

in (c) is given any attention or priority they may be little or no problem of poverty in the country.

POVERTY PROFILE AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN NIGERIA

The concern about poverty in sub-saharan African countries including Nigeria has been very tremendous. In Nigeria, resulting from large scale poverty human conditions have greatly deteriorated in the past fifteen years. Real disposable incomes have dwindled, while malnutrition rates are on the increase. Resulting from the rate of population growth which has out stripped the rate of food production and rate of increasing the social services, the quality of nutrition as well as of educational and health services has deteriorated a great deal, (Aboyode 1975, Ilori 1995, Obidegwu 1992, Olayemi 1995, World Bank 1995).

Evidence suggests that the concern for poverty is two dimensional. Overtime, a sizeable reduction in poverty is important, both in its own write and as a first step to providing the means for the self-improvement of the most disadvantaged in the society.

THE CONCEPT AND MEASUREMENT OF POVERTY IN NIGERIA

According to Oppenheim and Harker (1996) poverty means going short materially, socially, and emotionally. It means spending less on food, clothing than someone on average income. Above all, poverty takes away the tools to build the blocks for the future. Poverty level, therefore, is a measure of human deprivation. The higher the level of poverty, the lower the level of human development (Alcock 1997).

The incidence of poverty in Nigeria can be seen from the largely unimpressive performance of the Nigerian economy which is an indication of subsisting or probably increasing poverty. Although relevant statistics on poverty are unavailable, there is an indirect but strong evidence of widespread poverty which is mainly visible from the observable living conditions of large proportions of the populace (Olayemi 1995). Using a poverty line of one US Dollar per person, per day converted to purchasing power parity (PPP), the World Bank (1996) estimated that the head count incidence of poverty in Nigeria, in 1992 was 34.1%. The incidence of poverty was generally higher in the rural areas than in the urban areas. In Nigeria 73% of the poor are in the rural areas.

Measurement of poverty is as difficult a task as is the definition of poverty, especially in a country like Nigeria. The most widely used measure of poverty is the number of the poor, known as the head count. According to Basidhan (1973)