

The Implementation of National Social Investment Programme and the Role of National Home-Grown School Feeding in Human Capital Development in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) which included National School Feeding programme was one of the intervention programmes that were being implemented in Nigeria for effective human and economic development in the country. Though the seventeen goals of the SDGs are being implemented, Nigerians, especially the rural dwellers have not been aware of these goals, especially that of quality education. This study is aimed at examining the success or near success of National Social Investment programme implementation in Enugu State, Nigeria, from the angle of School feeding which impacts human capital development. The efforts of the SDGs in the state to improve education and alleviate poverty have not actually been felt much by the people, hence, creating doubt and raising such questions as to how effective is the implementation of the National Social Investment Programme and how has it contributed to poverty reduction in Enugu State. In the course of the research, the theory of "Good Enough Governance" propounded by Griddle Merilee in 2007 (Griddle M, 2007) is applied. The findings revealed that the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) implementation had played significant roles in development of the state, yet, social inequality gap, poverty and unemployment still persisted in the state. The paper opines that adequate community involvement and transparent administrative structures will help in the successful implementation of this social policy.

Keywords: *Educational Development, Poverty Reduction, Nation Social Investment Programme, Good Enough Governance.*

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs') has education as goal four in its agenda and is conspicuously given prominence and total acceptance by member countries. The MDGs which had 2015 as terminal period of optimal achievement were all revalued for sustainability due to the successful implementation of the MDGs, hence Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Besides being the fourth goal in both development goals, all other goals revolve around education as the most effective goal that affects all the goals.

Based on the above and to achieve qualitative education, the United Nations included **school feeding programme** as a means of realizing mass school enrolment and gender equality. In accordance with the United Nations' MDGs/SDGs, Nigeria keyed into it with the implementations of all the programmes of the goals, hence, the introduction of social investment interventions and poverty reduction programmes to improve human development

of the citizenry by providing access to economic resources for productive purpose (Lamidi & Igbokeh, 2021).

The National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) is one of such intervention programmes being implemented in Nigeria. Nigeria as a country is richly endowed with abundant deposits of crude oil and natural gas, very fertile and arable land, a perfect climate and large human population ready to work (Ajakaiye & Olomola, 2003). However, in spite of the beautiful macroeconomic outlook of the country, it is yet classified among the poorest and least developed countries in the world, especially in terms of education, socio-economic and human capital development. The idea of social investment or protection policies towards enhancing human development is a global phenomenon and which has in the 21st century turned to be the new bride policy of developing nations in their bid to reduce endemic poverty and enhance human capital development outcomes among the population. The Less Developed Countries (LDCs) are beginning to take steps towards a comprehensive social protection system (Odiase, 2020). Countries in Asia, Africa and Latin American have started adopting SIPs as an antipoverty programme by choice to pull indigent and vulnerable citizens out of poverty (Millian et al, 2019).

As a result of this, Latin American countries such as Mexico, Peru, Brazil and Uruguay began in the 1990s to implement social policies such as Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT) and Homegrown School Feeding Programmes (HSFP). In fact, a handful of research results are available on the short and long term impacts of such interventions of human development and related outcomes observed by those studies (Millian et al, 2019). The study provides an overview of available evidence on how Social Investment (effects on School Feeding Programme) influences school enrolment and human development outcomes. It focuses on social investment issues especially on National School feeding, Child Literacy and Enrollment at schools. Nigeria is one of the highest populated countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with a population of about 200 million people, of which 67% is made up of people between the ages of 6 – 34 years (NPC, 2022). The process of enlarging people's freedom and opportunities and improving their well-being has grossly been hampered by weak social-political and economic variables, such as poor technological known-how and dearth of infrastructure, lack of quality education and poverty-stricken communities due to lack of basic needs and security. These indices of human capital development have always anticipated the attention of government through communities, investment, enactment of policies and creation of enabling environment, for healthy participation of citizens and stakeholders in such areas. Unfortunately, these all-important issues have not been adequately addressed by government to reflect their deserved pride of place in the scheme of things in Nigeria.

