

AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ABIA STATE  
ECONOMIC, EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES  
POLICY (2004-2007)

<sup>1</sup>Kalu, Peters & <sup>2</sup>Nwakwurube, Adindu  
<sup>1&2</sup>*Department of Public Administration*  
*Abia State Polytechnic, Aba*

**Abstract**

This paper is An Evaluation of the Implementation of the Abia State Economic, Empowerment and Development Strategies-ABSEEDS-Policy (2004-2007). This policy is clearly a multi-sectorial poverty reduction strategy and it is on this premise that this paper sets out to investigate whether or not the policy has achieved its goals and how the citizenry are affected. Some three objectives were formulated together with three hypotheses as guide to the study while modernization theory formed the basis of the study. The methodology adopted for this research is the descriptive survey. The study relied both on primary and secondary data and the multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the study sample. The data collected were presented in frequency tables and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, tables etc. chi-square was used to test the hypotheses. The study revealed by way of findings that the organizational fragmentation in the bureaucracy has prevented the policy from achieving poverty reduction while funding of the programmed severely affected its goal actualization. The study concluded by putting forward recommendations those bottlenecks in the bureaucracy such as slow pace of movement occasioned by command hierarchy among others be streamlined to eliminate inefficiency such that the processes are faster for goals to be achieved which is one of the major reasons why the bureaucracy is distasteful. These are some of the policy recommendations that could provide the best ways forward.

**Keywords:** *Abseeds, Bureaucracy, Poverty, Policy, Empowerment and Development*

### Background to the Study

The issue of poverty has remained a major source of concern to mankind hence history is replete with various attempts at reducing the scourge of poverty. This situation has led to the Abia state government into creating a poverty reduction strategy known as Abia State Economic, Empowerment and Development Strategy (ABSEEDS). It is on the basis of this situation of poverty, such as is found in Abia state that various development plans, programmed and policies are deliberately designed to bring about the desired effect on the populace. Kalu and Nnadi (2012: 8) are of the view that

The primary task that development seek to accomplish is to eliminate (or at best reduce) poverty. "Development is concerned with improving the well-being of people. Raising living standards and improving education, health and equality of opportunity are among the essential components of economic development goal".

Indeed, a lot of people in the world live within the poverty bracket. This is more prevalent in the Less Developed Countries (LDCs) of the world where economic culture seem to be heavily traditional and as such discourages full utilization of human resources. In the LDCs people are mostly illiterate, ignorant, conservative and superstitious; these actually hinder economic development and thus make people poor. However, poverty is not restricted to a particular geographical area, indeed, Kalu and Mbah (2011) points out that; Poverty exists in America because the society is unequal and there are overwhelming political pressure to keep it that way. Any attempt to redistribute wealth and income will inevitably be opposed by powerful interests. Some people can be relatively rich only if others are relatively poor and since power is concentrated in the hands of the rich, public policies will continue to reflect their interest.

The 1966-1970 civil war was one situation that made poverty to become much more noticeable in Nigeria this was mainly as a result of the effects of physical and economic environment of the country that were severely affected as was characterized by the devastations of the war. The National Planning Commission- NPC- and the United Nations Children's Education Fund-UNICEF- (2011:165) Report attest that; It suffices here to recall that poverty became increasingly wide spread since the collapse of the oil boom in the early 1980's, the most recent available data showing serious intensification of poverty in the period between 1992 and 1996 with large increases in the proportions of both the moderate and the poor. More than half the population was living below the poverty line in 1996 with higher proportions in the rural areas and in the north of the country.

UNICEF (2011) further stated that with 2/3 of the Nigeria population living below the poverty line which is equivalent to about 140USD per day at the 1990 prices and nearly 29% in extreme poverty living below about 70 US Cent per day. It is quite easy to find out that many Nigerians cannot afford the cost of sending their children to school and to provide the home environment as well as the psychological support needed to improve the individual and for the country at large to develop. Against the foregoing, successive governments/administrations in Nigeria have sought ways and means of reducing and/or eradicating the negative effects of poverty. These had therefore raised a number of programmed formulated by the government towards the goal of either eliminating or reducing poverty in the country. Howbeit, given the pervasive nature of poverty, it has become a global issue and not necessarily a Nigerian or African issue. Kalu and Mbah (2011) observe that; The world is a very dynamic place and the sophistication that come from the changing situations proliferate the sophistication in knowledge, techniques and strategies in our policies, programmed practices and collaborations. Problems associated with education, employment, refugee status, poverty, social malice such as corruption, money laundering, etc. call for new ways of thinking and restructuring to cope with rising pressures, attitudes and demands.

