



SSAR Publishers (<https://ssarpublishers.com>)
Journal homepage: <https://ssarpublishers.com/ssarjms/>
Abbreviated Key Title: SSAR J Multidiscip. Stud
ISSN: xxxx-xxxx (Online)
Volume 1, Issue 1, (Nov-Dec) 2024, Page 14-41 (Total PP.28)
Frequency: Bimonthly



Impact of Government Policies on Poverty Reduction in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja-Nigeria, 2010 – 2023

By

Corresponding Author: Innocent Jooji-(PhD)

CO-author:

²Otegwu Isaac Odu-(PhD), ³Okeke-Ernest Anayochukwu

^{1,2,3} Department of Political Science and Diplomacy, Veritas University, Abuja-Nigeria.

ABSTRACT: Poverty is a challenge that has attracted the attention of global, regional and national leaders, which also necessitated the implementation of various policies to curb its menace. Accordingly, the study examines the impact of poverty alleviation policies on socio-economic development in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. The investigation utilizes the mixed method approach for its data collection and analysis. The study finds that the major economic policies of the government that target poverty reduction are the annual capital appropriation of the FCT and the FCT COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (CARES) programme. The study also finds that the poverty alleviation programmers are not very impactful in reducing poverty in the FCT due to poor implementation. The research underscores the critical importance of addressing policy implementation and corruption to significantly improve the impact of poverty alleviation programmers in the FCT Abuja – Nigeria.

Keywords: Poverty, Policy, Socio-economic, Development, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, humanity has grappled with a myriad of challenges, ranging from wars, pandemics and poverty. Among these adversities, poverty stands out as a persistent and widespread issue that has garnered attention from political leaders, policymakers, academia, and the media. In response, numerous policies and programmers have been devised and implemented at the global, regional, sub regional, and national levels to combat poverty and uplift the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable populations. One of the international efforts aimed at combating poverty was through the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Development

Goals (MDGs) that spanned through the year 2000 to 2015. Subsequently, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly to span from 2015 to 2030. One of the goals of both the MDGs and SDGs is poverty reduction, which was domesticated at regional, sub-regional, and national levels (UNDP, 2020). Thus, these global efforts show the prevalence and centrality of poverty and its impact on the global development agenda.

In Europe, the issue of poverty, especially among rural dwellers has attracted the attention of political leaders and policymakers in the European Union (EU). The situation was

so pervasive that the EU Commission had to put in place some common policies to alleviate the menace. One of the policies put in place to address the problem of poverty in rural Europe was the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), aimed at improving agricultural production in rural areas. The policy achieved significant success in the Republic of Ireland to generate massive employment and alleviate poverty (O'Malley, 2016). The policy also reduced rural-urban migration and addressed issues of sanitation and environmental pollution among others (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

In the continent of Asia, the challenges of poverty are evident in a sizable number of countries, especially in rural India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. To tackle the problem of poverty, for instance, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) rolled out the ASEAN Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (2016-2020). Available records show that the government in ASEAN countries used agriculture as the mainstay of their poverty alleviation strategies and were able to achieve commendable results as poverty declined (Smith, 2017; World Bank, 2021).

In South America, poverty is also evident in rural Bolivia, Venezuela, Chile, Ecuador, and Brazil. The Brazil experience is particularly instructive as poverty alleviation programmes in Brazil have been hailed as a relative success that could be adopted as a role model for developing countries. Brazil's Bolsa Familiar (family allowance) is the largest poverty alleviation programme in absolute terms. Like Brazil, many other countries in Latin America and the Caribbeans have implemented successful poverty alleviation programmes to reduce the prevalence of poverty in the continent. (UNDP, 2020).

Furthermore, Africa is not immune to the ravaging effects of poverty as more than half of the population resides in the poorest nations globally (UNDP, 2020). The effects of poverty in the African continent cuts across political, economic and social consequences. Politically, poverty contributes to instability and conflict, as disenfranchised populations are more susceptible to radicalization and violence.

Economically, poverty stifles growth by limiting productivity and investment opportunities, perpetuating a cycle of low income and limited access to resources. Socially, poverty exacerbates inequality, leading to disparities in access to education, healthcare, and basic services, further entrenching marginalization and exclusion. Moreover, poverty undermines efforts towards sustainable development in Africa, hindering progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and perpetuating a cycle of underdevelopment.

Within the West African Sub-region, poverty persists as a pervasive issue, often serving as a primary driver of insecurity in various instances (Deonandan, 2019). Despite concerted efforts by governments and development partners to address poverty through interventions, progress in alleviating poverty has been slow, and its impacts on socio-economic development remain pronounced in many West African countries. Over the past two decades, following the return of Nigeria to democratic governance, several poverty alleviation policies have been implemented by successive administrations to curb the incidences of poverty. These policies aimed at improving the economic conditions of Nigeria's poorest citizens and reduce poverty levels across the country. First, the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), which was initiated in 2001 by the Olusegun Obasanjo administration, aimed at reducing poverty by creating jobs, providing access to credit facilities, and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (Agba, 2017). This policy was replaced by the 7-Point Agenda and the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), which was initiated by the Umaru Musa Yar'Adua administration in 2009. YES aimed at reducing youth unemployment by providing training and job opportunities for young people (Alabi & Afolabi, 2019). YES was later replaced with Goodluck Jonathan's Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) in 2012. The policy aimed to reinvest the savings from the removal of fuel subsidies into various sectors of the economy, such as health, education, and infrastructure (Oyekale, 2016).

In 2016, the Muhammadu Buhari's administration introduced the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). The policies aimed at providing a range of social interventions, including the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Programme, the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, the Government Enterprise and Empowerment, the N-Power Programmers among others (Adefolaju&Omole, 2019).

The FCT administration has always adopted its poverty policies in line with existing national policies. Hence, policies implemented since 2003 to 2023 at the national level is always replete in the FCT (Maikalanga, 2023). Despite the humongous amounts of money spent on these programmers, incidences of poverty have remained unabated (Adefolaju&Omole, 2019; Idris&Abdulkadir, 2017; Maikalanga, 2023). It is pertinent to note that the impact of these policies on poverty alleviation in the Federal Capital Territory has been received with mixed feelings by policymakers, development partners, and scholars. Consequently, this study seeks to assess the impact of poverty alleviation policies on socio-economic development in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja between 2010 and 2023.

Conceptual Review: Poverty

A concise and universally accepted definition of poverty is elusive largely because it affects many aspects of the human conditions, including physical, moral and psychological. Arguments about how to conceptualize, describe, and measure poverty go beyond intellectual wrangling and semantics. Accordingly, most societies conceptualize, define and measured poverty to mirror the image of that society's cultural standards. Nevertheless, in order to understand any concept, it is important to have a common ground from which the concept can be adequately described. Thus, it is important for the description of poverty to be theoretically sound and the ideas, definitions and measurements of poverty to also be correct and relevant in order to have base understanding of the concept from where possible alleviation strategies can be recommended (Davids et al, 2013).

