confronting developmental goals in Nigeria is the political climate. What we are referring to is the politics, the nature and manner in which politics is played is a thing of concern. The fact that, our politics is ethnic based, the execution of projects always has ethnic or sentimental inclination. Instead of pursuing projects that would be beneficial to the general public, the political climate or environment will favour a scenario where projects are sited in places not needed or where there are no plans for such. In other instances, projects will only be sited in a particular state or local government because such a place belongs to a top political official. The outcome is the continuous failure to achieve the set-goals of environmental sustainability in Nigeria.

(e) External focus

SDGs like other international projects and programmes such as SAP, NEPAD, are externally focused. Their interest is what they will do for the people and not what the people will do for themselves. The people therefore consider themselves as spectators in the course of achieving development for their society. In such situation conscious efforts on maintaining the facilities is not there. This is clearly demonstrated when you visit the rural areas and observe that, the people who use boreholes and other water system when available do so without knowledge on how it is supposed to be maintained. It is not an exaggeration to argue that, many Nigerians are not knowledgeable about the activities of SDGs.

The development strategy, therefore, is not people participatory and it increase problem of integrating the people for its implementation. The beneficiaries only get what the top government functionaries felt is good for them without input from the people. This external focus or top-down approach is a challenge to the achievement of SDGs in general and goal No 7 in Nigeria. The development is not autonomous and lacks the capacity to live long or be sustained.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Sustainable Development

Sustainability as a policy concept has its origin in the Brundtland Report of 1987. This theory was propounded by the former Prime Minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland. The theory was concerned with the tension between the aspirations of mankind towards a better life on the one hand, and the limitations imposed by nature on the other hand. (Kuhlman and Farrington, 2010). In her consideration of environmental factors to national development, she posited that sustainable development entails meeting the needs of the present without

compromising the ability of future generation to respond to their needs (Global Learning Programme, 2018). The import of this statement is that sustainable development in Nigeria ensures that future generations are at liberty to a better standard of living, prevent the crises in resources management and utilization; show the need for national quality and cohesion; and create the awareness of environmental, economic, and social needs of the people (Abbas, 2011).

Why the Theory of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development theory was chosen as the underlying theory for this study because it is the most widely accepted theory in the field of development studies, but it is still important because it is very general and because it includes very important features such as meeting the basic needs of the global population and environmental protection (Dernbach, & Cheever, 2015). Fundamentally, the core conceptual achievement of sustainable development is to provide an alternative to the binary “environment or development” narrative that has traditionally dominated public and private political discourse (Bali Swain, & Yang-Wallentin, 2020; Dernbach, & Cheever, 2015).

Relevance of the Theory of Sustainable Development to the Study

This theory remains relevant to this study because it serve is a framework for making decisions based on the integration of development and environmental objectives or considerations, it is important to understand what “development” means in this context (Ruggerio, 2021; Dernbach, & Cheever, 2015). The theory explains how national and international authorities should focus on meeting the basic needs of their citizens. However, this need remains unmet for the majority of the world’s population, primarily those living in developing countries such as Nigeria.

Nigeria as a country has spent a lot of money to cater for the needs of its citizens but it is still nothing to write home about. Therefore, the importance of this theory to the sustainable development of Nigeria is that it explains that future generations of Nigeria are free to improve their living standards and prevent crises in resource management and utilization; demonstrate the need for national quality and cohesion; improve people’s environmental, economic understanding of social needs (Abbas, 2011).

Research Methodology

The researcher used the descriptive survey method for the study, in which questionnaires were carefully administered to respondents of the study.

Methods of Data Collection

The methods of data collection for this study were grouped into two, namely; the primary and secondary data collection. The both source of data were extensively used for the purpose of drawing an empirical conclusion of the study.

(1) Primary Data

The primary data for this study were obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to direct beneficiaries of the SDG projects in Nassarawa state and data from direct responses to interviews which were designed for selected staff of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation offices and agencies in Nassarawa state. The essence of this exercise is to enable the researcher obtain more detailed, reliable and up-to-date information on the topic of research from the aforementioned respondents.