There seem to have become a global and common linkage or effort on the issues, problems and solutions of poverty throughout the world. There are now international efforts which have been brought to bear on the issues of poverty, more so, as it concerns the developing countries. Through various international co-operations, partners and agencies like the World Health Organization (WHO), the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) including such nongovernmental organizations like Rotary International (RI), the LDCs are being assisted in the fight against poverty in their countries. The global effort to reduce poverty has taken a gigantic stride with the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The aim of focusing development assistant more effectively shaped the Millennium Summit at the UN headquarters in the year 2000 and its identification of the MDGs and associated targets for reducing global poverty by 2015.

In 2010, the UN Fund for Population Activity (UNFPA) while making reference to their 2004 Conference otherwise known as the Cairo-Consensus made extensive report on global eradication of poverty. At the heart of these global efforts to eradicate poverty is the paradigm shift from foreign aid to empowerment in which the well-being of the poor is the key to development. As a result, countries, regional and global efforts are now being made to empower economically the poor and less developed countries. There is now the global introduction of Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and sector wide approaches for poverty eradication and

empowerment. Many advanced countries are providing funds and other necessary facilities to eradicate poverty and empower the people of the developing world. The United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is one such instrument for this purpose.

#### Statement of Problem

The National Bureau of Statistics baseline survey in the year 2000 indicated that Abia State was and is still one of the poorest states in Nigeria with 52.6% of the population as poor and 85% of this group live in the rural areas. To fact check the veracity of this finding the State conducted a Social Institutional Needs Assessment in 24 (Twenty-four) pilot communities, the result confirmed the poor status of the State. Furthermore, a World Bank Appraisal Mission from June 25 to July 7, 2000 also confirmed this. Similarly, in the UNDP (1996) Human Development Report, Abia State ranked low (0 466) on the Human Development Index (HDI), a combined measure of longevity (physical health), knowledge (education), and income (purchasing power). The reasons behind this low ranking are very obvious because UNICEF Report (2002) listed life expectancy in Abia state to be below 54 years for male and 55 years for female. Mortality rate for Children under age 5 is 191 per 1'000 life birth. While most rural dwellers are still grappling with water from shallow wells and contaminated water from streams. About 35% of the State population is illiterate. The report concluded that this situation calls for a re-orientation among the people and in governance in terms of setting priorities right through dynamic financial reengineering to achieve good results.

It is in the light of the above that the Abia State government felt a sense of responsibility in leading the people out of poverty hence the introduction of the economic and empowerment development strategy to deal with poverty reduction, sufficiency in food supply, employment generation, wealth creation and value reorientation. This work therefore sets out to evaluate the implementation of the ABSEEDS policy with a view to determining how well it has been done so far, this is because of the assumption that if the policy is fully entrenched, poverty will be reduced and social change will occur.

#### Research Questions

In undertaking this research, the following research questions were posed-

1. What effect has ABSEEDS had in reducing poverty in Abia State?
2. What impact has funding on ABSEEDS in reducing unemployment?

#### Objective of the Study

The study specifically sets out to-

- a. Assess the role of the ABSEEDS in reducing poverty in Abia State.

- b. Determine how the funding of the ABSEEDS policy has contributed towards employment generation in Abia State.

#### Scope of the Study

This study is carried out in Abia State of Nigeria. Abia State is chosen because it is one of the states in Nigeria characterized by high unemployment rate, high school dropout rate, etc. The content and scope is therefore limited on to the evaluation of the implementation of the policy in Abia state.

#### Significance of the Study

Reduction of poverty in Abia state will bring about improvement in the lives of the people through clearly defined policy options like ABSEEDS. It further will help in the transformation of society by way of value reorientation, wealth creation, employment generation etc. For Nigeria in general and Abia state in particular, the study will help governments at the national and sub-national levels to adequately assess the efforts of public policy initiatives towards development of the society.

#### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the research

1. There is no significant relationship between the implementation of ABSEEDS and poverty reduction in Abia State.
2. There is no significant relationship between funding the ABSEEDS policy and unemployment reduction in Abia State.

#### Conceptual Framework

##### The Concept of Poverty

The word poverty has suffered a lot of misrepresentation despite differences of opinion and understanding of the concept. Indeed, what constitutes poverty in one society may not be poverty in another. It was perhaps for the sake of clarity, that Kalu (2009:6) put forward the concept of clarification when he cited the master philosopher himself, Aristotle who stated the now popular dictum, *initio, disputandi est difinito nominis* (for discussion to be intelligible, it must begin with definition of concepts), accordingly, the term poverty can be described as the absence of basic needs of health living. These include but not limited to health, housing, food and education.

Similarly, Nwaogwugwu (2010:121) agree that there is no conceptual clarity as to the definition of who is poor and meaning of poverty; there is a nuance understanding of poverty particularly from the perspectives of people living in poverty. Nwaogwugwu (2010) therefore attempted a definition when he stated that a poor person is one who is in need or in want and has less than is necessary for survival and

development. Such a person lives a substandard life, often miserable and hapless owing to uncertainties about procuring basic needs for survival or existence on this planet earth.

Owing to insufficiency in providing means of livelihood results in hardship for such a person described as poor. On the other hand poverty could be defined as a state of lacking adequate food or money and the living from hand-to-mouth existence. Therefore a state of poverty is characterized by food insecurity, lack of portable water, inadequate access to modern health facilities, inadequate access to education, feeder roads etc. In like manner, Jhingan (2007) agree that poverty does not lend itself to precise definition, but as a broad generalization, it could be said that a family lives in poverty when its basic needs exceed its available means of satisfying them.

It may have been against this backdrop that in 1994 the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) focused on the issue of poverty and population and called on countries to ensure that reproductive health and rights for all is a critical contribution to sustainable development and the fight against poverty. This has therefore come to bear on the quest to eradicate poverty. According to UNFPA (2010:11) "Poverty perpetuates poor health, gender inequality and rapid population growth. The ICPD recognized that empowering individual women and men with education, equal opportunity and the means to determine the number and spacing of their children are critical to breaking this vicious cycle".

It is in this regard that the issue of poverty and empowerment has become of global concern. Many countries of the world including international and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have wedged in to fight the menace of poverty especially in Nigeria. As put forward by Madza and *Rotary*, "Initially a club for the promotion of friendship through fellowship in Chicago has eventually become significant to the development of humanity as there are over 32'000 Rotary clubs in over 2'000 countries daily initiating service project to address today's challenges including illiteracy, diseases, hunger, poverty, lack of clean water and environmental concerns".

Other NGOs have remained key to the complementing efforts of governments in attending to the challenges of poverty. The UN and its related agencies like World Food Programmed (WFP), World Food Council (WFC), International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UN Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) have all wedged-in in an international effort and attempt aimed at global

poverty reduction. Indeed, Kalu and Mbah (2011) Argues that “poverty, underdevelopment, starvation and disease have long blighted human societies, but only recently have governments involved themselves in attacking these problems in a cooperative global level. In fact, these problems are being tackled today because they are viewed as threats to world peace”.

The issue of poverty reduction in Nigeria has undergone several phases. The government of the Federal Republic has at different times adopted various policies and programmed that were directed at reducing poverty in the country and the problem of poverty has ever remained endemic as more people keep falling within the poverty bracket. Such programmed as the Primary Health Care Scheme, Agricultural Development Programmed (ADP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Better Life for Rural Women Programmed, National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND), Community Banks now, Microfinances Banks etc. were all aimed and designed to reduce poverty.

In spite of the fact that the flagship of African development initiative; the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) was designed to reflect the global nature of poverty particularly in Africa, it does however appear that not much have been done or achieved through it toward reducing poverty in Africa. As pointed out by Igbokwe (2010:403) “Although Africa is one of the most endowed regions of the world, it still remains today the poorest continent with not less than half of the people living below the poverty line on less than 1USD a day. Africa is also the most aid-dependent, most indebted, as well as the (most) marginalized region. The world is presently experiencing an economic revolution, referred to as globalization. Indeed, globalization has increased Africa's marginalization but at the same time, it provides the means for the continent rejuvenation”.

