ECONOMIC REFORMS AND SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA 1999-2007: ISSUES AND OPTIONS

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Abstract
The security and development of any nation depend critically on the adequacy of its social service delivery to the populace. Social service delivery in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic focused essentially though not exclusively on education, health, water resources and housing. Meanwhile, government mechanism for successful implementation of these programmes is not adequate in Nigeria. This paper examines the nexus between economic reforms and social service delivery in Nigeria with a view to exploring the policy issues and options. For the purpose of this objective we drew references from advanced Western societies that have previously embarked on similar schemes. We adopted the theory of dualism for analysis and generated the data mainly through documented evidence. We conclude that since the federal government in Nigeria initiates economic reforms and involves both state and local governments in the implementation of social service for the welfare of the populace as their statutory responsibilities, harmonious blending of these reforms and policies across tiers and levels of government is inevitable to attain the much needed good governance and national development in Nigeria.

Key words: social service, reforms, public policy, programmes.

Introduction
The political economy of Nigeria since May 29, 1999 reflects a state in dire need of reforms. Notably, the long years of military involvement in politics characterized by poor economic management, unbridled corruption and rent-seeking are hostile to both domestic and foreign investments1. This has large-scale effects on the masses. Arguably, the unpleasant experience sometimes serves as a panacea for the various pro-democracy activists that fought to unseat the military class for a better deal under the new democratic dispensation. In response to the myriad of problems besetting the Nigerian state under President Obasanjo 1999-2007, Nigeria experienced an aggressive session of both economic

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and social service reforms. Few years after the reforms were initiated and executed, the living standard of Nigerian citizens are yet to improve. This was evident in the high rate of poverty, infrastructural decay and poor maintenance culture. The advent of democracy since 1999 has generated more frustrations and despair as the faith of the masses has worn out entirely. According to Afro-barometer, the faith of Nigerians on democratic government slumped from 84% during the early years of Obasanjo’s first term to 25% in 2005\(^2\). This article examines the nexus between economic reforms and social service delivery in Nigeria between 1999 and 2007.

**Conceptual Framework**

**Social Service**

Social Service is a set of program aimed at achieving some objectives. It relates to the social system in the goals of social policies. All social policies are directed towards making some change not only in the structure of society for the living conditions of the people in the society. Social service programs are services provided by a governmental agency for welfare of persons or the community at large such as housing, child protection, free education and health care delivery. Social service programs and their delivery help the people with necessities of health, education and housing to attain self actualization and happiness\(^3\).

Again, Social service is a wide concept which encompasses improvement in the social status of the people and society in general. It necessitates in reality and not deceitful the provision of such services as health, education, housing, roads, portable water and electricity. It also encompasses “reduction of poverty, improvement of women and workers”\(^4\). Geol states that social service is a process of bringing community welfare through social change and the implementation of social policy decisions for the total welfare of the community. It encompasses every act, technique and consideration in the process necessary to transforming social policy\(^5\). Donnison also states that during social services delivery, social legislation aimed at private philanthropy and religious charities into the dynamics of services and benefits for humanity are implemented\(^6\). Currently, Nigeria has weak state supported social

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\(^2\) Washington Post, 2007:2


welfare system; hence, most people rely on the extended families in their old age. Medications are only provided for government employees and few company workers in commercial enterprises while the rest of the populations are left on their own.

Several attempts to reform primary health care centers suffer set-backs in Nigeria. Drugs and other facilities are undersupplied and these centers are lacking in qualified personnel. Patients pay user fees and purchase medication which sometimes they cannot afford because the drugs are expensive. This results increases infant mortality, thus 94 of every 1000 births die and the life expectancy for Nigerians is only forty-eight (48) years\(^7\). Malaria and other curable diseases remain the major cause of death. Other preventable ills that government has been unable to halt include measles, whooping cough, polio, cerebrospinal meningitis, gastroenteritis diarrhea, tuberculosis, bronchitis and sexually transmitted infections with Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) becoming more prevalent. In 2005 only, 170,000 Nigerians died of HIV\(^8\). Unlike other countries like Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Carpe Verde, Nigeria lack state supported social services system to support her citizens during emergency. Arguably, Nigeria’s fiscal arrangement by the three levels of government has problem of coordination in service delivery.