Apart from this, National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) in Nigeria is a brainchild poverty alleviation programme of the SDGs which was adopted by Muhammadu Buhari civilian administration. On assumption of office in 2015 as President of Nigeria, Buhari initiated the N-SIP under the supervision of the National Social Investment Office. His intention for creating the programme was to ensure more equitable distribution of resources to the poor and vulnerable segment of the population, including children, the youths, women and the less privileged in society (Ibrahim, 2018). To this end, N-SIP is split into four separate schemes to effectively address poverty and speed up human development. The four schemes include N-Power, Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) and Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) (N-Power, 2018). Moreover, National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) was a strategy

for combating poverty and unemployment. The NSIP scheme was created for citizens to exit from the twin evils of poverty and unemployment including Job Creation and Youth Empowerment (N-Power) thereby improving household ability to absorb economic shock.

On the other hand, the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) was created to enhance school enrolment, improve nutrition, health and stimulate the growth of our local economies by sourcing food items from local farmers which strengthens the Local Agricultural Economies, Creates Employment Opportunities with jobs. This school feeding is simply the provision of food to children through schools. According to Save the Children (2007), school feeding would be grouped into two broad categories: in-school meals and take-home rations where families are given food if their children attend school. Historically, in-school meals have been the most popular modality of school feeding interventions. The school feeding can be in turn grouped into two common categories of feeding programme that provides meals and programme that provides high-energy biscuits or snacks to generate greater impacts on school enrolment, retention rates, and reduce gender or social gaps (Afriadi, 2007). The aim of the study is to examine the National school feeding programme by evaluating the contribution of the National Social Investment Programme to poverty reduction in Enugu State between from 2017 to 2022.

In the Human Poverty Index, the poor mostly occupy the informal sector of the economy and lack job security or social security (Lustig, N., Arias, O. & Rigolini, J.; 2002). Following this, the N-SIP was introduced to alleviate sufferings of the vulnerable in the state through N-power, CCT, GEEP and HGSFP.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Though the seventeen goals of the SDGs are being implemented, many Nigerians, especially the rural dwellers have not been aware of these goals, especially the goal four of the SDGs which is quality education. However, in spite of the beautiful macroeconomic outlook of the country, Nigeria is still classified among the poorest and least developed countries of the world, especially in terms of education, socio-economic and human capital development. As a result, there has been skepticism about the real effect or impacts of these goals on the people, especially with regards to the qualitative education. From goal one which borders on poverty reduction to goal seventeen that is on partnership, the effects have not actually been felt by the Nigerians especially the Enugu people. This is evidently felt through persistent widening social inequality gap, poverty and unemployment in the state. Based on this, the research assesses the implementation of NSIP through HGSFP to ascertain its level of success or otherwise in Enugu state, Nigeria.

Research questions

In view of the above ambivalence, the following research questions were raised for the study:

1. How did the implementation of the National Social Investment Programme contribute to poverty reduction in Enugu State from 2017 to 2022?
2. What were the effects of National School Feeding Programme on Schools' enrolment and literacy in Enugu State between 2017 and 2022?

The study has both theoretical and empirical significance: Theoretically, the study contributes immensely to existing literature on National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), especially on National School Feeding Programme in Enugu state, Nigeria. The discussions

will unravel the basic tenets of the theory and bring out its relevant ‘good enough governance’ theory to bear in relation to the study. Empirically, the study equally seeks to assess the extent to which the goals of the National Social Investment Programme were being met

Descriptive and Survey Research Design were applied as the method. The descriptive research design was used to analyze data that investigated the application of certain motivational elements to performance or behaviour modification. The purpose was to establish whether such relationship existed or not and if it did exist, the degree or significance of such relationships.

National Social Investment Programme (NSIP)

This is a social policy for the deprived, the relegated and other vulnerable classes in society. Social Investment is the policy designed to strengthen people’s skills and capacities and support them to participate fully in employment and social life (Wilson, 2014). The idea of social investment has become increasingly relevant in today’s socio-political and economic environment, especially developing ones which investments ought to go beyond the confines of mere providing employment and skills to individuals, but should be helping organizations expand their businesses and economic prospects. Wilson (2014) writing on Social Investment, states that markets involving many players or stakeholders should be the high net worth of individual economic measurement.