The above suggest that applying appropriate strategies for implementing public policies geared towards poverty reduction can bring about solution to the challenges posed by issues of poverty to a reasonable degree hence the need to evaluate the implementation of the ABSEEDS policy. Though poverty reduction programmed continue to be designed in Nigeria, its implementation has become herculean task despite the fact that Nigeria has continued to provide and offer the world valuable resources of market, labour/skills, competences and investment opportunities. In the face of this gloomy position, what seems apparent is that the various programmed have not done much to help or reduce poverty in Nigeria. It is on the basis of the foregoing that it became expedient for the government to introduce the policy with a view to ensuring that poverty issues are adequately dealt with, hence the policy of Economic, Empowerment and Development Strategies (ABSEEDS) whose implementation is herein being evaluated.



## Policy Evaluation

Evaluation implies the assessment of value, in other words, the act of considering or examining something in order to judge its value, quality, importance, extent, or condition. what is being evaluated in this case is policy which is described here as a course of action or a programmed of actions adopted by a person, group or government or the set of principles on which they are based. While policy science can be seen as the study of making and conducting policy or the study of how policies are made and executed in governments and bureaucracies. This work attempts to evaluate the implementation of the ABSEEDS policy between 2004 and 2007 which is a review of its performance, assessment of achievements, constraints and prospects bearing in mind that this policy is a poverty reduction strategy. Generally speaking, National Economic, Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) from where ABSEEDS derives rest on four key strategies:

1. **Reforming Government and Institutions:** The goal is to restructure, right-size, professionalize with a view to creating an explicit Service Delivery Programmed to re-orientate government agencies towards effective delivery of services to the people. In summary, the goal is to make government and public institutions serve the people; to make government play a developmental role rather than a haven for corruption and rent-seeking. Part of the reforms at this level is to ensure a predictable and sustainable macroeconomic framework, especially through a sustainable fiscal policy framework.

2. **Growing the Private Sector:** ABSEEDS is a development strategy anchored on the private sector as the engine of growth for wealth creation, employment generation and poverty reduction. The government is the enabler, the facilitator, and the regulator. The private sector is the executor, the direct investor and manager of businesses. The key elements of this strategy include the renewed privatization, de-regulation and liberalization programmed (to shrink the domain of the public sector and buoy up the private sector); infrastructure development especially electricity and transport; explicit sectorial strategies for agriculture, industry/SMEs; services (especially tourism, art and culture, and information/communication technology), oil and gas, and solid minerals. The small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are critical for employment generation, and therefore receive special attention under ABSEEDS.

3. **Implementing a Social Charter:** ABSEEDS is about people: it is about their welfare, their health, education, employment, poverty-reduction, empowerment, security and participation. With about 50 percent of the population as children, education is seen under NEEDS as the most important bridge to the future and a powerful instrument of empowerment. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is not just a social



problem; it is a major threat to productivity and the economy. Effective health care delivery system, especially aspects directed at combating the scourge of HIV/AIDS and other preventable diseases (malaria and tuberculosis) is a key strategy for preserving a healthy workforce. Explicit programmed are directed at youth re-orientation and employment. The priority to agriculture (especially to improve the productivity of peasant farmers) is a key element of the poverty reduction strategy since over 50 percent of the poor are in agriculture.

4. Value Re-Orientation: The key message of the ABSEEDS here is that 'it is not business as usual'. The privatization programmed is designed to shrink the domain of the state and hence the pie of distributable rents which have been the haven of public sector corruption and inefficiency. Public sector reforms would also aim to emphasize professionalism, selfless service, and efficiency (value-for-money). Part of the reform agenda is to ensure that hard work is rewarded and that corruption and rent-seeking are punished. The people will be empowered to hold public officials accountable through some Bill of Rights (especially the Freedom of Information Act). The people will be mobilized to re-emphasize the virtues of honesty, hard work, selfless service, moral rectitude, and patriotism. The National Orientation Agency (NOA) and their state counterparts will be strengthened to actively lead the campaign. Government will also encourage the civil society organizations, Community-based organizations, NGOs, private sector organizations, religious and socio-cultural-traditional organizations, etc. to provide leadership in the campaign for a new value system. Agencies and organizations will be encouraged to take specific steps to reward excellence as the demonstration effect could help to motivate imitation of exemplary behaviour by others.