This study will begin by presenting various working definitions of poverty, examining how each is treated under different analytical frameworks, shaped by the societal context and historical period in which they were developed. It is pertinent to note that the understanding and response to poverty are deeply influenced by the specific definitions adopted by different schools of thought. McLachlan (1986), for instance, defines poverty as a condition where an individual's resources, primarily material, are insufficient to meet basic needs, including social participation. In contrast, the World Bank's definition highlights specific conditions like malnutrition, illiteracy, and disease, while also acknowledging human dignity (Chaudhuri et al., 2002). These aspects may be more pronounced in poorer countries, but their effects, such as on mortality rates and educational opportunities, are evident globally. For the purpose of this study, poverty is defined as a condition in which individuals, families, or households experience deprivation and lack access to sustainable income, education, healthcare, employment, and social and political rights.

Adam Smith (1887) described poverty as the inability to acquire the essentials dictated by nature or societal customs. In his view, poverty encompasses both the social and psychological dimensions (customs) as well as the material or economic conditions (nature). He further clarified that necessities include not just the basic items needed for survival but also those goods that society deems necessary for maintaining a respectable appearance, even among the lowest social classes. Smith explained that "necessaries" include not only the basic goods essential for survival but also those items that society deems necessary for maintaining dignity and respectability, even among the poorest individuals. In other words, what is considered a necessity extends beyond mere survival needs to encompass what society expects people to have in order to avoid shame or social exclusion (Smith, 1887). He also highlighted how the concept of poverty is relative to the time and place in which the 'lack' is experienced. Adam Smith particularly noted that while a linen shirt might not be essential for

life, in his time, a respectable laborer in much of Europe would be embarrassed to appear in public without one. Lacking such an item would suggest a level of poverty associated with a failure of personal conduct, according to the social norms of the time (Smith, 1887).

This assertion highlights that even Adam Smith, a foundational figure in classical economics, acknowledged the relative nature of poverty, suggesting that poverty is not only about material lack but also tied to societal expectations and norms. His perspective also underscores the critical and often judgmental view of the poor during that era, linking poverty to moral failings, which contributes to the stigma and shame associated with being impoverished. This view also aligns with Karl Marx perception of poverty. Karl Marx emphasized the relative and context-dependent nature of poverty. However, Karl Marx went further by rejecting any notion of an absolute standard. Marx argued that human needs and desires are shaped by the society in which they live in, and thus, “they are measured relative to social conditions, not merely by the physical items that fulfill them” (West, 1969, p.72).

On the other hand, in the early 20th century, Joseph Rowntree differentiated between primary and secondary poverty. He defined primary poverty as a situation where an individual’s income is insufficient to cover the minimum essentials needed to maintain basic physical health (Rowntree 1901, cited in Townsend, 1979). This definition is essentially an absolute measure of poverty, focusing on living standards. To determine the poverty line, Rowntree calculated the financial requirements for an adequate diet, clothing, and rent. Secondary poverty, according to Rowntree, was more subjective and involved assessing whether those he interviewed were living in evident need and poor conditions, despite being above the poverty line he had established (Laderchi et al., 2003). Later, Rowntree expanded his definition of primary poverty to include additional necessities, such as having space for bathing and gardening (Laderchi et al., 2003). This extension made his definition of poverty explicitly tied to the socio-economic context of the time.

The poverty definition of Rowntree has a strong ‘relative’ as well as strong ‘absolute’ component of poverty. In addition, Rowntree identified a “cycle of poverty”, whereby children, young married couples with children and old people constitute the social groups that bear the highest risk of falling into poverty. Even though the features defining the poor were described, no formal attempt was made by him to inquire into the possible causes of the occurrence of these states, such as labour market inequality or unequal access to employment. Townsend (1979) suggests that this classification represented a shift away from the paradigm of conditional welfare for the few that had prevailed before towards the idea of minimum rights for the many. It is however important to note that Rowntree’s definition of poverty is closely related to the contemporary measure of poverty employed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF).

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) defines poverty as the situation where a person’s resources such as their material resources, are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs such as social participation (Townsend, 1962; Townsend et al., 1997). This definition is based on classical definitions such as those above, but also adopts elements from broader definitions of poverty by acknowledging the importance of the social life of the individual and not merely his or her purely material circumstances. Hence, it captures both the absolute and relative characteristics of poverty.

Literature Review

There is growing research on poverty in Nigeria among scholars and researchers because of the endemic nature of poverty in the country despite government interventions. For instance, Okhiriaet. al. (2015), in their study “Poverty and Insecurity in Nigeria: An Empirical Study”, investigates poverty as an epidemic in Africa using empirical data from Nigeria. Without a doubt, poverty is still a widespread, multifaceted reality. The questionnaire and oral interview were used as the main data collection methods. To address the substantial association between the responses of the respondents acquired through the questionnaire and arrive at a logical conclusion, a straightforward correlation

technique was chosen. According to the study's findings, the failure of developmental programme design and implementation to take into account the basic needs of the poor and historical circumstances along with the resulting social structures is to blame for poverty. The study also uncovered several differences in people's levels of education, health, and income. However, the study suggests that the government should set forth a bold vision and specific goals for enhancing and saving the lives of those who are threatened by diseases and hunger by introducing grants to "senior citizens" - old people, providing them with monthly allowance, ensuring support for children who are orphaned, homeless, and even with disabilities, and so on. - across all facets of life. The study further suggests that in order to help monitor and implement federally-initiated programmes for reducing poverty and to meet the target of the Financial System Strategy (FSS) 2020, government at all levels should be made aware of the significance of using crucial statistical data to bolster progress reports. However, despite the relevance of Okhiria (2015) study on poverty in Nigeria, there is a gap in the literature on the impact of government's poverty alleviation policies on socio-economic development in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja.

Mundi (2000), in his study, "Understanding Poverty in Nigeria: A Multidimensional Approach", sees poverty as the absence of the ability to decide on issues that directly impact one's welfare. His study offers a conceptualization of poverty that extends beyond mere economic deprivation to encompass a lack of agency in decision-making processes that affect one's welfare. By emphasizing the inability to set prices for production and influence laws governing asset acquisition and disposal, Mundi underscores the multifaceted nature of poverty in Nigeria. The study highlights several structural issues such as low per capita income, income inequality, inadequate infrastructure, and inefficient resource allocation, all of which contribute to Nigeria's status as an emerging market struggling to achieve sustained growth and development. Mundi's analysis provides

valuable insights into the complex dynamics of poverty in Nigeria, shedding light on the systemic barriers that hinder economic progress and exacerbate social disparities.

However, despite the significance of Mundi's contributions to understanding poverty in Nigeria, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding the impact of government poverty alleviation policies specifically on socio-economic development in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. While Mundi's framework provides a broader understanding of poverty's underlying causes and manifestations, empirical research focusing on the effectiveness of government interventions in Abuja is lacking. The current study addresses this gap by conducting empirical assessments of the implementation and outcomes of poverty alleviation policies within the study area in the FCT, examining their impact on key socio-economic indicators such as income levels, access to basic services, employment opportunities, and overall quality of life.