**Economic Reform**

Reform connotes “change”, “improvement” in a given condition or state of affairs, change toward better conditions, it is synonymous with progress. Olewe states that reform is to bring ideas, plans, programmes into reality\(^9\). Put differently, reform is for national transformations that aid to produce positive changes. Everett described economic reform as a widely participatory process of directed social and economic change in a society, intended to bring about social change and material advancement like equality, freedom and other valued qualities for the majority of people through their gaining greater control over their environment\(^10\). Thus, a good economic reform should bring about national renewal and transformation through systematic and faithful implementation in the polity. It seeks to change the status quo that ought to be changed. It requires proper planning and implementation, if desired ends are to be attained. Economic reform is a planned process of

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\(^8\) Ibid


bringing about improvement in a socio-economic and political order in a polity. For our purpose socio-economic reform refers to a comprehensive program of government in any polity geared towards transforming the structures and systems of public service for improved service delivery.

**Theoretical perspective**

The theoretical slant adopted for this paper is the theory of dualism. This theory argues that economic laws that are valid in advanced capitalist nations may not work in underdeveloped countries. According to this theory, economic reform in advanced capitalist nations facilitates development in stable environments with appropriate institutions and values system.

This theory was developed by Professor J.H. Boeke of Netherlands in 18th century “when the Western style of agricultural plantation was introduced by the Dutch in the territory of Indonesia and it was discovered after few years of Western system that plantation failed woefully”\(^{11}\). It was in an attempt to discover this problem that Boeke developed dualism theory, which contends that Western strategy of socio-economic development introduced in the third world countries are characterized by:

- Enthusiasm and high expectation,
- Resource are mobilized for its success,
- Government justify through massive propaganda network,
- Little success is achieved in the implementation process,
- The economic condition of the people deteriorates,
- The government is more authoritarian to survive\(^{12}\).

For example, the Marshal Plan led to the reconstruction of Western Europe within a few years after World War II. The similar strategy was adopted for the development of post-colonial African states but they did not succeed. Development strategies like the United Nations Development Decade, the New International Economic Order and the Brandt Report did not achieve their goals in Africa. The structural and attitudinal factors that negate the development process were based on the Western strategy. The factors include lack of basic institutions, appropriate and relevant manpower, prevalence of corruption, poor value system


among others. Many scholars have confirmed the theory as a result of their empirical research. For instance Riggs and Whitaker\textsuperscript{13}. The theory of dualism explains Nigeria’s government socio-economic policies in relation to the democratic process for the following reasons:

- The policies were based on western development strategy.
- Massive resources were deployed for its success.
- Propaganda mechanism of state was mobilized for success.
- The policy makes few Nigerians rich and majority was poor.
- There was rise in the poverty level between 1999 and 2007
- Most industries closed down with the result of unemployment.
- Social services like power, water and roads have deteriorated.
- There is a steady rise in anti-social activities.
- There is a big wave in armed robbery
- Corruption was on the increase\textsuperscript{14}.

In the contemporary political and economic systems most third World countries adopted and are adopting the Western strategy of socio-economic development with the hope that development will occur. The structural institutions and behavioural factors make the realization of the aims of the strategy impossible because the institutions are weak. Often, these two tendencies exist in third world countries and the understanding of the economies and politics of underdeveloped countries must consider the two factors”\textsuperscript{15}.

Social service Delivery in Nigeria: execution and funding

Nigerian government recognized the importance of the social sectors to economic growth and poverty reduction; hence government developed comprehensive policies on education, health and population. Policy statements sound objectives and attractive but only tend to forward over-ambitious targets that are difficult to achieve. The National Policy on Education for instance covers all educational activities like universal, free and compulsory education in Nigeria. Similarly, the primary health system was richly packaged. Again the National Policy on Population package was laudable for her strategies in reducing mortality rate of nursing mothers and children for increased family planning among others.

Despite that the statutory allocation from federation account and internally generated revenue are two major sources of funds for the states and local governments, poor funding


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
remains the mostly cited rationale for poor implementation of policies. The major sources of fund for states and local government are Statutory Allocation from Federation Accounts, VAT, Stabilization Receipts, Ecology Fund and Internally Generated Revenue from tax and non-tax. Most scholars and practitioners blame poor social service delivery on poor funding. Table 1 below shows the distribution of Federal Allocation to various tiers of government from 1999 to 2007.