In Nigeria, social investment is usually conceived as a public programme reserve of the government (Lamidi & Igbokwe, 2021). At times it is geared towards reducing the rate of youth restiveness in some states of the federation. In view of this, Lamidi & Igbokwe (2021) opine that Nigeria introduced a series of youth programmes in the 1960s aiming at facilitating social investment for the youth population. For instance, the periods between 1975 and 1979 saw the establishment of the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and introduction of the Green Revolution, in 1980. These programmes and many others that came after them were designed to provide basic infrastructure, diversify the economy and reduce unemployment as well as achieve dynamic self-sustaining growth and raise the living standard of the people (Lamidi & Igbokwe, 2021). In line with this, the administration of President Muhammed Buhari designed and implemented the ongoing National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) as a strategy for combating poverty and unemployment. The NSIP scheme was created to enable citizens exit from the twin evils of poverty and unemployment as earlier mentioned through capacity building, investment and direct financial support. NSIP generally is aimed at reducing poverty and vulnerable household by having opportunity to income good livelihood and providing access to targeted funds, thereby improving household ability to absorb economic shock.

National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in Enugu State

The National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) was created to enhance school enrolment, improve nutrition, health and stimulate the growth of our local economies by sourcing food items from local farmers which strengthens the Local Agricultural Economies, creates employment opportunities with jobs in catering services among the urban and rural dwellers. The National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) is the fourth scheme of the NSIP. NHGSFP is a government led N70.000 meal-per-day school feeding programme that aims to improve the health and educational outcomes of public primary school pupils. The scheme uses farm produce locally grown by smallholder farmers to produce children’s “nutritious” mid-day meal on every school day. The programme is intended to link local famers to the education sector by facilitating their access to the school feeding market

(Action Health Inc, 2017). The current HGSFP started in 2016, and according to the federal government, over 300 million meals have been served to more than 7.5 million pupils across 46,000 public primary schools in 22 states (Action Health Inc, 2017).

In Enugu State, the NHGSFP was feeding 85980 pupils in 803 schools with 945 cooks attached and empowered. N-SIP is tailored towards alleviating the suffering of unemployed youths, the poor, idle and vulnerable women and children in the society. This class of people is basically not able to provide for themselves and their families (Shunmuga, Sekar & Subburaj, 2014). However, a major finding of the World Bank poverty assessment in the 1990s shows that Nigeria's poverty level was rising at an unprecedented high rate (World Bank, 2001: Bloom & Sachs, 1998; Hanmer et al, 1999; Arimah, 2004).

Poverty situation since then has been compounded by nagging economic issues, such as inflation, intermittent devaluation of currency, corruption and looting of public funds by public office holders, internal communal conflicts, insurgency, banditry and other environmental circumstances (Aigbokhan, 2000).

Apart from the above, most people, both the relegated and the deprived in Enugu live in rural and semi-urban areas with highly underdeveloped social infrastructure and weak economic activities, evidenced in shanty settlements with inadequate provision of portable water, epileptic electricity, very bad roads and dilapidated industries, subsistence farming and petty trading. So, this programme came as a source of relief to them. The smallholder farmers became empowered through their engagement in the programme. Those among the rural or semi-urban area dwellers with culinary skills were employed as cooks.

According to Orodho (2009), many parents who had hitherto failed to send their children to school are reportedly having a change of mind to send them to school because of the provision of a meal a day by the Federal Government in some schools across the country. It was equally learnt that in many cases, some parents are withdrawing their children from private schools to public schools to enable them benefit from the free school feeding programme. Accordingly, the decrease in the out of schools' enrolment should have been cheering news as it portends improvement in the quality of life and the desire of the country to fight poverty through education.

However, the very scheme that seems to have spurred the increase in school enrolment in some parts of the country, especially in Enugu, is gradually losing steam and may end up like any other government programme owing to huge corruption and lack of commitment on the part of the states and even the Federal Government to ensure the success of the scheme (Orodho, 2009). This stems from the fact that there are no adequate community involvements and transparent administrative structures for constant monitoring of the policy implementation. Therefore, it is clear now that while there is a visible success of the programme implementation in the state, it evaporates over time like morning dew, thereby making the success recorded appear to the people as if nothing had happened.

On the other hand, in order to have a strong grasp of all the information above, there was a visit to all the selected schools in seven local governments in Enugu state. Interviews were conducted on the vendors, the teachers and the primary school management. During the interaction with the people involved, it was obvious that the feeding programme geometrically increased the school enrolment. Most of the schools had their pupils' number surged, triggered by the new intake during each new term.

As a result, some of the schools were having problems of space as the junior classes were filled and in most cases the classes were over populated as against the UNESCO recommended 25 – 35 pupils per class/ a teacher. So, with this, one can see the relevance of the policy in Enugu state.