Uma, et. al. (2013), in their study: 'Poverty and Economic Growth: Evidence from Nigeria', examines the effect of poverty on economic growth. Uma et. al. (2013), present a comprehensive overview of the persistent challenge of poverty in Nigeria and its detrimental effects on the country's economic expansion and sustainability. The study highlights the government's acknowledgment of poverty since Nigeria's independence in 1960, particularly in rural areas, and outlines various socio-economic programmes aimed at poverty reduction across sectors such as agriculture, health, transportation, housing, and banking. By emphasizing the importance of addressing poverty as a fundamental driver of economic recovery, Uma et al underscore the urgency of effective poverty alleviation strategies in Nigeria. Furthermore, the study draws attention to the relationship between low income, limited capital accumulation, and reduced investment, which further perpetuate the cycle of poverty in the country.

However, despite the significance of Uma et. al.'s study in elucidating the challenges posed by poverty in Nigeria, there exists a gap in the literature regarding the specific impact of

poverty alleviation policies on socio-economic development in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. While Uma et al provide a broad understanding of poverty dynamics and the government's efforts to address them at the national level, there is a lack of empirical research focusing on the effectiveness of poverty alleviation interventions in the FCT specifically. The current study aims to bridge this gap by conducting a targeted analysis of poverty alleviation policies and their impact on socio-economic development in the FCT Abuja, thereby providing insights into the unique challenges and opportunities for poverty reduction in the FCT.

Lucky and Achebelema (2018), used the NBS 2010 survey to evaluate poverty and income inequality in Nigeria using the Lorenz curve and a descriptive technique of analysis. Although the Gini coefficient was used to evaluate income disparity, the food poverty line, absolute poverty line, subjective poverty measure, and dollar per day poverty line were employed to quantify poverty. According to research, a sizable share of the Nigerian population is subsistence-poor. It was also discovered that there is a significant disparity between the affluent and the poor in Nigeria. However, there is a gap on the impact of government policy on poverty alleviation in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Through a literature review and content analysis, Fosu (2018) evaluated the economic development, growth, and evolution of inequality and poverty in Africa. His research revealed from the literature that the economic structure does not appear to support the recent and relatively spectacular expansion in Africa. This study makes us to understand the dynamic nature of poverty in Africa which is relevant to the study of poverty alleviation at the continental level. Hence, this study seeks to assess on the impact of government policy on poverty alleviation in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Kennedy (2019), used the federal government's Trader Moni social intervention policy initiative to study the impact of governance on income distribution and income inequality in Nigeria. The study examined the

plan between 2018 and 2019 using content analysis. It concluded that the Trader Moni social intervention policy's execution fell short of achieving its goal of income redistribution and claimed that it was biased to increase support for the governing party in the Osun gubernatorial and 2019 general elections. This study remains relevant to our understanding of the Trader Moniprogramme as a poverty alleviation framework of President Muhammed Buhari's administration. Hence, this study discovered a gap on the impact of government policy on poverty alleviation in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

By utilizing content analysis to systematically incorporate survey, tax, and national account data, Chancel et. al. (2019) evaluated the trajectory of income inequality in Africa from 1990 to 2017. According to research, there is a significant amount of economic disparity in Africa, comparable to that of South America or India. It showed that there is a particularly wide disparity between Southern and Central Africa. Also, the within-country component makes up the majority of the continent-wide income disparity, although the between-country component has marginally decreased over the past two decades as a result of faster development in developing nations. With the exception of Southern Africa, inequality was also very consistent over the time period. Last but not least, there is the issue of sectoral dualism, which includes mining rents and is a significant factor in determining inequality. Nevertheless, this study seeks to assess the impact of government policy on poverty alleviation in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Ibrahim and Taigu's (2020) study, which covered the years 1986 to 2018, evaluated the effect of income disparity on poverty in Nigeria. To achieve this goal, the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model was employed. The study's findings showed that income disparity had a substantial impact on Nigeria's rising poverty, which increased by 75%. In a similar vein, the country's poor situation was made worse by unemployment and growing prices. On the other hand, across the research period, increases in per capita income reduced

the detrimental effects of poverty. The report suggested better distribution of human capital, well-targeted social protection, and an expansion of the scope of the government's social investment programme to include more jobless individuals in order to address the prevalent economic disparity. Hence, this study discovered a gap on the impact of government policy on poverty alleviation in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Adepoju, et. al. (2020), in their work; 'Poverty Alleviation Programmers and Standard of Living in Nigeria', examines the effect of poverty alleviation programmers on the standard of living in Nigeria. Adepoju and Salami (2020) further investigated the relationship between poverty alleviation programmers and the standard of living in Nigeria with the aim of determining the impact of poverty alleviation programmers on the living standards of beneficiaries in Nigeria. The study used a quantitative research design, employing a survey method to collect data from 450 beneficiaries of poverty alleviation programmers in three states in Nigeria. The study employed descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and chi-square tests to analyze the data. The authors found that poverty alleviation programmers have a positive impact on the standard of living of beneficiaries, especially in terms of income, housing, and healthcare. The authors also note that the impact of these programmers could be enhanced through better targeting, monitoring, and evaluation.

The study's methodology appears to be sound as the authors made an effort to ensure that the sample size was representative of the population. However, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to response bias. Secondly, the study focused only on the beneficiaries of poverty alleviation programmers, and the authors did not include a control group of individuals who did not participate in the programmers. This limits the study's ability to establish causality between poverty alleviation programmers and living standards. Hence, the current study aims to address these shortcomings.

Idachaba (2017), in his study; 'The impact of poverty alleviation programmers on

the standard of living of rural women in Nigeria', aims to investigate the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programmers in improving the standard of living of rural women in Nigeria. The study focuses on the impact of poverty alleviation programmers on the standard of living of rural women in Nigeria. The author found that poverty alleviation programmers have a positive impact on the standard of living of rural women, especially in terms of income, education, and healthcare. In addition, the author notes that the impact of these programmers could be enhanced through better targeting and implementation.

Alabiet. al. (2019), in their work; 'Poverty alleviation programmers and standard of living in Nigeria: A case study of Oyo State', examines the impact of poverty alleviation programmers on the standard of living in Oyo State, Nigeria. The authors found that poverty alleviation programmers have a positive impact on the standard of living of beneficiaries, especially in terms of income, healthcare, and education. Also, the authors note that the impact of these programmers could be enhanced through better targeting, monitoring, and evaluation.

Alabiet. al. (2019) study makes a valuable contribution to the existing literature on poverty alleviation programmers in Nigeria, however the study's methodology is not sufficiently detailed. The authors did not provide a clear explanation of how they selected their sample size or participants. In addition, the study did not provide an adequate explanation of the statistical methods used to analyze the data collected. This lack of transparency and detail makes it difficult for other researchers to replicate the study or assess the validity of the findings. Also, the study relied solely on self-reported data, which may be subject to biases or inaccuracies. For example, participants may have exaggerated their income or level of education to present a more favorable image of themselves. This potential bias undermines the reliability of the study's findings and limits their generalizability. Moreso, the study's conclusion is overly simplistic and does not reflect the complexity of the issue. While the study found a positive correlation between poverty alleviation

programme and the standard of living in Oyo State, it did not consider the long-term sustainability of these programme or their broader social impact. Therefore, the study's conclusion is limited and does not offer a complete picture of the issue at hand, hence the rationale for the current research.

