to an average of 15.81 for the period 1970-1979 (FOS 1996). In fact, if there were any indicator of economic performance in the 1980s and 1990s that showed some high degrees of instability, then it was the growth rate of CPI (i.e. inflation rate) (CBN 1994) One peculiar feature of this index is the diminutive impact on the living standard of the people. As such in some years where inflation was exceeding high (for instance in 1984, 1988, and 1993 with inflation rates of 39.6, 56.1, and 57.2 respectively), the hardest hit was the purchasing power of the people.

The most unpleasant impact of skyrocketing inflation rate is the instability that is often transferred to other macroeconomic variables thus creating an non-condusive atmosphere for investment in the real sector of the economy. Thus speculative and service businesses boom at the expense of productive activities. Such was the case in the part decade in Nigeria; and the reason why the authorities were working towards the objective of sustaining a single digit inflation rate which was achieved in the most part of 1998 (1999 budget speech).

However, empirical studies have shown that inflation in Nigeria was caused by many factors, critical among which included budget indiscipline, excess liquidity in the economy, exchange depreciation, and debt overhang/burden (Taiwo 1990, Ekpo 1992).

INCOME DISTRIBUTION AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

The distribution of income in a country indicates the existence or otherwise the presence of poverty. In other words, the existence and incidence of poverty can income distribution in the absence of income distribution data per se, because relative inequality in income distribution indicates poverty. Every country has the social responsibility of ensuring that every citizen has a fair share of the National wealth. In Nigeria, there are different provisions in the 1979 constitution containing references in the distribution of income and wealth. These are found in the provision of section 16 (2) (a) directing the state to provide a balanced economic development. Subsections 16 (2) (b) and (c) provide further that the state shall ensure that:

(b) the material resources of the community are harnessed and distributed as best as possible to serve the common good,
(c) the economic system is not operated in such a manner as to permit the concentration of wealth or the means of production and exchange in the hands of a few individuals or group,
(d) suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate living wage, old age care and pensions are provided for all citizens (Okigbo 1982). If the provision