Table 1: Summary of Fiscal Allocation to Federal, State and Local Governments by RMAFAC (June 1999 – May 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beneficiary</th>
<th>State Govt =N=</th>
<th>Local Govt =N=</th>
<th>Total =N=</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Abia</td>
<td>113,956,322,728.62</td>
<td>66,957,033,320.83</td>
<td>180,913,356,049.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Adamawa</td>
<td>111,973,469,608.66</td>
<td>88,385,118,660.50</td>
<td>200,358,588,269.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Akwa Ibom</td>
<td>384,370,238,540.34</td>
<td>110,896,366,303.24</td>
<td>495,266,604,843.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Anambra</td>
<td>97,592,169,763.11</td>
<td>85,847,453,591.19</td>
<td>183,439,623,354.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Bauchi</td>
<td>128,248,345,518.84</td>
<td>98,833,751,081.01</td>
<td>227,082,096,536.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Bayelsa</td>
<td>414,158,710,867.12</td>
<td>38,101,830,075.82</td>
<td>452,260,540,942.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Benue</td>
<td>120,963,431,284.39</td>
<td>100,676,342,004.41</td>
<td>221,639,773,288.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Borno</td>
<td>127,814,189,455.35</td>
<td>114,329,322,081.28</td>
<td>242,143,511,536.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Cross River</td>
<td>115,403,682,833.25</td>
<td>74,990,493,054.89</td>
<td>190,394,175,888.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Delta</td>
<td>463,459,893,918.76</td>
<td>97,961,571,804.08</td>
<td>561,421,465,722.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Ebonyi</td>
<td>97,825,886,665.52</td>
<td>51,780,333,382.06</td>
<td>149,606,220,047.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Edo</td>
<td>119,085,051,909.31</td>
<td>77,565,785,400.62</td>
<td>196,650,837,309.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Ekiti</td>
<td>92,732,057,109.79</td>
<td>60,134,219,325.71</td>
<td>152,866,276,435.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Enugu</td>
<td>103,979,483,787.19</td>
<td>68,964,491,966.13</td>
<td>172,943,975,753.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Gombe</td>
<td>96,583,878,576.74</td>
<td>49,916,381,357.36</td>
<td>146,500,259,934.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Imo</td>
<td>132,104,455,243.39</td>
<td>99,280,101,362.71</td>
<td>231,384,556,606.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Jigawa</td>
<td>117,009,316,440.23</td>
<td>108,615,763,243.89</td>
<td>225,625,079,684.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Kaduna</td>
<td>138,928,609,161.09</td>
<td>117,182,125,094.69</td>
<td>256,110,734,225.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Kano</td>
<td>179,437,799,067.94</td>
<td>191,497,373,448.88</td>
<td>370,935,172,516.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Katsina</td>
<td>140,721,433,816.83</td>
<td>139,822,729,992.43</td>
<td>280,544,163,809.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Kebbi</td>
<td>109,325,901,797.25</td>
<td>86,787,009,340.22</td>
<td>196,113,911,137.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Kogi</td>
<td>108,937,683,153.98</td>
<td>86,187,515,182.33</td>
<td>195,125,198,336.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Kwara</td>
<td>99,576,991,214.56</td>
<td>66,011,107,696.79</td>
<td>165,588,098,911.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Lagos</td>
<td>182,535,977,642.02</td>
<td>149,392,517,393.59</td>
<td>331,928,495,035.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Nassarawa</td>
<td>90,518,301,030.98</td>
<td>54,487,876,090.81</td>
<td>145,006,177,121.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Niger</td>
<td>126,254,889,591.23</td>
<td>111,114,801,956.06</td>
<td>237,369,691,547.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Ogun</td>
<td>114,180,594,528.10</td>
<td>81,197,512,355.95</td>
<td>195,378,106,884.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Despite the fact that the federal government kept about ₦7,390,688,951,768.72, the state received ₦5,742,903,843,313.33 and local government received ₦3,313,534,541.80 from the Federation Account within the periods from 1999 to 2007 financial years to provide for social services to Nigerians, their performance remain poor. Table 1 indicates that fund accruing to the oil-producing states of South-South excluding derivation fund have been constant and relatively small, compared to other geo-political zones of North West and North Central. The distributional inequality is attributed to allocation formula based on land mass.