The work of Emenikeet. al. (2021), used an appropriate research design and sampling technique to collect data from a representative sample of the target population. The use of structured questionnaires to collect data ensured that the data collected were reliable and valid. Also, the analysis technique used in the study is appropriate for the research questions and hypotheses. The use of SEM allowed for the simultaneous examination of the relationship between the variables and testing of the hypothesized model. The use of descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis also helped in providing a comprehensive analysis of the data. However, the research did not focus on impact of poverty alleviation programme in the FCT, hence the rationale for the current study.

Umar, et. al. (2022) in their work titled 'Impact of NYSCs Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development Programme on Job Creation in Abuja, Nigeria', examines the impact of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development Programme (SAEDP) on poverty alleviation through job creation in Abuja, Nigeria. The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining a survey and focus group discussions, to collect data from 400 ex-corps members who participated in the SAEDP in Abuja. The authors analyzed the data using descriptive statistics and regression analysis to determine the impact of the SAEDP on job creation. The study found that the SAEDP had a significant positive impact on job creation among ex-corps members in Abuja. Specifically, the study found that the SAEDP improved the skills and knowledge of the ex-corps members, which in turn increased their employability and entrepreneurial activities. The study also found that the SAEDP provided ex-corps members with access to capital, networking opportunities, and mentorship,

which further facilitated their job creation abilities thereby reducing poverty rate in the FCT, Abuja.

Generally, the study provides useful insights into the impact of the NYSC SAEDP on job creation in Nigeria. However, the study has some limitations, including the sample size and the focus on only one poverty alleviation programme (SAEDP). Hence, the current research aims to expand the study by using a more appropriate sample size and considers divers government poverty alleviations policies to improve the generalizability of the findings and recommendations.

Conclusively, a review of the literature on poverty alleviation programmers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja Nigeria suggests that poverty alleviation programmers in the FCT have had mixed successes, with some programmers showing promise while others have failed to achieve their intended goals. Some of these programmers have focused on providing financial assistance to the poor, while others have focused on skills training and entrepreneurship development. However, challenges identified include; limited funding, inadequate programme implementation and corruption, which have hindered the effectiveness of poverty alleviation efforts in the FCT. Consequently, there is a need for more rigorous evaluation of poverty alleviation programmers in the FCT Abuja Nigeria and its implication on socio-economic development in order to identify what works and what doesn't, and to ensure that efforts are focused on the most effective interventions. This would enable policy recommendations that would enhance socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the elite and the decision-making theories to explain how the elites in the FCT influence poverty alleviation policy decisions.

The proponents of these theories, their various variants and limitations and how they inter-relate in the study are discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

Elite Theory

The elite theory, which was made popular by Vilfredo Pareto (1848 – 1923), posits that political power is concentrated in the hands of a small group of individuals who hold disproportionate influence and control over the policymaking process (Mosca, 1939). These elites are typically wealthy, well-educated, and well-connected individuals who use their power and resources to influence government decisions in their favour. Mosca (1939) argued that the ruling elite is a small group of people who hold significant power and influence over society's affairs, while the masses are powerless and marginalized. Elite theory asserts that the ruling elite controls the policymaking process, and the policies they make benefit their interests rather than the masses' interests. In the context of poverty alleviation policies, elite theory suggests that the interests of the political elite may not align with the needs and priorities of the impoverished population. Elite theory also posits that the political elite may use their power and influence to maintain the status quo, even if it means perpetuating poverty and inequality (Dahl, 1958).

Normative elitism is a theoretical perspective that suggests that the rule of the elite is desirable and necessary for the proper functioning of society. According to this perspective, political power should be vested in the hands of a wise or enlightened minority, who have the knowledge, skills, and expertise to govern effectively. One of the key proponents of normative elitism is Plato, who argued in his work; 'The Republic' that society should be ruled by a 'philosopher-king' who possesses knowledge and wisdom beyond that of the general population. Plato believed that this elite class of rulers would be able to govern justly and make decisions in the best interests of society as a whole (Plato, 380 BCE).

Classical elitism, developed by Vilfredo Pareto (1848 -1923), Gaetano Mosca (1857-1914) and Robert Michels (1876-1936). Vilfredo Pareto was an Italian economist and sociologist who developed the theory of the 'circulation of elites', which suggests that society is ruled by a small group of people who are born into privileged families or are part of the ruling class. Pareto argued that this group

holds most of the power and resources in society and that they use this power to maintain their position and control over the rest of the population. According to Pareto, this elite class is composed of individuals who possess certain qualities, such as intelligence, education, and ambition, which make them more suited to hold power than the rest of the population (Pareto, 1916).

One of the modern elite theories is the Marxist elite theory. Marxist elite theory is a perspective that views society as divided into two classes: the ruling class and the working class. The ruling class, also known as the bourgeoisie, owns the means of production and exploits the working class, also known as the proletariat, for their labor. According to Marxist elite theory, political power is held by the ruling class, who use it to maintain their dominance over the working class and perpetuate the capitalist system. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the founders of Marxist theory, argued that the ruling class maintains its power through a combination of economic, political, and ideological means. Economically, the ruling class controls the means of production and uses this control to extract surplus value from the labor of the working class. Politically, the ruling class controls the state apparatus and uses it to enforce its will on the rest of society. Ideologically, the ruling class controls the dominant cultural institutions, such as the media and education system, and uses them to shape the beliefs and values of the working class (Marx & Engels, 1848). Marxist elite theory also suggests that the ruling class is not a monolithic entity but is instead divided into factions that compete with each other for power and resources. These factions may differ in their economic interests, political strategies, and ideological orientations, but they are united in their desire to maintain their dominance over the working class (Ollman, 1976; Wright, 1985).

One criticism of Marxist elite theory is that it oversimplifies the complexity of power relations in society. Marxist theorists tend to view power as solely based on economic relations, with the ruling class controlling the means of production and exploiting the working class. However, other factors such as cultural,

social, and political power also play a role in shaping the distribution of resources and opportunities in society (Giddens,1973). Another criticism of Marxist elite theory is that it assumes that the working class is a homogeneous group with shared interests and goals. In reality, the working class is diverse and may have competing interests and priorities. This diversity can make it difficult to achieve collective action and may undermine the effectiveness of poverty alleviation policies that rely on the unity of the working class (Hobsbawm,1978). In addition, some critics argue that Marxist elite theory does not provide a clear roadmap for poverty alleviation policies. While the theory emphasizes the importance of collective action and political organizing, it is less clear how this can be translated into specific policies and programmes that address poverty and inequality (Sen, 1981).

Another modern elitism is the power elite theory. The power elite theory argues that power in society is held by a small group of people who are interconnected and share common interests. This theory is associated with the work of theorists like C. Wright Mills (1959) and G. William Domhoff (1957). The power elite theory posits that this elite group consists of individuals who hold high positions in politics, corporations, and the military, and who use their power to maintain their own dominance and control over society. The theory argues that this elite group operates in a coordinated manner to ensure that their interests are protected, while the interests of the broader population are ignored (Mills, 2000).

