

ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POVERTY REDUCTION POLICIES: A CASE OF WEST POKOT COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are targeted at eradicating extreme hunger and poverty in the 189 member countries of the United Nations (UN). Poverty is not new but at each mention, it stirs a lot of misgiving. This is because it has a very devastating influence on its victims. The purpose of this study was to assess factors influencing the implementation of poverty alleviation policies in west Pokot County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objective: To determine the effects of good governance on implementation poverty alleviation policies in West Pokot County. The study was supported by the Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. Descriptive survey design will be used. The survey will be conducted in west Pokot County. The population of study comprised of 190 policy implementation respondents from west pokot county, Kenya. A simple random sampling was used to get respondents for the study. This generated 95 respondents. Data was collected using predesigned semi-structured questionnaires. Data obtained was cleaned, coded and analyzed using *spss* version 21 software. Multiple regressions model/analysis was used to determine the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. The results were presented using inferential statistics such as the Pierson correlation coefficients, comparative tables and percentages. Findings emanating from this study will be of great importance to all the direct and indirect stakeholders who play key roles in ensuring the ultimate accomplishment and realization of the Kenya Vision 2030 development blue print. The results will as well be essential in county and national governments developing strong monitoring and evaluation frameworks to help analyze the various factors influencing successful implementation of poverty alleviation policies in west Pokot county y and also other counties for economic balancing. The results of correlation showed that there was a partial positive and statistically significant correlation between poverty reduction policies implementation and good governance ($r= 0.118, p= 0.005$), Stakeholders participation ($r= 0.132, p= 0.029$) and policy implementation challenges ($r= 0.030, p= 0.023$).

Keywords: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), poverty alleviation policies, economic balancing.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are targeted at eradicating extreme hunger and poverty in the 189 member countries of the United Nations (UN). Poverty is not new but at each mention, it stirs a lot of misgiving. This is because it has a very devastating influence on its victims. It reduces the social and psychological prestige of its victims. As noted by Weber, C. M. (2015) the population in United States and Western Europe make up for only 11% of the entire world population but unbelievably accounts for over 56% of the world's gross domestic product. If other nations such as Japan, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are added to the list then the figures will change. Instead of 11% the figure will now change to 14% of the world's population and account for nearly 77% of the world's gross domestic product. This would leave the rest of the 86% of the world population to struggle for the remaining 23% of economic output. This shows that

there is total imbalance in the distribution of wealth across the world and this is now a big issue in the world's political agenda. Many pressure groups are however advocating for more help to be given to developing countries, but there are still many questions of how effect this help has been or will be.

According to the Central Bank of Srilanka Annual Report (2013) 1.8 million identifies as poor and the large majority of it 84.7% live in rural areas. The proportion of people living below the poverty line has more than halved in urban and rural areas; in urban areas it has reduced from 16.3% in 1990 to 5.3% in 2009, while it has reduced from 29.4% to 9.4% in rural areas over the same period. In the estate sector too, poverty has reduced, but not at the same rapid pace, going from 20.5% in 1990 to 11.4% in 2009. This was cited by WHO (2016) suggesting that as many as 2.6 million people have moved out of poverty over the past 20 years. This snapshot of poverty may, however hide a number of troubling characteristics. For example, while 2.6 million people are estimated to have escaped poverty in the last 20 years, they may still be dangerously close to the poverty line and vulnerable to fall below due to any number of shocks such as illness, inflation, natural disasters.

Several research studies have been conducted with the aim of determining the various factors that influence poverty reduction policies performance in developing countries. Why is sub-Saharan African considered the poorest region in the world?, this question beats many minds, although it is very common for one to think of poverty as a local problem, but, just like over population and mass migration, the level of poverty in a particular location can be affected and worsened by its surrounding environment (countries). Byrne, J. (2016) cites a case for Liberia and Ghana for instance, the turbulent times in Liberia saw a huge migration of Liberians to Ghana to find solace. To think that Ghana in itself is overwhelmed with the task of supporting and controlling its economy, the building of refugee camps to support immigrants seems like an even more onerous task.

Findings in 2004 indicated that poverty was more acute in rural areas in Nigeria and that some geo-political zones were particularly harder hit than others by the phenomenon while unemployment kept souring with the worst affected age bracket being 13-25 years (MDG, 2006). According to Muhammad (2016), Nigeria's democratic experience has neither served the purpose of political emancipation nor led to economic betterment of the citizens. This is especially in the face of endemic poverty, hunger, unemployment and progressive disempowerment of a large chunk of the population. The prospect of escaping the life threatening situations and achieving sustainable growth and development is therefore linked to the MDGs. Again its actualization in Nigeria is still challenged by poor leadership, insincerity in governance, policy inconsistency, lack of adequate data base, high levels of corruption, etc. Some growth indices are often paraded by the Nigerian government, but, there is mismatch or disconnect between it and existing realities as the country still exhibit large symptoms of underdevelopment as reflected in the socio-economic lives of Nigerians. According to Odion (2014) 70% of the over 140 million Nigerians currently live below the poverty line of one dollar per day. The rapid urbanization, put at over 5 percent per annum, exerts severe pressure on ailing infrastructure. Nigeria is further ranked as one of the twenty five poorest nations in the world. This further intensifies youth unemployment. The Human Development Report 2007/2008 on Nigeria showed that the Human development Index for Nigeria is 0.470, which gives the country a rank of 158th out of 177 countries. Life expectancy was 46.5 percent, ranking Nigeria as 165th and adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and older) was 69.1, ranking Nigeria as 104th out of 177, the report also indicated the Human Poverty Index value of 37.3 percent for Nigeria, which ranked the country as 80th among 108 developing countries for which the index were calculated (UNDP, 2008). According to Bello (2007) about one million Nigerian children were given out for forced and exploitative labour, of which 18 percent work in dangerous environments after school hours.