(2) Secondary Data

The main sources of the secondary data for this study were through the review of relevant literature or use of text books, website pages, articles, publications and journals and also through relevant official administrative documents of Nassarawa state government.

(3) **Personal Observation**

The study also adopted personal observation when local governments were visited to retrieve administered questionnaire. The researcher adopted the systemic observation when he visited the study areas to assess the conditions of the rural areas and some of the projects executed or abandoned by the selected study agencies in the selected local government areas.

The Area of Study

The study was conducted in Nassarawa state of North-Central Nigeria. Nasarawa State was created on 1st October 1996 by the then military regime of General Sani Abacha. The State was created with great hope and pleasantry for all her citizens and groups (Osaghae; 1994, p.29). Nasarawa State was created to bring governance closer and accessible to the people. This was to ensure the maintenance of social peace, law, order and equity. The State was also established to bring about social harmony, solidarity and participation of the people in state-building process (Pannenberg, 1989, 43). Social justice and equality was intended to be the cardinal principles for state policies and decisions. As a result, it would facilitate socio-economic development, cordial relations as well as ensure the security of lives and property. At the level of individuals, the State was intended to empower men, women and youths in order to enable them create wealth and enjoy good life (Dalat & Fliba; 2007, p.3). The empowerment of the people would make Nasarawa State a prosperous, functional and just State in Nigeria. Nassarawa State is today considered a pluralistic society, in view of its diverse socio-cultural groups composition. These came with the challenges of social relationship and interaction that raised tension among groups and between the government and the governed. The State has diverse religious, ethnic and political classes (Dalat & Fliba; 2007 p.3).

Population of Study

The state has a total population of 1,863,275 people (NPC, 2006).

Table1: Nassarawa State Population Distribution by Local Government Area

S/N	Local Government Area	Population
1	Akwanga	113,430
2	Awe	112,547
3	Doma	139,607
4	Karu	205,477
5	Keana	79,253
6	Keffi	92,664
7	Kokona	109,749
8	Lafia	330,712
9	Nasarawa	189,835
10	Nasarawa-Eggon	149,129
11	Obi	148,874
12	Toto	119,077
13	Wamba	72,894
	Total	1,863,275

Source: Compiled by the Author using the 2006 Population

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A multi-stage sampling procedure was used in this study. This includes purposive sampling, snow ball sampling, and simple random sampling technique. Firstly, purposive sampling technique was used to select the study sites in the state (Akwanga, Karu, Keffi and Lafia LGAs). The second stage involves administering Structured Questionnaire (SQ) to target respondents using convenience or accidental sampling technique, two communities were selected from each of these LGAs making it a total of eight communities. In the final stage Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze data collected via SQ while non-parametric statistics (chi-square) will

be used to test the research hypotheses at 5% (0.05) level of significance. Yamane (1967) statistical formula was employed as shown below:

$$n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$$

Where N represents population size

n represents minimum sample size

e represents the degree of error expected (0.05)

$$n = 1,863,275 / 1 + 1,863,275(0.05)^2$$

$$n = 399.9$$

Sample size (n) is approximately **400**

$$\text{Akwanga LGA} = 113,430 / 742,283 \times 400 = 61$$

$$\text{Karu LGA} = 205,477 / 742,283 \times 400 = 111$$

$$\text{Keffi LGA} = 92,664 / 742,283 \times 400 = 50$$

$$\text{Lafia LGA} = 330,712 / 742,283 \times 400 = 178$$

Sampled LGAs	Population (2006)	
Akwanga	113,430	61
Karu	205,477	111
Keffi	92,664	50
Lafia	330,712	178
Total	742,283	400

Source: Field Work, 2024

Instrument of Data Collection

The instruments for gathering data for this study include the following;

- (i) Documentary method: This research work involves the collection of documentary materials written by various scholars and also some official administrative documents and records from Junaidu Waziri library, Sokoto; Aminu Kano Centre for Democratic Research and Training (Mumbayya House, Kano); Arewa House, Kaduna. These documents were collected, organized and subjected to critical analysis. This was done to enable the researcher make a comparative study of the data from the literature reviewed and responses from respondents.
- (ii) Questionnaire: The researchers also made use of questionnaire. A closed-end questionnaire is structured to obtain information concerning the impact of Sustainable Development Goals in Meeting Poverty Alleviation in the study area.
- (iii) Interview: Personal interview was used to obtain first-hand information in the course of this study. This instrument was used because it gives opportunity for deeper probing into issues of study. In the entire interview conducted, only three respondents permitted that their response be tape-recorded. The others permitted note-taking. These responses were then synthesized and analyzed.