Sharma (2012) in his review of the 1996 World Bank report which described Nigeria as a paradox points out that the poverty level in Nigeria contradicts the country's immense wealth. Among other things, the country is enormously endowed with human, agricultural, petroleum, gas and large untapped solid mineral resources. Particularly worrisome is the fact that the country earned over US\$300 billion from one resource viz; petroleum during the last three decade of the twentieth century; but rather than record remarkable and appreciable progress in national socio-economic development, Nigeria retrogressed to become one of the 25 poorest countries in the world, in the threshold of the new millennium, which is the twenty first century despite the fact that she was among the richest 50 countries of the world in the early 1970s.

This above situation can only be attributed to non-optimization of resources in Nigeria. This has been amply demonstrated by Chukwuka and Chukwuemeka (2012) when they stated that from the period of the independence era of Nigeria, it is instructive to emphasize that the same impunity of resource mal-optimization has continued unabated. In this aspect, one of Nigeria's anti-graft government organizations the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has reported several cases of public resource mismanagement. This situation cannot but breed poverty.

The Background of the ABSEEDS policy no doubt is because of the need to get around the challenges brought about by poverty. This therefore means that poverty reduction is a function of good governance as has been articulated in the content of the ABSEEDS. Good governance according to Osioma (2012) is that process by which public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee sustainable human development in an atmosphere of due process and rule of law, free from abuse and corruption. He further opined that the true test of good governance is the degree to which it delivers on the promises of human rights, civil, cultural, economic, political and social right. It is the thinking of this paper that for poverty to be reduced, it must be within the framework of functional public institutions that drive public policy.

Similarly worried is Ibodje (2012) who noted rather with dismay that Nigeria is now being generally classified as belonging to the group of potentially richest nations of the world, but paradoxically with citizens that are among the poorest on earth. The poverty level he further observed rose from 54.7% in 2004 to 60.9% in 2010 and has continued to rise with North-West region and North-East ranking the highest with 72.2% and 71.2% respectively as of February 2012.

In like manner, Okpata (2012) observed that Nigeria has been grappling with so many socio-economic and political issues of governance which include corruption, provision of infrastructural facilities for the well-being of the citizens, poverty reduction starting from the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programmed (SAP) in 1986 to NEEDS in 2003 and NAPEP in 2010 etc.

#### Evaluation of ABSEEDS Implementation

In making evaluation as it concerns ABSEEDS, it is necessary to place side by side the initial targets of the policy and what has been achieved within the period examined by the study. For instance, whereas ABSEEDS target was a minimum annual GDP growth rates of 5% in 2004, 6% in 2005 and 2006, and 7% in 2007; actual output in terms of real GDP according to the CBN Annual Report (2007) was 6.2% as of the end of the evaluation period. This clearly shows a shortfall in growth projection. In setting the above goals according to NPC (2004), the government took into account

the fact that per capita GDP in Nigeria was among the lowest in the world during the 1980s and 1990s, costing it decades of development. In the 1990s GDP grew just by 2.2% between 1999 and 2003 and this is far lower the 4.2% per capita growth needed to significantly reduce poverty.

To finance the ABSEEDS programmed, the Abia State government according to <http://nigeriaworld.com/> will be to increase the efficiency of resource use by curbing wasteful expenditures (by plugging all leakages in public expenditure and sources of revenue and reforming institutions), selling assets, reforming the tax system, increasing the efficiency of resource use, mobilizing domestic savings, and attracting foreign direct investment and overseas development assistance. However, as of 2007, according to <http://nigeriaworld.com/> which is the end of the evaluation period, Abia State government was still talking about optimizing resources towards ensuring effective implementation of policies.