Again, it is pertinent to review the performance of social service delivery since the inception of democratic dispensation. The performance and non-financial indicators used for such assessment are contained in table 2 below. Our unit of analysis was based on welfare indicators as captured in table 2 below.

**Table 2: Rate of Social Service Delivery in the Geo-political zones in Nigeria 1999-2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>N/East</th>
<th>N/west</th>
<th>N/central</th>
<th>S/East</th>
<th>S/West</th>
<th>S/South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to water</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe water source</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to electricity</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>61.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to pri. School</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health access</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eboh and Igbokwe (2006:)

16 Federal Ministry of Finance, 2007

The paradox emanating from the indicators in table 2 shows that states from the oil-rich areas are worst than other states in the area of social service delivery. States in South-South and South-East zones that benefit from derivation fund are relatively poor in their performance on all the welfare indicators. Public sector resources allocated to the social sectors have been largely erratic because of the fluctuation in government revenues due to changes in oil prices. Although government expenditures in social sectors declined in real terms in recent years and grossly inadequate to maintain and expand services at acceptable standards. The share of federal, state and local government budget for social sectors is less than 15% in 1990 and low compared to other developing countries like central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan) and Mongolia\(^\text{18}\). Public resources have been poorly managed, characterized with frivolous activities, leaving little for essential services like drugs, instructional materials, supplies or maintenance. Private provision of services is increasingly available, but mostly in the affluent areas and the quality of services is highly variable. Cost recovery within the public sector is increasing and individuals that pay for such services are poor. There are performance and non-financial indicators used for such assessment. In addition to financial performance we examine other indicators of performance thus:

**Education:** The goal of MDGs on education is to achieve universal primary education by the year 2015 and to ensure that children, boys and girls will complete a full program of at least primary school. In line with this, one major objectives of the national policy on education is to make education accessible to all Nigerians. The policy emphasizes on education for self-reliance, development and technological advancement of the nation. In addition, it stresses the need for quality education at all levels in order to be more useful to the society. Both states and the federal government established and fund educational institutions at secondary and tertiary levels, while the local government bears the proportion in funding primary school.

Odoko and Nnanna and Eboh and Igbokwe\(^\text{19}\) reviewed the performance of the states between 1999 and 2005. They revealed that state survey in Rivers and Enugu have significantly increased on the total number of enrolment for primary and secondary schools


with staff strength, while Lagos and Kano, recorded marginal increases during the period from 1999 to 2005. The implication of the increase in enrolment rate and teacher strength in Rivers and Enugu shows that the increase in the pupil-teacher ratio from 39 and 29 in 1999 to 52 and 42 respectively in 2005. The indication states that each teacher in these states is having more pupils to cope with in a situation that impact negatively on the performance of both the teachers and pupils. However, there is a slight improvement ratio in Kano and Lagos as the ratios declined from 56 and 33 in 1999 to 30 and 32 respectively in 2005. Their classrooms has deteriorated significantly in Rivers and Enugu; whereas in 1999 there is an average of 28 and 26 per class at the primary school, in 2005 the number of pupils per class decline from 31 and 45 in 1999 to 29 and 31 in 2005. However, the adult literacy rates range between 59 and 88 % among all the states, with Kano having the highest range between 73 and 88 % in the period.

The poor state of services delivery is reflected in the number of pupils that progress from primary to secondary schools. Currently, the middle and upper classes send their wards to private schools and this widen the gap in the quality of the education in public and private schools. In attempt to redress the situation, the Federal Government came up with Universal Basic Education (UBE) which intends to increase funding and accessibility.