Methods of Data Analysis

Since multi-data gathering instruments were used in the course of this study, it then implied that different types of statistical tools would be used, and conclusions were easily drawn among them. Simple percentages and chi-square were also used to analyze the data generated from the study.

Presentation and Discussion of Result

In carrying out the research, a total of four hundred and seven 400 questionnaires were sent out to the respondents. The four hundred and seven (400) questionnaires that were answered are found useful and relevant in the study and this constitutes 100% return of the entire questionnaires presented. Hence the various questions asked and their respective responses are itemized below:

Data Presentation and Analysis**Table 1: Respondents Bio-data**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 25 Years	109	27.25
26 – 32 Years	103	25.75
33 – 39 Years	151	37.75
40– 46 Years	22	5.5
47– 53 Years	13	3.25
54– 60 Years	2	0.5
Total	400	100
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	298	74.5
Female	102	25.5
Total	400	100
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	308	77
Single	34	8.5
Divorcee	32	8
Widow/Widower	26	6.5
Total	400	100
Salary Grade	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 4	71	17.8
5 – 8	44	11
9 – 12	182	45.5
13 – 16	103	25.8
Total	400	100
Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Business	32	8
Farming	69	17.3
Teaching	72	18
Students	13	3.3
Civil Service	189	47.3
Others	25	6.25
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

As shown in Table 1 above, 27.25% are between 18-25 years, 25.75% are between 26-32 years, 37.75% are aged between 33-39 years, 40-46 years are 5.5% 47-53 years 3.25% and the remaining 0.5% are 54-60 years and above. This shows that majority of the respondents are between the ages of 33 and 39 years. From the table, it can be concluded that the research received response from all adult categories in the study area. The sex distribution of the respondents on the other hand indicates that out of the 380 respondents, 366 representing 96.3% were males while 14 representing 3.68% were females. This therefore implies that majority of respondents are males, however, the view of females were not left out. Table 4.2 above shows that 439 respondents representing 51.2% are married, 395 respondents equaling 46.0% are single, 14 respondents equaling 1.6% are either widows or widowers, and 10 respondents with a percentage of 1.2% are divorcees. Table 4.3 reveals that 325 respondents equaling 37.9% are within the salary grade level 5 – 8, 232 respondents representing (61) 27.0% are between grade level 9 – 12, 222 respondents with a percentage of 25.9% are within grade level 1-4, and 79 respondents representing 9.2% are with grade level 13 – 16. In respect of occupation, the table shows that 23.4% are civil servants, 18.68% are engage in various types of businesses, 7.89% are into farming, 18.9% are teachers at various level, 24.5% are students while, 18.68% are into different occupation

such as artisan like, mechanics, tailoring, driving, barbers, etc. Majority of respondents therefore are business persons.

Table 2: Respondent awareness about SDGs PEP in Nassarawa State.

Opinion	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	166	41.5%
No	234	58.5%
Total	400	100%

Opinion	Respondents Daily Income	Percentage
N0-149	132	33%
N150-249	144	36%
N250-above	124	31%
Total	400	100%

Opinion	Respondents income sustainability	Percentage
Yes	144	36%
No	256	64%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table two shows that, 234 respondent (58.5%), are not aware of any SDGs poverty eradication program, while 166 of the respondent that represent 41.5% of the population sample are aware. This study shows us that lack of sensitization can lead to the failure to the aims and goals of SDGs. 144 respondent's daily income is N150-249 with 36%, followed by 33% with N0-149 and lastly N250-above have 31%. This show that SDGs target to eradicate poverty has no input to the citizen of Nassarawa state because of the high rate of people live in below N150. 64% of the respondent's income does not sustain them and their families while 36% of the respondent's incomes sustain them and their families. The major determinant of poverty is satisfaction of basic needs (food, clothes, shelter, and health). If all basic needs are satisfied then the individual cannot be categories as nor poor but if otherwise he, is poor even if his income is high.