Another modern elite theory is the pluralist elite theory. The pluralist elite theory suggests that power in society is not held by a single group or class, but rather by many different groups with diverse interests. According to this theory, these groups compete for power and influence in a democratic system, with no one group dominating all others. This perspective emerged as a critique of the earlier elitist theories, which posited that power was concentrated in the hands of a small, privileged class. Robert Dahl is one of the most prominent scholars associated with the pluralist elite theory. In his book "Who Governs? Democracy

and Power in an American City," Dahl argued that power is fragmented among many different groups in society, and that no one group holds all the power. He suggested that the key to understanding power in a democratic society is to look at the distribution of power among different groups, rather than focusing on the actions of individuals or specific institutions (Dahl, 1961). David Truman also contributed to the development of the pluralist elite theory. In his book "The Governmental Process," Truman argued that power is distributed among many different groups in society, each of which has a different set of interests and objectives. He suggested that these groups compete for influence in the political process, and that the outcome of this competition determines public policy (Truman, 1951). Critics of the pluralist elite theory argue that it underestimates the power of certain groups and ignores the fact that some groups have more resources and influence than others. They suggest that the theory fails to account for the ways in which power can be concentrated in the hands of a small group of people, despite the appearance of competition among different groups (Bachrach & Baratz,1962; Domhoff, 1978).

Another variant of the elite theory is the culturalist elite theoretical approach. The cultural elite theory is a perspective within the broader framework of elite theory that focuses on the role of cultural production in shaping society. According to this theory, power in society is held not just by those who control political and economic institutions, but also by those who control cultural production, such as media executives, intellectuals, and artists. One of the key theorists associated with the cultural elite theory is Herbert Marcuse. In his influential work 'One-Dimensional Man', Marcuse (1964), argued that in contemporary capitalist societies, cultural production was used to promote conformity and maintain the status quo, rather than challenge it. He argued that the mass media, advertising, and other forms of cultural production were used to create a false sense of satisfaction and contentment among the masses, preventing them from recognizing the true extent of their oppression and exploitation (Marcuse, 1964). Another key figure in the

cultural elite theory is Theodor Adorno (1991), who worked closely with Marcuse at the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt Germany. Adorno's work focused on the ways in which mass-produced cultural products, such as popular music and movies, were used to create a false sense of individuality and freedom, while actually reinforcing the dominant social order. Adorno argued that cultural production was increasingly being controlled by large corporations and that this was leading to a homogenization of culture that served the interests of the ruling elite (Adorno, 1991).

The cultural elite theory has been criticized by some for its narrow focus on cultural production and its neglect of other forms of power, such as economic and political power. Critics have argued that the theory fails to account for the ways in which cultural production can be used to challenge dominant ideologies and promote social change (McGuigan, 2004; Fuchs, 2014). However, despite these criticisms, the cultural elite theory remains an important perspective within the broader framework of elite theory. It highlights the important role of cultural production in shaping society and provides a critical lens through which to examine the ways in which cultural products are used to maintain and reproduce poverty and social inequality.

The different variants of elitism discussed provide important insights into the nature of power and influence in society, and how these dynamics impact the design and implementation of poverty alleviation policies. The classical elitism of Pareto, Mosca, and Michels highlights the role of an entrenched and self-interested ruling elite, while the Marxist elitism of Marx and Engels emphasizes the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. The power elite theory of Mills and Domhoff underscores the interconnectedness of different elites and their shared interests, while the pluralist elite theory of Dahl and Truman highlights the diffusion of power among many different groups. While these theories have their own strengths and weaknesses, they can be complemented by decision theory to provide a broad understanding of poverty alleviation

policies in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja-Nigeria. A combination of elitism and decision-making theories can provide a more comprehensive and critical perspective on poverty alleviation policies in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja Nigeria, and their implications for socio-economic development. Such an approach can help to identify potential trade-offs and conflicts, and to promote more inclusive and effective policy-making processes. Consequently, the decision-making theory would be discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

Decision-Making Theory

Richard Snyder (1927 – 2011), an American social psychologist, propounded the decision-making theory in his book; 'Decision-Making: Studies in Management, Organization, and Behavior'. Snyder's decision-making theory is a model that explains how individuals make decisions in complex situations where the outcomes are uncertain. According to Snyder, decision-making involves several steps: identifying the problem, gathering information, identifying and weighing alternatives, making a decision, and then evaluating the decision (Snyder, 1964).

Snyder's decision-making theory provides a suitable alternative to the general systems theory of David Easton and the structural-functional approach of Gabriel Almond. Snyder argued that both the system theory and the structural approach are more or less static in nature and not suitable in real-life situations that are complex. Snyder's point of view is that society is not only complex but also dynamic. In this regard, poverty is a complex phenomenon which requires dynamic policies to alleviate. The decision-making theory therefore provides a complementary framework for analyzing poverty alleviation policies. This theory focuses on the decision-making process and how policymakers arrive at policy decisions. Decision-making theory suggests that policymakers consider various factors, such as the cost and benefits of the policy, the interests of various stakeholders, and the available resources.

Snyder's theory is particularly relevant to poverty alleviation policies, as these policies often involve complex trade-offs and uncertain outcomes. The application of Snyder's theory to poverty alleviation policies requires policymakers to carefully consider the potential costs and benefits of different policy options, and to engage in ongoing evaluation and adjustment of these policies based on their outcomes. One key aspect of Snyder's theory that is particularly relevant to poverty alleviation policies is the importance of gathering and evaluating information. Policymakers must carefully consider the available evidence on poverty and its causes, as well as the potential impacts of different policy options. This may involve analyzing data on poverty rates and trends, conducting surveys and focus groups to better understand the experiences of people living in poverty, and reviewing research on the effectiveness of different poverty alleviation programmes. Another important aspect of Snyder's theory is the importance of considering multiple alternatives and weighing the costs and benefits of each option. This is particularly important in the context of poverty alleviation policies, where policymakers may need to choose between different approaches to reducing poverty, such as cash transfers, education and training programme, or job creation initiatives. Snyder's theory suggests that policymakers should carefully consider the potential impacts of each option, including their short and long-term costs and benefits, and the potential unintended consequences of each approach.

There are various variants of decision-making theories, which include; the Rational Choice Theory, the Bounded Rationality theory, the Prospect Theory, Incrementalism, Group Decision Making theory, Game Theory, and Intuitionist Theory. These theories and how they relate to the current study are discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

The rational choice theory is a decision-making theory that assumes individuals make decisions based on rational calculations of costs and benefits. Proponents of this theory include economists such as Gary Becker (1930-2014), James Buchanan (1919-2013), and Kenneth

Arrow (1921-2017). When applied to poverty alleviation policies in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja Nigeria, the rational choice theory suggests that individuals living in poverty will make decisions based on the perceived costs and benefits of government programmes aimed at alleviating poverty. If the costs of participating in such programmes, such as transportation costs or time spent away from work, outweigh the perceived benefits, such as increased access to education or healthcare, then individuals may choose not to participate in the programmes. Critics of the rational choice theory argue that it oversimplifies human decision-making by assuming that individuals always act in their rational self-interest and unrealistic assumptions, which ignores human unlimited cognitive abilities that can calculate the costs and benefits of every decision. In addition, the theory ignores the role of social and cultural factors in decision-making and fails to account for the power dynamics between different groups in society (Simon, 1985; Elster, 1989; Scott, 1987).

