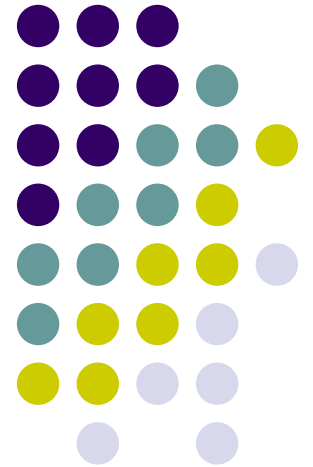


The Role of Parliament in Poverty Reduction

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Introduction

- Parliamentarians have an important role to play in enacting good laws that can lead to poverty reduction and the attainment of sustainable democracy.
- Parliaments and parliamentarians play a variety of roles.
- An appropriate legal framework to guide poverty reduction efforts that responds to the needs of the citizenry is needful



Intro Cont'd

- An appropriate legal framework to guide poverty reduction efforts that responds to the needs of the citizenry is needful.
- The process of legislative involvement in the development of poverty reduction frameworks necessitates an analysis of efforts geared towards the attainment of poverty reduction.
- To this end, a comprehensive review of the poverty reduction strategy plan process is imperative.



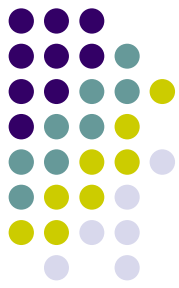
Poverty situation in Nigeria

- Poverty is among the three most important problems that have contributed to human crisis in the world – deepening poverty, social disintegration and environmental degradation.
- Nigeria has gradually deteriorated from an advantage and manageable stage to a worrisome stage

Poverty Situation cont'd



- it is ironic that Nigeria which happens to be the largest explorer of crude oil in Africa and the sixth in the world host the third largest number of poor people after china and India



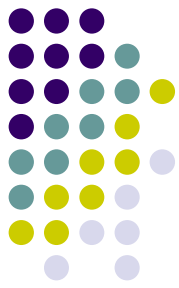
Poverty Situation cont'd

- At the rate of US \$1 per day incidence of poverty increased from 28.1% in 1980 to 46.3% in 1985 and declined to 42.7% in 1992 but increased again to 65.6% in 1996.
- If the rate of US \$2 per day is used to measure the poverty level, the percentage of those living below the poverty line will jump to 90.8%.
- Nigeria fares very poorly in all the development indices.



Poverty Situation cont'd

- Poverty in Nigeria has three unique characteristics.
- First statistics show that majority of poor Nigerians are located in the rural areas.
- The second is the clear difference that exists in incidence of poverty across the geopolitical in zones in Nigeria. In 1997 the incidence of poverty across the zones were as follows:
- North East 68%; North West 62%; North Central 53%; South East 79.5%, South West 74.1% and South South 78.6% with a national figure of 69.2%.



Poverty Situation cont'd

- The third is the existence of disparities in poverty between males and females.
- This is not surprising as it has been documented that women account for 70% of the world's population
- This situation will be the crux of issues the parliaments need to engage with in order to effectively carry out their function in achieving poverty eradication in Nigeria in line with the Millennium Development Goals.



Role of parliament:

- The parliament in every country has three main roles of legislation, oversight and representation
- These are intended to be the ethos of their day to day functions and provide the basis for their accountability to their constituencies.
- parliamentary procedure that is enduring must inculcate the habit of firm consideration to the plight of its electorates.



Role of parliament cont'd

- A parliament which is borne of elected representative cannot but centre its legislative proceedings towards the betterment of its electorates of which in the Nigeria context, poverty eradication is paramount.

Poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria



- Recognizing the unwholesome effect of poverty among Nigerians, over the years various Nigerian governments has advertently initiated various poverty reduction programs.
- The efforts geared towards poverty eradication in Nigeria include SAP, NDE, NAPEP and more recently NEPAD, NEEDS, SEEDS, LEEDS

Poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria



- the extents to which these programs and strategies have impacted in the lives of millions of Nigerian are questionable
- Practical evidence and official statistics indicate that in spite of these efforts, meeting the MDG goal of eradicating extreme poverty of Hunger in Nigeria remains far fetched.

Role of Parliament in poverty reduction



- It has been documented that one of the greatest challenges in addressing poverty is that of unequal distribution of resources.
- It is therefore the role of parliament to legislate on probable ways within which scarce or unequal resources are distributed in order to achieve equal distribution of amenities.

Role of Parliament in poverty reduction



- a sound and healthy legislative framework is advisable in attacking the poverty scourge which is holding 70% of Nigerians to ransom.

Parliamentary commitment to Eradicating poverty



- Development of a legislative framework that will lead to the attainment of the MDGs, NEEDS and other development targets to which Nigeria has committed to;
- A legislative process that will enhance adequate monitoring, evaluation and other appraisals of various programs embarked upon by the parliament in achieving a poverty free society.
- Advocating proper implementation of the basic right of the citizenry

Parliamentary commitment to Eradicating poverty cont'd



- Adequate and sustainable parliamentary framework that will ensure good partnership within and outside the shore of the nation in building sound trust among development agencies and international bodies that promote the quest for poverty eradication
- Advocacy for budgeting processes that is in favour of the poor and ensures adequate implementation of the budget.
- Promoting transparency and accountability in budget implementation in line with approved programs and actions for poverty eradication for the benefits of the citizens.

Conclusion and recommendation



- The new approach to poverty eradication should produce public policies that will lead to poverty eradication in Nigeria.
- Parliamentarians are central to this process.
- The parliament is the key to the achievement of the desired change that will move Nigeria to a new course aimed at eradicating poverty and assuring their constituents a life of dignity.

Conclusion & Recommendation cont'd



- It is recommended that a poverty eradication policy for Nigeria should promote a more nuanced understanding of poverty, participation of poor, empowerment of the poor, good governance, transparency and accountability, combat gender inequity a, promote right-based approach and pro-poor policies.