

sector. The sector is expected to be treated uniquely in terms of poverty alleviation strategies. The need for unique treatment is necessitated by the fact earlier expressed, and as acknowledged by the World Bank, that majority of the poor are in the rural areas. Food which is the most essential basic need is purely a rural business. Moreover, the rural sector is often the weaker sector when compared with the urban sector.

An integrated rural development strategy (IRDS) has been advocated as capable of simultaneously holistic and intersectoral manipulation of all necessary variables which together could alleviate poverty.

POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES AND THEIR ASSESSMENT IN NIGERIA

Since after the take off of the structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986 the Federal Government has been more conscious about poverty alleviation programmes. Earlier programmes such as free and compulsory primary education operation feed the Nation (OFN) rural electrification Schemes, rural banking schemes, low cost housing schemes, small scale enterprises schemes etc, were not consciously designed for the purpose of poverty alleviation. Although some of these programmes had laudable achievements, they could not be sustained for an appreciable long period due to lack of political will and commitment and adequate involvement of the beneficiaries in these programmes.

To cushion the effects of SAP hardship on the poor, certain poverty alleviation programmes have been put in place. These programmes are categorised into multi-sectorial, and sectorial programmes.

MULTI-SECTORAL PROGRAMMES

These programmes were mostly targetted at opening the rural areas and the poor. Among these are: the Directorate Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) the Better Live Programme (BLP), the Family Support Programme (FSP), and the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP). These programmes had very landable objectives, but the problems of prioritisation and implementation have often reduced the achievement of their goods. Among the, BLP was gender specific and targeted at rural women; the same fate of resources being used for personal aggrandisement. The FSP which replaced the BLP is still on course, can not be evaluated in this paper for want of concrete evidence.