Table 3. Factors Contributing to increasing Poverty in Nigeria.

	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Pervasive Corruption	121	30.25	145	36.25	15	3.75	74	18.5	45	11.25
Unemployment	138	34.5	119	29.75	31	7.75	59	14.75	53	13.25
Lack of Political will	111	27.75	121	30.25	23	5.75	67	16.75	78	19.5
Ethno-religious conflicts	151	37.75	101	25.25	17	4.25	76	19	55	13.75
Poor social amenities	186	46.5	113	28.25	9	2.25	53	13.25	39	9.75
Lack vocational technical skills related courses in tertiary institutions	101	25.25	171	42.75	25	6.25	66	16.5	37	9.25
Poor enlightenment	171	42.75	103	25.75	33	8.25	51	12.75	42	10.5

Source: Field Survey, 2024

It is evident from the above table that 30.25 and 36.25% of respondents, respectively, strongly agreed and agreed that pervasive corruption in the state is crippling the economy with lack of educational facilities while, 18.5% and 11.25% disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. According to item 2 of the above table, 34.5% and 29.75% of respondents, respectively, disagreed

and strongly disagreed that unemployment in the state is reduced tremendously, while 14.75% and 13.25% had opposing opinions and disagreed and strongly disagreed on this issue raised.

Regarding item 3, 27.75% and 30.25% of respondents, respectively, disagreed and strongly disagreed that there is political will. Contrary opinions were stated by 16.75% and 19.5%, who settled on the terms agree and strongly agree. According to Item 4, 37.75% disagreed and 25.25% of respondents strongly agreed, respectively, with the notion that poor social amenities has multiple effects on the health of the population such as the outbreak of communicable diseases. The remaining 19% strongly agreed and 13.75% of respondents agreed, According to item 5 of the above table, 46.5% and 28.25% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that the Lack vocational technical skills related courses in tertiary institutions contributed to poverty in the state, while 13.25% and 9.72% disagreed, and strongly disagreed, with the aforementioned statement. According to Item 6, 25.25% and 42.75% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that internal displacement hinders national unity amongst the people as feelings of resentment persists amongst the populace. The remaining 16.5% and 9.25% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the aforementioned statement. It is evident from item 7, 42.75 and 25.75% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that increase in the level of insecurity such as crime rates, human trafficking, child soldiers amongst the internally displaced persons on the nation. Contrary opinions were stated by 12.75% and 10.5%, who settled on the terms agree and strongly agree. Despite the strategies adopted by the government in mitigating the crisis of poverty, yet the crisis seem to be on the rise. There are some challenges posed which affects the effective alleviation of poverty. It's against this backdrop, a Key informant opined that:

The absence of Anti-poverty targeting programmes are readily politicized for patronage as experienced under the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) implemented between 1999-2001 which was marred by poor, inefficient targeting and distorted implementation leading to high incidence of unintended beneficiaries, corruption and rent-seeking practices that crowded out the intended beneficiaries. In another analytical viewpoint a Senior Lecturer in a University observed that:

Those who capture the benefits from the various government anti-poverty programmes are not the poor, but the rich and powerful. An assessment of government programmes related to poverty and community-based organizations and initiatives indicate that virtually all the government programmes lack mechanisms for effective pro-poor targeting (World Bank, 1996). The situation is aggravated by inadequate national statistical and data systems and the absence of an explicit rallying poverty reduction framework to galvanize policies and programmes at the three tiers of government in tandem with private sector and civil society.