**Health:** Nigeria’s health policy aims at providing affordable health services to all Nigerians which focus on preventive health care delivery through the execution of a primary health care delivery system. The system emphasize on health education, adequate nutrition, safe water, sanitation, maternal and child health. Health care at the secondary level involves setting up of hospitals managed by state governments while tertiary health care delivery is managed by the Federal government. The goal of health sector under MDGs is to reduce child mortality under the age of five by two-thirds and to improve maternal health care by reducing the maternal mortality rate three-quarter total coverage and inadequate health care delivery. It involves all the tiers of government ranging from local to federal level of government. While the expenditure increased in absolute terms, the share of health sector in all the state expenditure has been on decline. The ratio average is 6.9% for the states in 1999 decline to 5.1% by 2005. The proportion of GDP share of expenditure on health has been dismal

A cursory look shows that there has been little or no improvement in non-financial indicators, life expectancy at birth remain constant in all the states, ranging between 51-55% in 1999-2005. Infant and maternal mortality is fairly constant, while staff strength declined. For instance, the ration of medical doctors to health institutions in 1999 was 1.1, 7.2 and 0.2 in Rivers, Enugu and Kano declined to 0.7, 4.9 and 0.1, respectively. In 2005, Lagos

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increased slightly from 2.4 in 1999 to 3.0 in 2005. A breakdown of the number of beds per hospital showed that Rivers and Enugu averaged 58.9 and 160.2 in the period\textsuperscript{21}.

**Housing:** The surge for shelter in Nigeria is on high side due to population growth and migration with an average of 3.0\% per annum, rapid urbanization or rural-urban migration and high cost of building material. The housing policy of the nation aims at providing affordable housing for all by the year 2000. The objective have not reverted to its deadline to accomplish this national objective has nothing on ground like other sectors, instead the master plan for housing has been terribly low. It has always been less than 1 \% on the total expenditure of the states. For instance, the capital outlay for housing in Lagos in 1999-2005 average is 1.3\% expenditure, while Enugu was 0.01 \%t in the period. Housing deficits estimate about 15 million units for the country, but despite the huge deficits, the total number of housing units built in 36 state and Abuja from 1999-2005 was 2289 units. Also, the total approvals given for plots of land with certificate of occupancy (C/O) in Lagos and Enugu are 20,879 and 21,454, respectively, in the period\textsuperscript{22}.

The Land Use Act constrained the transfer of titles and made mortgage finance extremely difficult in the quality of houses, the standards for residential structures are generally lower than international standards with regards to enforcement. Most housing schemes do not offer the range of urban services amenities: water, sewage and waste disposal are clearly inadequate if not outright absent. There is need to evolve policies that will encourage greater participation of public private sector in housing especially for low-income groups. In addition, it has become critical that local governments focused approach on capacity building in view of the increasing role they play in housing delivery.

**Water Resources:** The trends in water expenditure and other social indicators has been on decline or increased marginally, in most of the states like Rivers the ratio of capital expenditure on water to total state expenditure declined from 1.5 \% in 1999 to 1.0 \% in 2005. Then Lagos remains constant at 0.2 \%, while Enugu rose marginally from 0.2 \%- 0.3 \%. However, in Kano, more money was budgeted to provision of water. The capital outlay in the state rose from 5.8 \% on total state expenditure in 1999 to 9.5 \% in 2005\textsuperscript{23}. Generally, we observe that states allocate more funds on water services especially for domestic use with the notion that “water is life”.

**Key Issues and Options**

Issues, challenges and options facing Nigeria in the social service sector are systemic and inter-dependent. They need urgent attention on the quality and quantity of social services

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\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid
improvement. However, appropriate action programs need to be devised and implemented in these areas.

**Enhancing quality and efficiency:** There is urgent need to improve the inputs on the processes of social services delivery. Education and health practitioners need adequate training and support with adequate resources and materials like drugs, facilities, text-books, teaching aids among others are needed than are unavailable, so also the maintenance and refurbishment of existing physical facilities. Increasing access to these services should be at the expense of quality for efficiency.

**Setting realistic targets for system expansion:** The expansion plans for the provision of social services must be on realistic assumptions about resource use and social demand. The rapid uncontrolled expansion of services in the late 1970s and early 1980s, coupled with budgetary shortfalls in subsequent years led to the problems of poor quality and inefficiency. The current government plans to expand universal basic education (UBE) to nine years have immense resource implications, if the government’s targets for UBE is to be implemented, the recurrent expenditures on education need to triple their 1990 level (US$1.1. billion in 1990) budget and 750,000 new teachers need to be trained for its primary and junior secondary schools over the next 10 years and this cannot be accomplished in the current resource constraints\(^{24}\). According to Woo, he observed that:

Access to education in Nigeria has increased considerably in the 1970s and. However, rapid expansion and budgetary constraints have put severe strains on financial, human and physical resources. The quality of education is poor and declining. Nigeria now needs to prioritize its policy objectives, set realistic target and develop viable, coasted implementation plans\(^{25}\).