To address these criticisms, the rational choice theory can be complemented with the various strands of elitism discussed earlier. For example, incorporating elements of the power elite theory can help to better understand how decisions regarding poverty alleviation policies are made by a small group of individuals who hold significant power and influence. Similarly, the cultural elite theory can help to shed light on how media executives and other cultural producers shape perceptions of poverty and influence public opinion about poverty alleviation policies. Consequently, the rational choice theory provides a useful framework for understanding how individuals make decisions about poverty alleviation policies in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja Nigeria.

Another variant of the decision-making theory is the bound rationality theory. The Bounded rationality theory is a decision-making model that acknowledges the limitations of human rationality in making decisions. Proponents of this theory argue that humans have a limited ability to process information and that they often rely on shortcuts or heuristics to make decisions. The theory is associated with

the work of Nobel laureate Herbert Simon (1916-2001), who proposed the concept of bounded rationality in the 1950s. Simon suggests that policymakers and decision-makers may be limited in their ability to process information and make rational decisions. They may rely on heuristics or biases that affect their decision-making, which can lead to suboptimal outcomes for government policy outcomes such as poverty alleviation policies (Simon, 1957). However, the theory has been criticized for its various limitations. One criticism of bounded rationality theory is that it oversimplifies decision-making by assuming that individuals are always rational in their choices. Critics argue that individuals may make decisions based on emotions, values, and other factors that cannot be explained by rationality alone. In addition, some critics argue that bounded rationality theory does not account for power dynamics and the influence of elites in decision-making processes (Thompson, 2003; Domhoff, 2013).

To address these criticisms and complement bounded rationality theory, insights from elitism can be incorporated. For example, the power elite theory can provide an understanding of how a small group of interconnected individuals may hold significant power in decision-making processes related to poverty alleviation policies. In addition, the cultural elite theory can provide insights into how cultural production, such as media and intellectual discourse, can shape decision-making and policy outcomes. In summary, while bounded rationality theory provides valuable insights into the limitations of human decision-making, incorporating insights from elitism can provide a more nuanced understanding of how power dynamics and cultural production can influence decision-making processes related to poverty alleviation policies in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja Nigeria.

Another decision-making theory is the prospect theory. Prospect theory, developed by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky (1937-1996), is a descriptive theory that seeks to explain how individuals make decisions under conditions of risk and uncertainty. Unlike

rational choice theory, which assumes individuals make decisions based on a full and complete understanding of the available options and their consequences, prospect theory recognizes that individuals often have limited information and are influenced by cognitive biases and heuristics. According to prospect theory, individuals evaluate potential outcomes in terms of gains and losses rather than final states. The theory posits that individuals are risk-averse when faced with potential gains and risk-seeking when faced with potential losses. In addition, the theory suggests that individuals are more sensitive to losses than gains, and that losses have a greater impact on decision making than equivalent gains (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). In the context of poverty alleviation policies in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja Nigeria, prospect theory can help to explain why individuals may be hesitant to engage in poverty reduction initiatives. For example, individuals may be more likely to support policies that promise to avoid losses rather than those that promise gains, even if the gains are potentially greater.

One criticism of prospect theory is that it is a descriptive theory that explains how individuals make decisions, but does not prescribe how decisions should be made. In addition, some scholars have argued that the theory may be culturally specific and may not apply equally to all individuals and groups (Thaler, 2016; Domhoff, 2013). To address these criticisms, complementing prospect theory with other decision-making theories, such as rational choice theory and bounded rationality theory, can provide a more nuanced understanding of decision-making processes in the context of poverty alleviation policies. In addition, incorporating insights from different strands of elitism, such as cultural elitism and power elite theory, can help to illuminate how decision-making is influenced by broader social and political structures. The next decision-making theory is incrementalism.

Incrementalism is a decision-making theory that suggests that public policy is shaped through small, incremental changes over time. This approach is associated with the work of Charles E. Lindblom (1917 – 2018), a political

scientist who first proposed the theory in his 1959 article 'The Science of Muddling Through'. According to Lindblom, incrementalism recognizes the complexity of policymaking and the limits of human rationality. Rather than making sweeping changes or adopting comprehensive plans, policymakers focus on making small adjustments to existing policies. This approach allows them to avoid major conflicts and to gradually build consensus and support for their policies (Lindblom, 1959). In the context of poverty alleviation policies in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja Nigeria, incrementalism could be seen in the gradual increase of funding for poverty alleviation programmes or the introduction of small changes to existing programmes in response to feedback and evaluations. For instance, the Abuja Enterprise Agency (AEA) which is the agency of the Federal Capital Territory Administration responsible for wealth creation, employment generation and poverty reduction through the development of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the FCT, could make incremental adjustments to their policies based on feedback from MSMEs owners and the results of evaluations of the programme.

Critics of incrementalism argue that it can lead to small changes that fail to address the underlying problems that policymakers are trying to solve. In addition, incrementalism may not be effective in addressing crises or situations that require immediate action (Wilson, 1973; Hood & Jackson, 1991). Complementing the incrementalism theory with other variants of decision theory and the various strands of elitism can address some of these criticisms. For example, incorporating the rational choice theory into incrementalism could help policymakers identify the best course of action for achieving their goals and making more informed decisions. Likewise, incorporating elitism could provide insight into the interests of different groups and help policymakers address issues of power and influence in the policymaking process. Thus, incrementalism provides a useful approach to policymaking, especially in complex situations with multiple stakeholders.

Another variant of decision-making theory is the group decision-making theory. Group decision-making theory suggests that decisions are made through a process of discussion and consensus-building among members of a group. This theory is associated with the work of theorists like Irving Janis and Cass Sunstein. According to Janis (1972), group decision-making can lead to better decisions than those made by individuals. Janis argued that group decision-making allows for a wider range of perspectives and ideas to be considered, and that group members can challenge each other's assumptions and biases. Sunstein (2006) also argued that group decision-making can lead to better outcomes because it allows for diverse viewpoints and the correction of individual biases. In the context of poverty alleviation policies in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja Nigeria, group decision-making can be useful in involving a wider range of stakeholders, including community members and representatives from various organizations. This can lead to policies that are more responsive to the needs of those affected by poverty.

However, the group decision-making theory has been criticized for its potential to create groupthink, where dissenting opinions are not adequately considered, and group members conform to the dominant perspective. In addition, group decision-making can be slower and more difficult to manage than individual decision-making, which can be a disadvantage in situations where time is of the essence (Sunstein, 2006). To address the limitations, the group decision-making theory can be complemented with other variants of decision theory and the various strands of elitism. For example, incorporating elements of rational choice theory can help to ensure that individual preferences and incentives are taken into account, while the pluralist elite theory can help to ensure that power is distributed among many different groups in society, rather than being concentrated in a single group.

Having assessed the various strands of elitism and decision-making theories, the study observed that each theory has its strength and weaknesses. However, the study also observed

that the theories are interwoven and reinforces each other's strength to accommodate observed weaknesses. Hence, the theoretical framework for this study is grounded in both elite theory and decision-making theory. Specifically, the study examines how political elites in Nigeria influence poverty alleviation policies and how policymakers make decisions about poverty alleviation in the FCT. The study also explores the factors that shape policymakers' decisions, including the political and economic context, personal values and beliefs, and the interests of different stakeholders. To operationalize this framework, the study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with policymakers and stakeholders with quantitative analysis of poverty data in the four area councils of AMAC, Bwari, Abaji and Kwali area councils. The study began by identifying key political elites and policy implementation agencies and their staff in FCT and mapping their interests and influence on poverty alleviation policies. The study then conducted interviews with these group of elites, as well as with policymakers and stakeholders involved in poverty alleviation policymaking and implementation process in the FCT. The qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis to identify common themes and patterns in policymakers' decision-making processes, while the quantitative data will use statistical tools such as pie charts and bar charts to examine the relationship between poverty alleviation policies and socio-economic development in FCT Abuja.