Pupils being fed in school during a visit by the researchers

By extension, the impact of this policy as seen above affirms the fact that in developing countries, almost 60million children go to school hungry every day and about 40 percent are from Africa. Providing school meals is therefore vital in nourishing children. In Enugu state, parents are motivated to send their children to school instead of keeping them at home to work or care for siblings (Ahmed 2004).



Children already enjoying their meal in school

Social Investment and Human Development

The expression, ‘Human Development’ is widely used and understood in different ways by different authors. The expression consists of two key words separately – ‘Human’ and ‘Development’. It is therefore right to look at these two words before juxtaposing them and forming the major variable of the subject or topic of this study. Longman dictionary of contemporary English defines human as “belonging or relating to people especially as opposed to machines or animals”. This definition means that whenever the term “human” is mentioned, it applies to people either as individuals or groups. Thus, we can make references to human beings, human science, human resources, human nature and human shield etc.

On the other hand, development is also defined by the same Longman dictionary as the “process of gradually becoming bigger, stronger or more advanced”. By this definition it can be inferred that development is not just restricted to living beings but as well affects inanimate or lifeless and abstract phenomena. As such, one can talk of political development, national development or economic development. According to Dudley Sear (1969), Development occurs when there is reduction in Inequality, reduction in unemployment and reduction in poverty. Then, Human Development Report Office (HDRO) of the UNDP defines Human Development as the product of global discussion on the link between economic growth and development during the second half of the 20th century. The growing call to deemphasize Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita economic growth as both the leading objective and indicator of national progress and wellbeing in many countries started in the 1960s. in the 1970s and 80s, development debates considered using alternative focuses beyond GDP, including putting greater emphasis on employment, redistribution with growth and then, whether people had their basic needs met.

For the purpose of this study, Human Development is defined as a gradual but consistent increase in the general welfare and progress of a group, usually members of a community, state or nation. Human development and poverty reduction or alleviation have often been used to mean the same thing, though there may be slight difference which may not so much draw the attention of this study as the concepts are also used interchangeably **International Perspective on Social Investment and Poverty Reduction Programmes**

Most countries at the international level have recognized that poverty is a global phenomenon and which has proved to exist in every society, no matter how highly developed, and therefore, have sought measures to tackle, reduce and or eliminate it. The European nations are among countries that have taken the issues of social investment programme very seriously (Onah & Olise, 2019; Bouget et al, 2015). The European Union (EU) Commission had initiated a Social Investment Package (SIP) in 2013 for its member countries to adopt and fine tune to suit their individual national circumstances. This framework covers such welfare policies as child education, longevity education, health, housing support and active labor market policies (Bouget et al, 2015, in Onah & Olise, 2019). Following this, a well over 30 member countries in Europe had long embraced this policy following the Commission’s release of its report in 2013.

However, economic growth, arguably, is one of the principal instruments for poverty alleviation and for pulling the poor out of poverty through productive employment (Singh & Chudasama, 2020). Studies from Brazil, China, Costa Rica, and Indonesia show that rapid economic growth lifted a significant number of poor people out of financial poverty between 1970 and 2000. Similarly, Ito Peng of the University of Toronto did a comparative study of the

social investment policy reforms that were implemented by two Anglo-Saxon countries of Canada and Australia and two East Asian countries of Japan and South Korea in the 1990s. In his study, he found out that the two groups of countries shared similar templates of social investment policies but differed in their target groups. While Canada and Australia focused on what Peng referred to as “Invest in the future” model, which targeted mainly children, Japan and South Korea approached their social investment from a more general “Human Capital Activation” model, with the differences stemming from variation in socio-economic and political milieu (Peng, 2011; Onah & Olise, 2020). Moreover, Singh & Chudasama (2020), writing on evaluating poverty alleviation strategies in a developing country, tried to identify critical factors responsible for poverty alleviation in India with the aid of Fuzzy Cognitive Maps (FCM). They applied the FCM simulation to evaluate the efficacy of existing poverty alleviation approaches in India, which included community organization based micro-financing, capability and social security, market-based and good governance (Ambarkhane, 2013). Micro-financing for the poor and vulnerable in society and economic growth illuminate on the finance aspect of poverty but at the same time, do not reflect its cultural, social and psychological dimensions (World Bank, 2001).