**Increase public fund and priorities for resource allocation:** A stable level of expenditures on the social sectors is needed particularly in under-served areas. The proportion of recurrent expenditures allocated to essential inputs like instructional materials and drugs needs increased maintenance and rehabilitation of existing facilities. The grounds of equality, public resources should be devoted to primary and secondary services while private resources should be mobilized for tertiary services.

**Mobilizing private resources:** Community involvement in the management and provision of services should be encouraged through support in personnel, limited financial resources and dissemination of information. The policies and regulations on cost recovery especially, on private contributions to social service provision need to be developed. Different approaches may be adopted for different sub sectors and particular regions.

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\(^{25}\) Ibid, p.5
Strengthen planning, management and communication. The institutional capacity for planning and management of social sectors needs to be strengthened. The roles and responsibilities of all levels of government need to be clarified with link on resource allocations in the responsibilities assigned. Coordination of planning and management is necessary between federal, state and local governments and each level must be established. Adequate institutional support should be provided for the local governments as sole responsible for the provision of primary health and education services within Nigeria. An information, education and communication program (IEC) needs to be launched and necessary steps has to be taken in mobilizing leadership support for social programs, information management systems need to be upgrade.

Girl’s child education: The link between female education and national development with substantial social benefits of getting girls educated. Women who have completed primary education tend to give better health care to their children, and are less likely to become pregnant at an early age than women without basic education. Enrolling more women in school has the potential of reducing child infant mortality rate and low fertility rates. Although there has been remarkable increase in female participation ratios in Nigeria for the past 20 years, more can be done to reduce gender disparity which exists today in the northern Nigeria. Woo explains thus: Changing infant and young child feeding practices, eliminating vitamin A deficiency, deworming children, and iodizing salt could greatly reduce mortality and morbidity among pre-scholars. Government needs to develop and implement a nutrition program through a concerted multi - sect oral effort26.

Multi Sectoral approach: The social sectors are inter-related; the Population growth affects the demand for education and health services. Education enhances appreciation for health and population programs, healthy pupils are likely to learn more. Successful implementation of social sector programs depends on developments in other sectors such as infrastructure and agriculture.

The underlying causes of mal-nutrition are household food insecurity, poor access to health services, sanitation and inadequate caring practices. Good governance is needed to bring together all these sectors and identify their different roles, priorities and institutional requirements. The increase in communication link between personnel in these sectors will facilitate a multi sectoral approach to development. Nigerians need to participate in a stable and growing economy, with an improved delivery of social services that is realistic on the assessment of resources and with adequate implementation plans as absolute necessity.

Conclusion

26 Ibid. p. 4
Undoubtedly, the Nigerian state is in dire need of socio-economic reforms, the reforms embarked upon by the successive political leaderships had been externally rooted and totally neglected domestic realities. The fallout has been unmitigated disaster in the socio-economic and political lives of the citizen. Hence, there is need to embark on people-centered reforms in the Nigerian state. This paper concludes that social service delivery in Nigeria can improve if Nigeria customizes the social service delivery systems of the West while accommodating Nigeria’s peculiar socio-economic reality.

Social service arrangements in these model countries suggest that consolidation and coordination of social services as central affair. It is worthy to note that the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria at present defines the rule modalities for resource allocation, distribution of responsibilities for social service delivery and provision of infrastructures among different tiers of government, hence; there is need for cooperation among the three levels of government in Nigeria to guarantee effective social service delivery.

**Recommendations**

There is need for Nigeria to realize its potential by tailoring the formulation and implementation of economic reforms and social service delivery in a manner that will address the socio-economic challenges facing Nigerians, or else the reform process will continue to be meaningless so long as it failed to unleash the potential of Nigerians and address the challenges facing the nation’s teeming population.
References

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