In Kenya, as noted by UNICEF(2014) and cited by Rajbhar (2017), the population of children was 19.15million, People living below the poverty line were 46%, National HIV and aids prevalence (age 15-49) was 7.8% while Under 5 mortality rate was 74/1000 live births. Furthermore, Immunization coverage was 68% while School enrolment was 90%. Access to basic quality services such as health care, education, clean water and sanitation, is often a luxury for many people. Large segments of the population, including the burgeoning urban poor, are highly vulnerable to climatic, economic and social shocks. As such, progress on the Millennium Development Goals, especially in regards to social security, is mixed.

In 2010, Kenya enacted a new Constitution that specifically addresses longstanding historical, geographic, demographic and human rights violations that have hindered progressive development. Under the new dispensation, power was devolved from the National Government to 47 newly decentralized counties. Three years later Kenyans conducted fairly peaceful elections to vote in the National and County Government with expectations for equitable resource allocation and

accountable service delivery. In June 2011, Kenya faced formidable hurdles with the Horn of Africa drought that left 3.75 million Kenyans and 150,000 refugees mostly from Somalia, in need of humanitarian assistance. UNICEF and partners responded effectively to this emergency bringing the humanitarian crisis largely under control. However, significant challenges still remain as a result of the 2011 refugee influx, increasing insecurity and ongoing food insecurity.

Kenya remains a dual economy with wide disparities in economic, social and infrastructural development across regions (Gitau as quoted by TIAPD 2009). According to the data accumulated by the World Bank (2009), the percentage of the population with per capita income below the poverty line has decreased in each region of the world since 1990, hence setting the new international poverty line at \$1.25 per day. Based on this latest revision, about 1.4 billion people still live on or below the poverty line. In African countries and most specifically Kenya, the alarming records of poverty are mainly due to repressive regimes, official corruption and mismanagement of the national natural resources (Ademolekun, 2009). The gap between the rich and the poor has widened persistently in Kenya affecting many counties. West Pokot County has not been exempted in this. Poverty reduction mechanisms have been initiated, but they end up unsuccessful. Money is extravagantly spent and all programs closed with the reports showing 100% implementation while tangibly all the money is embezzled and the locals continue anguishing in poverty. This has led to a shift in aid allocation in favor of social services. The public expenditures of poor counties have also tended to reflect this shift, with increased spending on basic services used by the poor. There has also been a proliferation of social assistance schemes, such as free health care for children, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and the aged; pensions for the elderly; income transfers for child care; employment guarantee schemes; and school feeding programmes. In some poor counties, such as west Pokot donors play a crucial role in funding these programmes.

2. RESERCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey design. Namusonge (2010) observes that this method is best suited for gathering descriptive information where the researcher investigates people or attitudes concerning one or more variables through direct query. The population of study comprised of policy implementation respondents from West Pokot County, Kenya. The researcher conducted a simple random sampling to get the respondents for the study. In this case, every k^{th} member will be selected. The researcher sampled every 2nd member, meaning that the population (N) =190, then K=2, Then the sample obtained was (n) =N/K; 190/2=95. Therefore 95 respondents constituted the sample size for the study. Data was collected by use of a predesigned semi structured questionnaire. To test reliability, of the instrument, the questionnaire was piloted using Trans-Nzoia County which does not fall within the study area. The data obtained was then analyzed and the results correlated to determine their reliability coefficients. Analysis of the data was done using spss 21software. Comparative tables, percentages and pie charts were also used for data analysis and presentation. Inferential statistics was also used-Pierson correlation.

3. RESULTS

95 questionnaires were distributed for feedback on the study. Out of the 95 questionnaires distributed, 90 questionnaires were dully filled and returned for analysis. This generated a response rate of 94.7 percent. Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficient was computed at 95% confidence level for all the variables under study. The value obtained was 0.79, which indicated that the level of internal consistency for the items was 79.0 percent. The reliability results obtained indicated a strong reliability and satisfactory level of inter-item reliability.