For this reason above, perhaps, the World Development Report (1990) endorsed a poverty alleviation strategy that combined enhanced economic growth with provisions of essential social services directed towards the poor while creating financial and social safety nets. In this regard Singh & Chudasama (2020), submitted that the promotion of both non-farm as well as farm activities is a pathway to economic development and poverty alleviation in developing and even the developed countries, the world over (Khan & Arefin, 2013). Most importantly, the ideas of good governance have continued to gain prominence in development discourses since a good governance approach towards poverty alleviation has become a prerequisite for obtaining financial aid and grants from donor agencies (Davis, 2017).

Apart from this, it is obvious that poverty is among the most dreaded social problems in the world today, and more prevalent in the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America (Cobbinah et al, 2013, Duguara, 2008; Knowles, 2000; Todaro & Smith, 2006). The perception and argument on what constitutes poverty (Nwadike, 2018) varies among communities and nations in magnitude and in scope. However, some principles or indicators of poverty have emerged and which help to shed more light on the meaning of the term. These indicators have categorized poverty into absolute poverty, relative poverty and material poverty. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed a measure known as the Human Development Index (HDI) as standard measure of development although the gauge is more gender sensitive (Fosu, 2007). As time went on, other measures baring on Amartya Sen’s ‘capability’ concept such as civil and political rights have been added also. Following this, Sen defined poverty as not merely a matter of actual income but as an inability to acquire certain minimum capabilities (Chudasama, 2020). HDI has accordingly shown that in countries where the level of poverty is so high, there is always the tendency that such country exhibits low value of human development (Fosu, 2007).

According to Ajakaiye, D.O. & Olomola, A.S. (2003), poverty is a generic term which affects morality, knowledge, economy, religion, politics, character and emotion. Pillari & Newsome (1998) in their study entitled Human behavior in the social environment families, groups, organizations and communities defined poverty as a structural problem causing homelessness, unemployment, and oppression.

Poverty of an individual means that the individual is persistently and unchangeably lacking in basic necessities of life (food, shelter, clean water, clothing, medicine, education, knowledge, electricity) etc (Adeyemi, 2007). The poverty line may differ from country to country and over time too. But to simplify comparability across countries and over time, the poverty line has been standardized as a daily income of US\$1.00 at international standard (Fosu, 2007). Owing to this, the UNDP thereafter came up with Human Poverty Index (HPI) for the developing countries. The measure is intended to reflect deprivations in the following indexes of Ajakaiye, D.O. & Olomola, A.S. (2003), which include: Human development, long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living (Fosu, 2007).

Education Development and School Feeding Enrolment in Enugu State

The National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) as stated earlier is a government led N70 per day school feeding programme that aims to improve the health and educational outcomes of public primary school pupils. In 2004, the Federal Government of Nigeria piloted the implementation of Home Grown School Feeding beginning with 12 states selected from the six geopolitical zones, including Enugu. The current NHGSFP started in 2016 and according to the Federal Government, over 300 million meals have been served to more than 7.5 million pupils in 46,000 Public Primary Schools in 22 states. Afrid (2007) contended that there are `indications of a significant swing in thinking about school feeding and many elements of this new thinking are being promoted keenly under the rubric of “home grown school feeding”.

Each year, the World Food Programme provides millions of school children with food in the world as an incentive to lure children to school and maintain their attendance. The programme targets areas where enrolment ratios are lowest and which can have greatest effect towards improving education standards of the children (WFP, 1996). In 2001, the WFP launched a global campaign to expand access to education for millions of children in the world. By then, there were 66 million school children attending school, hungry in the world (World Food Program, 2009). According to Ahmed (2004), school meals increased pupils' participation in school. Ahmed found that school feeding increased pupils' enrolment, reduced dropout rate, increased attendance and improved performance in participation to schools compared to their counterparts where no feeding programs were available.

In Enugu state, the programme set a stage for the employment of smallholder farmers for supplies of farm produce thereby linking them to education. These farmers before used to have limited market which forced them into living from hand to mouth. This is owing to the fact that they do not have enough steady capital to stay and grow in the farming activities. This produced ripple effect in the government's efforts to develop the state. Of course, human capital development translates to societal development. This apart, cooks were engaged too. Moreover, the rise in the enrolment population in schools as a result of the programme led the state government into employing more manpower in those schools to cater for them. Not only this, the infrastructures in these schools experienced pressure, thereby forcing the government to erect more to accommodate the growing demands. So, it was a relief to the people in the state, especially those living on the fringe of cities. But did it last?