Challenges of Sustainable Development Goals on Poverty Reduction in Nassarawa state

	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Policy Inconsistency	141	35.25	119	29.75	17	4.25	66	16.5	57	14.25
Adequate budgetary Allocation	168	42	117	29.25	15	3.75	39	9.75	61	15.25
Political Instability	191	47.75	139	34.75	12	3	21	5.25	37	9.25
Gender insensitivity	166	41.5	121	30.25	23	5.75	41	10.25	49	12.25
Free and fair selection of beneficiaries	99	24.75	121	30.25	35	8.75	67	16.75	78	19.5
There is no reliable data on the statistics of the poor in the state.	169	42.25	101	25.25	17	4.25	52	13	61	15.25
Corruption affects the proper alleviation of the crisis	176	44	131	32.75	12	3	33	8.25	48	12

Source: Field Survey, 2024

It is evident from the above table that 35.25% of respondents and 29.75% of respondents, respectively, agreed and strongly agreed that Policy Inconsistency affects the affairs of poverty in Nassarawa state. On this idea, however, 16.5% and 14.25% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. According to the above table's item 2, 42% and 29.25 percent of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that Adequate budgetary Allocation is therefore service delivery is not satisfactory. 9.75% and 15.25% of the respondents, however, had opposing opinions. The results of the table's item 3 showed that, while 9.75% and 35.25% of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with this perception, 5.25% and 9.25% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed Political Instability affects the SDGs, hence the short term goals were adopted for the immediate basis of intervention towards the SDGs. Item 4 reveals that while 41.5% and 30.25% of respondents, respectively, agreed and strongly agreed on this perspective, 10.25% and 12.25% of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that Gender insensitivity have not been pleasing nor accommodating.

According to Item 5, 24.75% and 30.25% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that Free and fair selection of beneficiaries, endanger aid from the government, while 16.75% and 19.5% of respondents opposed and strongly disagreed with the earlier expressed opinion. According to item 6, 42.25% and 25.25% of respondents, respectively, disagreed and strongly disagreed that there is no reliable data on the statistics of poor in the state. However, 13% and 15.25% percent of the respondents, respectively, strongly agreed and agreed that the poor do received aid from the government. It is evident from item 7, 44 and 32.75% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that corruption affects the proper alleviation of the programme. Contrary opinions were stated by 8.25% and 12%, who settled on the terms agree and strongly agree.

Table 3. Effectiveness of the Strategies for addressing Sustainable Development Goals on poverty reduction in Nassarawa state

	Strongly agree		Agree	Undecided	Disagree		Strongly disagree			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Full integrated of the Rural Poor in poverty alleviation policies/ programs	44	11	57	14.25	19	4.75	179	44.75	101	25.25
Adequate budgetary Allocation	36	9	42	10.5	27	6.75	139	34.75	156	39
Provision of basic needs	149	37.25	118	29.5	21	5.25	45	11.25	67	16.75
Job creation	29	7.25	34	8.5	15	3.75	181	45.25	139	34.75
Integrated rural development Programs	51	12.75	61	15.25	18	4.5	161	40.25	109	27.25
Bottom-Top approach not just at the implementation stages but at all stages of poverty eradication endeavours.	58	14.5	42	10.5	17	4.25	149	37.25	134	33.5
Poverty eradication and indeed sustainable development should be removed from the list of “charities” of government. It should become a duty for which the people can hold government to accountability even seeking redress in the event of a default. This would make poverty eradication a matter of compulsion and not mere discretion.	143	35.75	131	32.75	23	5.75	46	11.5	57	14.25

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 above demonstrates that 11% and 14.25% of respondents, respectively, disagreed and strongly disagreed that full integrated of the Rural Poor in poverty alleviation policies/ programs. Contrary opinions were stated by 44.75% and 25.25%, who settled on the terms agree and strongly agree. According to Item 2, 9% and 10. 5% of respondents strongly disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively, with the notion that the Adequate budgetary

Allocation has been effective in addressing poverty. The remaining 44.75% and 25.25% of respondents, on the other hand, strongly agreed and highly agreed. According to item 3 of the above table, 37.25% and 29.5% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that Provision of basic needs has been highly supportive in addressing Sustainable Development Goals on poverty reduction in Nassarawa state, while 11.25% and 16.75% disagreed, and strongly disagreed, with the aforementioned statement. According to Item 4, 7.25% and 8. 5% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that Job creation has been effective in

addressing the menace. The remaining 45.25% and 34.75% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the aforementioned statement.