In summary, the theoretical framework adopted for this study contributes to the literature on poverty alleviation policies and their impact on socio-economic development in Nigeria. By combining the elite theories and decision-making theories, the study provides a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of government's policymaking and the factors that shape policymakers' decisions about poverty alleviation in the FCT Abuja. The study's findings also have broader implications for

policymakers and practitioners working to address poverty and inequality in the FCT and other states of Nigeria and beyond. Finally, the theoretical perspective contribute to the understanding of the political economy of the FCT and how political elites' policy decision-making process can be harnessed to improve poverty reduction in the FCT.

Impact of Poverty Alleviation Programmes in the FCT

This section examines the impact of poverty alleviation policies on the socio-economic development of the FCT. The section focuses only on the study area of Abaji, Bwari, Kwali and AMAC. Poverty alleviation programmers carried out within these area focuses on specific Delivery Link Indicators (DLI). The DLIs cover a wide range of areas including; Conditional Cash Transfer programmers, Labour Intensive Public Work (LIPW) programmers, Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) empowerment programmers and agricultural empowerment programmers. The impact of these programmers towards reducing poverty in the FCT are discussed. Each of these programmers are analysed using hard data provided by the FCT Administration. Similarly, the data gathered through surveys and interviews are discussed, analyzed and used for comparism through triangulations. The section aims to draw pertinent conclusions from each of the programmers on the effectiveness of the poverty alleviation programmers in fostering socio-economic development in the FCT.

Impact of the Conditional Cash Transfer Programme

The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) has impacted a significant portion of the population, with a total of 2,710 individuals benefiting from the scheme across the four (4) study area councils; Abaja, Bwari, Kwali, and AMAC as indicated in Table 1

Table 1: FCT CARES Conditional Cash Transfer

Serial	Area Council	Male	Female	Total
--------	--------------	------	--------	-------

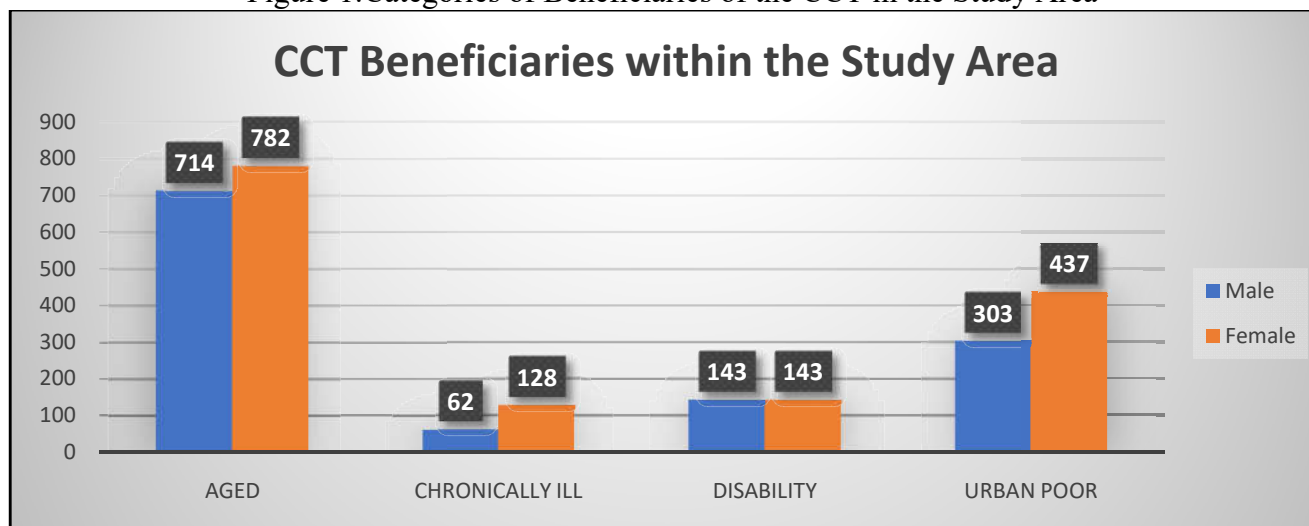
1.	ABAJI	396	542	938
	Aged	79	72	151
	Chronically Ill	39	72	151
	Disability	54	102	156
	Urban Poor	224	305	529
2.	BWARI	259	342	601
	Aged	170	198	368
	Chronically Ill	7	10	17
	Disability	9	18	27
	Urban Poor	73	126	199
3.	KWALI	140	208	348
	Aged	110	138	248
	Chronically Ill	11	44	55
	Disability	18	22	40
	Urban Poor	1	4	5
4.	AMAC	373	379	752
	Aged	355	374	729
	Chronically Ill	5	2	7
	Disability	8	1	9

Source: Field research, 2024.

The demographic in Table 1 includes 1,222 males and 1,490 females, indicating a slightly higher female participation rate as indicated in Table 4.3.1. The programme specifically targeted vulnerable groups within these populations, as evidenced by the categorization

of the beneficiaries: 1,496 aged individuals, 230 chronically ill, 232 disabled, and 740 classified as urban poor. Chart Table 1 is a representation of the categorization of beneficiaries of the CCT programme within the study area.

Figure 1: Categories of Beneficiaries of the CCT in the Study Area



Source: Field research, (2024).

The distribution of aid under the CCT programme appears to have been strategically aimed at addressing the different facets of vulnerability within the population. For instance, the majority of the beneficiaries are aged, which highlights the programme's focus on providing support to those who are likely unable to engage in regular employment due to their age. In addition, the allocation of funds to the chronically ill and disabled individuals underlines the CCT programme's attempt to alleviate the financial burdens faced by those who may incur additional medical costs or who face barriers to employment due to their health conditions or disabilities. However, there is the need to expand the reach of the programme.