Apart from this, the introduction of the school feeding is traced to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) initiative and several conferences held thereafter by African leaders which aimed to tackle issues, such as peace, security, good economic, political and corporate governance and to make the continent an attractive destination for foreign

investment. Some of these developments include the 'New Partnership for African Development' which according to the blueprint is a pledge by African leaders, based on common vision and a firm and shared conviction, to eradicate poverty and to place their countries on the path of sustainable growth and development and, at the same time, to participate actively in the world economy and politics. Also, the 'Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program and the 'Millennium Hunger Task Force' amongst others were initiatives which were designed to link school feeding to agricultural development through the purchase and use of locally produced food (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh, Jukes, & Drakes, 2009)

FINDINGS

During a visit to the Enugu State Universal Basic Education Board and some selected schools in the state, it was discovered that the State Government built so many schools and equip them with modern education facilities. These schools were built in line with the federal Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC). The Universal Basic Education Commission contributed 100% to the state's contributory fund for education development. Though this was part of the duties of the UBEC, the Enugu State Government has been religiously and effectively contributed to this universal educational development. The Enugu State Basic Education Board, built more than 350 schools containing 3, classrooms, 5 classrooms, 6 classroom and sometime with adjoining offices. The State government built over 750 toilets in the schools for conveniences. All the toilets were built in accordance with modern facilities that met international standard.

In fact, the buildings were extended to all the basic education classes (from primary one to junior secondary schools). Therefore, it is worthy to note that the free and compulsory education in basic classes was vigorously adhered to in Enugu State. It became clearer and evidential in this era of National Home Grown School Feeding and National School Feeding that the government had set a stage for the realization of the social policy in the state.

Outside of this, reports from many of the states that are currently executing the programme, including Enugu state, showed the personnel's gradual slide into a lackluster performance in the implementation of the programme. This started manifesting in the quality of the food being served the children by the vendors. Often times, the quality of the food apart from being poor, would be inadequate and not sufficient to go round the pupils that they were meant for. In some cases, the vendors employed by the government to supply food to the participating schools were being shortchanged by the officials of state education ministry in charge of disbursement, while those who were sent to supervise the process were not committed to carry out their duty. This however aroused the interest of the researcher to find out the effects of the programme on not just students enrollment alone but also academic performance of students and class attendance of primary school pupils, including the impacts on unemployment and poverty reduction.

CONCLUSION

The NSIP implementation in Enugu state through HGSFP from the discourse so far has proved to be effective at first. Its introduction and implementation in the state raised the hope and buoyed up the spirit of the relegated and the deprived residing mainly in the rural and semi-urban areas. In fact, the general public hailed the programme with cheers. No wonder the primary schools in the state recorded surge in enrolment, with more manpower engaged by the

government to cater for the rise in population of the pupils. However, no sooner the social policy caught public attention than the implementation began to frail at the edges. The commitment of the personnel began to wane. There was corruption among the personnel. Steady supplies of food products from the local farmers were ditched. Then, to keep the programme floating, the pupils were being fed with meals lacking quality nutrients. The cooks were being short changed in their payments. Before one knew it, the once public primary schools that served as a centripetal force in school enrolment gradually became a centrifugal force to parents and their wards. The trend continued to worsen unabated until the programme finally collapsed. People were left bewildered, asking whether anything like that ever happened in the state. Poverty, hunger and unemployment had returned and persisted, with out-of-school children number mounting again amidst government expenditure profiles in the programme implementation. This was the situation of the programme in the state that aroused the urge for the research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

NSIP with HGSFP as a branch is a social policy meant to give hope to the hopeless and power to the powerless. It is a people's programme by the government. In other words, the people should be adequately involved and allowed to own it through awareness and sensitization campaign. It is clear that what one does not understand, it is difficult for one to know one's right and obligations in it. For the periods assessed, the story was the same from government to government in the states in Nigeria, including Enugu. There was no constant monitoring of the programme by government agents, no constant information gathering, update and reports. The people clinically detached themselves from the implementation. No wonder their will was perverted by the few government agents in-charge. Then, the aim of the programme became counter-productive and also defeated. Based on these, the paper therefore recommends that the government should ensure adequate community involvement in the programme. The communities will partner with the government personnel and agents for constant information collation, updates and reports for urgent attention. There should also be transparent administrative structures that will be handling any assignment objectively and with probity. If these are considered, the government will not only be responsive but also receive accolades in the successful implementation of the NSIP through HGSFP in the state.

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