According to item 5 of the above table, 12.75% and 15.25% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that the integrated rural development Programs provided by the government has contributed in addressing Sustainable Development Goals on poverty reduction in Nassarawa state, while 40.25% and 27.25% disagreed, and strongly disagreed, with the aforementioned statement. According to Item 6, 14.5% and 10.5% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that Bottom-Top approach not just at the implementation stages but at all stages of poverty eradication endeavours has aided SDGs on poverty reduction in the state. The remaining 37.25% and 33.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the aforementioned statement. It is evident from item 7, 35.75 and 32.75% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively. Contrary opinions were stated by 11.5% and 14.25%, who settled on the terms agree and strongly agree. Despite the strategies adopted by the government, yet poverty persons seem to be on the rise in Nassarawa state. Poverty eradication and indeed sustainable development should be removed from the list of “charities” of government. It should become a duty for which the people can hold government to accountability even seeking redress in the event of a default.

Conclusion

This study was carried out to ascertain the impact of the Sustainable Development Goals in meeting poverty alleviation goals in Nigeria; with special reference to Nassarawa State. Poverty situation in the state is every inch paradoxical; Alarming lack amidst great human and material resources. This scenario is further worsened by the inability of her huge array of poverty reduction policies and institutions to engender the much needed turn around. This paper in a bid to understand the critical missing link between policy intent and outcomes, finds vital explanation in the inability of the traditional top-down approach embraced by policy formulators and implementers in Nigeria. It therefore explores a more pragmatic and inclusive paradigm premised on the active participation of the targets of poverty reduction endeavours. This paradigm the paper finds out has the capacity to lower implementation cost, handle stakeholder apathy, empower the targets of poverty reduction to set actions and priorities as well as its support sustainability.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Proper and effective channels of communication and enlightenment should be made available by both the Government of Nassarawa State and other operating agencies of the SDGs in the state, so as to enlighten the people, especially those in the rural areas on the objectives, plans and policies of the SDGs in alliance with the government to bring about a sustainable development in Nassarawa state.
- ii. Development activities of the SDGs must be properly aligned with those of the state Government, in order to foster coherent development strategies that are in consonance with the felt needs of the people of Nassarawa State.
- iii. To supplement the efforts made by the State Government in the provision of essential services and amenities, such as construction of roads, provision of electricity, building of schools and Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities, provision of safe and portable drinking water among other services; the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through its operating agencies in the state should intervene in the areas that, the state funds cannot carry on, especially within its intervention period.
- iv. The activities of the Government agencies, such as the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), Nassarawa State Directorate of Employment, NEPAD, LEEMP, EU-MPP6, State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (SEEDS), SUBEB, and Other related agencies should be enhanced through the provision of adequate funds

- and integration into the rural communities, so as to deliver the even development plans of the state government to the nooks and corners of the state.
- v. The farmers and all those that engage in agricultural processing activities within the rural communities; should be encouraged by the state Government, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through its operating agencies and other development partners. They should be given equal opportunities to access loans from the commercial and development banks which will enable them to increase their ventures in agricultural production, increase their ventures in agricultural production, aimed at economic and self-sustenance, towards eradication of absolute poverty to meet the target of the SDGs.
 - vi. The Government should also appreciate the importance of intermediation of fieldworkers, who shuttle and liaises between agencies and rural population on the development needs of the areas and the possible ways of meeting these needs. These field workers should also be empowered and their activities be closely monitored in order to meet the target of operations.
 - vii. Efforts should be intensified by both the state and federal governments towards the eradication of all man made obstacles of development which include; corruption in high places, misappropriation and expropriation of funds by public office holders, insubordination, tribalism and nepotism, among others, that have eaten deep into the Nigerian public service.
 - viii. The activist groups and civil society organizations should monitor closely, activities of agencies to ensure transparency and efficiency in the discharge of duties and functions of such agencies of development.

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