EFFECT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN WEST POKOT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION POLICIES

| Parameters of good governance | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | strongly agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| There is available conducive political environment | 15.5 | 10.0 | 7.5 | 45.0 | 22.0 |
| Strong legal and regulatory frameworks are put in place to enhance implementation of poverty reduction policies | 5.0 | 6.3 | 18.8 | 43.8 | 26.3 |

| | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|
| Policy formulated clearly, documented and delineated poverty reduction goals and forecasts defined | 10.0 | 14.0 | 22.5 | 37.5 | 16.1 |
| Corruption and funds embezzlement is fought through all means to ensure no wastage of funds for poverty reduction | 2.5 | 16.3 | 18.5 | 34.0 | 28.8 |
| Policies of development and poverty reduction are in place and their implementation is monitored to enhance success. | 13.0 | 11.0 | 5.5 | 36.5 | 35.0 |

Analyzed data obtained by the researcher assessing how selected good governance parameters influence poverty alleviation policies implementation deduced that most of the respondents (45.0 percent) agreed and 22.0 percent agreed that there is available conducive political environment. Another percentage of the respondents strongly disagreed to this parameter (15.5 percent), while another proportion of the respondents disagreed (10.0 percent). Of the total respondents, only 7.5 percent stated as being not sure whether there is available conducive political environment. Similarly, 43.8 percent of the respondents agreed that strong legal and regulatory frameworks are put in place to enhance implementation of poverty reduction policies compared to 6.3 percent who disagreed to the same. On the contrary, the proportion of respondents who strongly agreed that strong legal and regulatory frameworks are put in place to enhance implementation of poverty reduction policies were 26.3 percent while those that strongly disagreed on the same comprised of only 5.0 percent. 18.8 percent stated that they were not sure Strong legal and regulatory frameworks are put in place to enhance implementation of poverty reduction policies. The respondents were further required to indicate on the likert scale to what extent they felt that policy was formulated clearly, documented and delineated poverty reduction goals and forecasts defined. Only 16.1 percent strongly agreed. Similarly, 37.5 percent agreed while 14.0 percent disagreed that policy was formulated clearly, documented and delineated poverty reduction goals and forecasts defined. However, 10 percent strongly disagreed on the same parameter while 22.5 percent were not sure whether policy was formulated clearly, documented and delineated poverty reduction goals and forecasts defined. From a total of the 90 respondents used in the study, 28.8percent strongly agreed that Corruption and funds embezzlement is fought through all means to ensure no wastage of funds for poverty reduction while 2.5 percent strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 34.0 percent agreed that Corruption and funds embezzlement is fought through all means to ensure no wastage of funds for poverty reduction while 16.3 percent disagreed. The proportion of respondents who were not sure was 18.5 percent. The researcher required the respondents to indicate whether Policies of development and poverty reduction are in place and their implementation is monitored to enhance success.13.0 per cent of respondents strongly disagreed, 11.0 percent disagreed, 5.5percent were not sure while 36.5 percent agreed and another proportion of (35 percent) strongly agreed. The results of this study on the topic of good governance reflect the same findings by IFAD Report (2001) which notes that good governance acts as a key element in developed nations and the vice versa is true in most developing countries which are faced with the problem of poverty alleviation and reduction within the proportion of people whose incomes are less than one dollar per day, and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. Policy makers within these countries recognize the importance of the problem; they came to the conclusion that there can be no real or effective economic development without taking care of the different categories of poor people in the country.

Correlation

A Pearson correlation was carried out by the researcher to determine the relationship between good governance and implementation of poverty reduction policies. The results of correlation are presented in the table 4. 1 in the next page

Table 3.2: correlation of good governance to poverty reduction policies implementation

| | | Poverty reduction policies implementation |
|-----------------|---------------------|---|
| good governance | Pearson Correlation | .118 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .005 |
| | N | 90 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

The results of correlation showed that there was a partial positive and statistically significant correlation between poverty reduction policies implementation and good governance ($r= 0.118$, $p= 0.005$); the influence of good governance had a Pearson Correlation Index of 0.118. It falls between +0.100 to + 0.500 which means that the good governance parameters

have significance in poverty reduction policies implementation. The interpretation of correlation coefficient thus shows that good governance has significant influence on poverty reduction policies implementation because the P value was $p=0.005$ or $P<0.05$.

Regression analysis

| Variables in the Equation | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|----|------|---------|---------------------------|-------|
| | | B | S.E. | Wald | df | Sig. | Exp(B) | 95percent C.I. for EXP(B) | |
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Step 1 ^a | Good governance | .839 | .652 | 1.656 | 1 | .035 | .432 | .121 | 1.550 |
| | Constant | 5.999 | 3.493 | 2.832 | 1 | .092 | 356.965 | | |

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Good governance.

Dependent variable: Poverty reduction policies implementation.

The following regression analysis was obtained.

$$Y = 5.999 + 0.839X_1 + X_e$$

Whereby Y is poverty reduction policies implementation, X_1 is Good governance, X_e is the error term assumed to be a constant.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of this study was to assess factors influencing the implementation of poverty reduction policies in west Pokot County, Kenya. The study determined the influence of good governance on the implementation of poverty alleviation policies in west Pokot County. The results of correlation showed that there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between poverty reduction policies implementation and good governance ($r=0.118$, $p=0.005$).

The null hypothesis H_{01} : Good governance does not have a significant influence on implementation of poverty alleviation policies in west Pokot County was rejected.

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