ABSEEDS represents an agreed plan of action by the people of Abia State aimed at alleviating the persistent general problems of poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, health, environmental degradation, insecurity and need for value re-orientation. It is a response to the changing national and global demands and the need to place Abia State in the league of prosperous states in Nigeria.

According to ABSEEDS (2009), its mission shall focus on the following objectives-

- i. To transform the state into prosperous and self-sustaining economy and will improve the living standards of the people.
- ii. To fight poverty and penury from all angles.
- iii. To bring about improvements in the welfare and quality of life of the citizenry.
- iv. To engender grassroots and integrated rural development and concentrate resources on the provision of basic infrastructure and amenities across the state. Tempo of infrastructural development in the state will be accelerated.
- v. To evolve a new political culture that is transparent and accountable.
- vi. To promote staff morale and motivation as well as strengthen the rule of law.

The overriding policy thrusts of ABSEEDS are poverty reduction/alleviation and sustainable economic growth through the redefinition of the role of government, promotion of a private sector-led economy and sustenance of good governance through inclusive governance, public sector reform, transparency and accountability.

Considering the tortuous path Nigeria has been through, National Planning Commission (2010) posits that the SEEDS programmed cannot afford to become a misguided effort and wasted opportunity. Indeed, the content of the programmed is most apt in view of the more than two decades of deterioration that the economy has been through. Nigeria truly needs some sort of 'crises management' not only to grow the national economy, but more importantly to avert a total collapse of her body polity and infrastructure.

#### Theoretical Foundation

This work is hinged on modernization theory which Samuel Huntington (1927) viewed as a model of both social and economic development. Igwe (2005) points out that modernization theory brings about social change and it is important to note that the implementation of ABSEEDS through appropriate public policy will result into modern society where social, economic and political empowerment is expected to bring about development. Modernization theory debates the necessity, stages, means and forms of transformation of new states from underdevelopment to development, instability to stability, poverty to prosperity etc. and found out that it could move a new state from the periphery to a place at least nearer the middle if not exact center of the international global economy. It is on the basis of this that modernization theory becomes both desirable and applicable to this study.

It should be noted that Armer and Katsillis (2011) have posited that there is no single modernization theory but rather an assortment of related theories and perspectives; important contributors to this theoretical variants include Hagan (1962), Berger, Berger and Kellner (1973), Bendix (1964), Moore (1967), Tiryakian (1985), Nolan and Lenski (1999) including useful reviews by Harrison (1988), Harper (1993) and Jaffee (1998).

#### Methodology

The methodology deals with research design and procedures for treating the data collected. Consequently the following procedures were involved in research survey: Research design, area of study, population of the study, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection and method of data analysis.

#### Population

The target population of this study consisted of the citizenry and government officials in the relevant Ministries in Abia State with whom they have interface. These Ministries are Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Sports and Youth Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Abia State Reorientation Agency and NEPAD. A population of

2'000 respondents made up of 1'463 government officials from the Ministries, Departments and Agencies listed above and 537 others made up of Auto Mechanics (74), Hair Dressers (57), Tri-Cycle (Keke) Drivers (207), Tailors (101), Bus Drivers (98) participated in this study.

#### Sample Size Determination

To determine the sample size, the Taro Yamani's formula was employed. The formula stated that;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + 2N(e)^2}$$

Where

n=sample size

N=Number of population

e=random error

1=a constant

On the basis of the above 333 became the sample size determined as follows;

$$\frac{2'000}{1 + 2000(0.005)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2'000}{1 + 2000(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{2000}{1 + 5}$$

$$n = \frac{2000}{6}$$

$$n = 333.33$$

$$n = 333$$

#### Sampling Procedure

For the purpose of questionnaire distribution, the R. Kumaison formula (proportional allocation) was employed which stated that;

$$Nh = \frac{nNh}{N}$$

### *Where*

n = Total Sample Size

N<sub>h</sub> = The Number of Items in each stratum in the Population

N = Population Size

n<sub>h</sub> = The number of unit allocation to each stratum

### Instrumentation

The research instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire adapted to the Likert Five (5) point rating scale viz: Strongly Agree (SA)-5 points, Agree (A)-4 points, Neutral (N)-3 point, Disagree (D)-2 point, Strongly Disagree (SD)- 1 point.

### Validity and Reliability of Instrument

To ensure the validity, the instrument of data collection was measured for both the content and face validity. Whereas the test re-tests method was used to ascertain the degree of consistency and reliability of the instrument.

### Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire is presented and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Data collected was decoded, tallied and values assigned to the responses according to the order of research questions and hypotheses. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while all the hypotheses are tested and analyzed using Chi-Square at 0.05 level of significance.

### Summary of Research and Discussion on Findings

From the results of the data analyzed, the following were identified-

- (1) The ABSEEDS has not contributed in poverty reduction in Abia State.
- (2) Funding of the ABSEEDS policy has not helped to reduce unemployment in Abia State showing therefore that funding is poor.

It is revealed from the findings of this research that the ABSEEDS policy “between” the period 2004-2007 has glowing objectives but its implementation has not made significant impact in reducing poverty in Abia State. For instance, from the questionnaire used to collect data and information from the respondents, such variables like policy evaluation, implementation and ABSEEDS, were used to find out how public policy has helped in poverty reduction in Abia State.

However, from the analysis of research question 1 and the data collected for hypothesis one (1) of the respondents, it showed that the ABSEEDS policy has not contributed significantly in poverty reduction in Abia State. The implication of this finding is that in as much as the ABSEEDS policy is lofty, there is need to bring

political will to bear on its implementation, otherwise there will not be a coherent strategy for its implementation and the result will be either failed or near failed attempt or a combination of both at achieving its objectives which include poverty reduction, reduction in unemployment etc.

This is in line with the argument of Ekwonwa (2009) that if the more advanced capitalist countries had co-operated at the time of their penetration and assisted (by way of building and sustaining strong institutions like the bureaucracy, such initiatives would have been pursued to logical conclusions) rather than exploiting and oppressing their host countries, progressive development would have occurred in these areas; thereby reducing poverty in the colonized areas such as Nigeria. The issue of funding of the ABSEEDS policy towards reducing unemployment in Abia State was tested in cluster two of the questionnaire items. The analysis of the data revealed that the poor or inadequate provision of funds to meet the objectives of the programmed has not helped to reduce unemployment. More persons will be gainfully employed if the components of the policy are properly provided for financially or monetarily, that way, unemployment will reduce and policy objective will be achieved.

#### Conclusion

The findings of this research have important information in policy, politics and the economy. The identifying of the need for the evaluation of the implementation of ABSEEDS towards poverty reduction in Abia State has great developmental value. Since poverty reduction efforts has remained a current issue in politics and economy the variables treated in this research will serve as guide for investigating efforts made in this regard in other States of Nigeria as well as evaluating its Federal Government equivalent viz NEEDS.

The study will make the Abia State government to articulate or evolve more enduring and better ways for implementing policies especially the type that is aimed at poverty reduction. This can on its own catalyze an economic value chain and it is on this basis that the study will help to promote linkages in agriculture, industry, trade and investment, finance, sports (human kinetics) as well as in human and infrastructure development. Other areas will include women and youth empowerment etc.

Finally the study will be of utmost importance to governments of both national and sub-national levels to work toward partnerships that will occasion synergy for solutions to both economic and social problems such as poverty, unemployment, value reorientation etc in their areas or spheres of influence. The study therefore provides political scientists, administrators/policy makers, economists, other social



scientists as well as generalists including political, community and opinion leaders the valuable information on best practices that can lead to poverty reduction.

### Recommendations

Following the findings of this study, recommendations are made thus-

(1) That the government of Abia State should developed and evolve best ways and strategies for implementing public policy. The most important of the best ways is to have political ability to execute such policies since policies are usually for the overall economic, social, political well-being of the citizenry.

(2) That Abia State government should be more proactive and perhaps radical in developing home grown solutions like ABSEEDS to the multifaceted and plethora of problems facing the people. Such radical approaches will more likely generate the much needed positive change or bring about the desired changes in the lives of the people including poverty reduction.

(3) That Abia State should make concerted and deliberate effort towards accountability, transparency and good governance such that jobs are created while implementing such policies designed to improve the lives of the people. This means that every policy created must have a corresponding funding allocated for its full and proper implementation such that the objectives of the policy are realized.

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