Expanding the CCT programme to reach a larger scale of the most vulnerable people is crucial for enhancing socioeconomic development for several reasons. Firstly, the high poverty level in the FCT, reported at 55.6%, underscores the urgent need for targeted poverty reduction strategies. The CCT programme, by focusing on assisting the aged, ill, disabled, and urban poor, directly addresses some of the key factors contributing to this high poverty rate. Moreover, given the vast population of the study areas totaling 2,509,400, the current reach of the CCT programme covers only a small fraction of the overall population. Expanding the programme would allow it to reach a larger portion of the needy population, thereby maximizing its impact on poverty

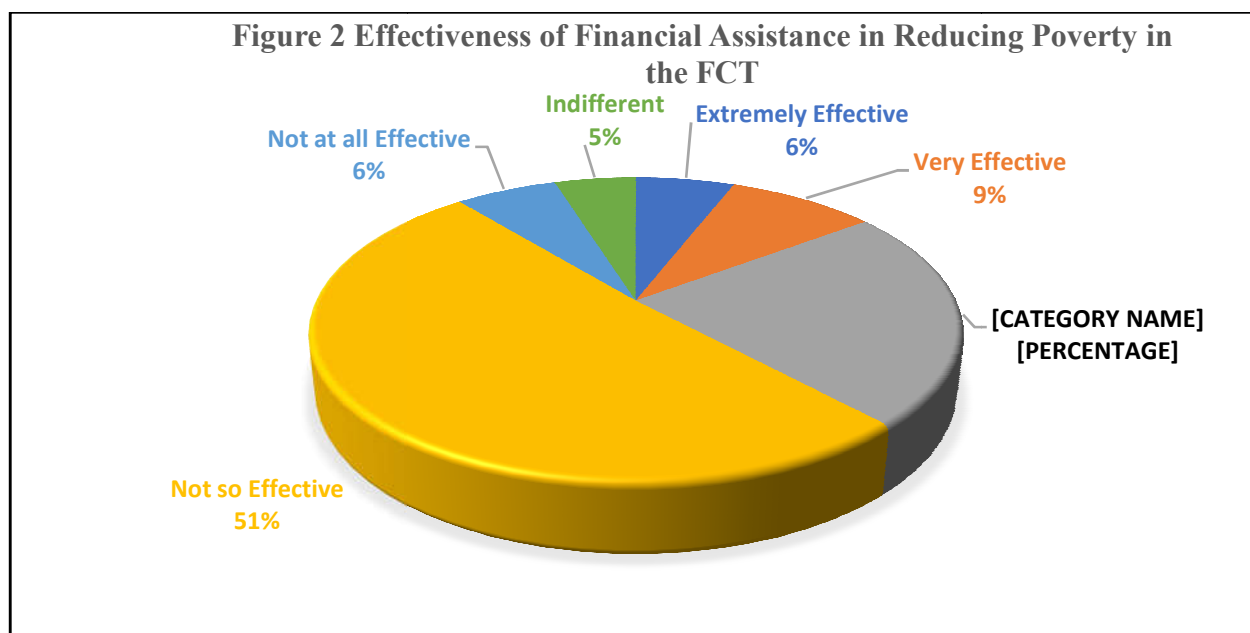
reduction. Secondly, while the CCT programme is impactful for individual beneficiaries, its limited scope relative to the size of the needy population may constrain its overall effectiveness in reducing the average poverty level. By expanding the programme, more individuals and households experiencing poverty and vulnerability can benefit from the cash transfers, which can help improve their access to basic necessities, healthcare, education, and other essential services. This, in turn, can contribute to lifting more people out of poverty and improving their overall well-being. Thirdly, the CCT programme's ability to access only about 25% of the CARES provisional budget highlights the untapped potential for scaling up the programme. Increasing funding allocation to the CCT programme would enable it to reach a larger number of beneficiaries and provide more substantial cash transfers to support their socio-economic needs. In addition, scaling up the programme would allow for greater coverage of marginalized and underserved communities within the FCT, ensuring that no one is left behind in the quest for poverty alleviation and inclusive development.

The findings on the impact of the CCT programme of socio-economic development of the FCT agree with the opinion of respondents on the effect of the CCT as shown in Table 4.2.7.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents Showing the Effectiveness of Financial Assistance Giving by the Government that are Programmed to Reduce Poverty in the FCT in Percentage

Scale Options	Respondents	Percentage
Extremely Effective	93	6
Very Effective	141	9
Somewhat Effective	371	23
Not so Effective	809	51
Not at all Effective	96	6
Indifferent	77	5
Total	1,587	100

Source: Field research, (2024).



Source: Field research, (2024).

The survey results in Table 2 and figure 2 reveal that only 15% of respondents believe that financial assistance programmes in the FCT are highly effective in reducing poverty, indicating a relatively low level of confidence in the impact of these initiatives. A majority (57%) perceive the financial assistance as not effective in alleviating poverty, suggesting a significant gap between the intentions of these programmes and their outcomes as experienced by the beneficiaries. The 24% who find the assistance somewhat effective represent a middle ground, recognizing some benefits but not a comprehensive solution to poverty. The low percentage (4%) of indifferent respondents could indicate that most people have a clear opinion about the effectiveness of these programmes based on their experiences or observations. On the whole, the programmes are good but requires better implementation strategies to make them more effective. Therefore, to enhance the impact of financial assistance programmes on poverty reduction in the FCT, a more targeted approach could be adopted. This could involve implementing conditional cash transfers (CCTs) directed at specific demographics most in need, such as low-income families, women, or the unemployed. These CCTs should be designed

with clear, achievable conditions aimed at promoting long-term economic stability, such as requirements for children's education, health check-ups, or vocational training for adults. In addition, there should be improved monitoring and evaluation to ensure that funds are reaching the intended recipients and contributing to measurable improvements in their living conditions.

Comparatively, the data obtained from the FCTA on the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme showcases a directed effort towards mitigating poverty within the Federal Capital Territory by aiding vulnerable groups such as the aged, chronically ill, disabled, and urban poor. This focused approach suggests a strategic effort to target financial assistance where it is most needed. It is important to note that the implementation agency reports that the programme is a huge success (Oluwookere, 2024). While the programme has achieved significant success in ameliorating the effect of poverty on targeted vulnerable people within the study area, its reach is however strongly debatable. The outreach, covering only a small fraction of the population against a backdrop of a 55.6% poverty rate, indicates a disparity between programme capacity and the widespread need, resulting in a limited impact

or significant gap in coverage. Similarly, the survey data reflects a perceived ineffectiveness of financial assistance programmes among the broader population, with a majority viewing them as not significantly impactful in reducing poverty. This perception could stem from the limited reach and visibility of such programmes, misalignment with the beneficiaries' immediate needs, or inefficiencies in implementation. The disconnect between the government-reported successes and public perception underscores the importance of enhancing the scope and relevance of these initiatives. Both sets of data point towards the necessity for a more expansive and inclusive approach in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes. Effective communication, broader coverage, and a more targeted approach, alongside regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms, could bridge the gap between policy intentions and public satisfaction. This suggests a need for policy reevaluation and strategic adjustments to ensure that the programmes not only reach a wider segment of the needy population but also align more closely with their immediate and long-term needs, thereby fostering a more impactful and positive perception of their effectiveness in poverty alleviation.

The theoretical implications of these findings are multifaceted and reveal significant insights into the governance and impact of poverty alleviation programmes in the FCT. Within the context of the elite and decision-making theories, policy decisions and implementations are predominantly influenced by a select group of individuals or institutions with significant power or resources. In the case of the FCT's CCT programme, the findings suggest that the design and execution of the programme could be predominantly shaped by the perspectives and interests of the political or bureaucratic elite, potentially leading to a misalignment between the programmer's provisions and the actual needs of the broader population. The disparity highlighted between the programmer's reported successes by implementing agencies and the perceived ineffectiveness among the general population

could be indicative of elite decision-making processes that may not fully incorporate or understand the ground-level realities faced by the intended beneficiaries. This disconnect supports the notion that despite well-intended strategies, if the policy-making and implementation processes are heavily influenced by a disconnected elite, the programmers might not address the most pressing needs of the vulnerable population effectively.

Moreover, decision-making theory, which focuses on the processes by which policies are formulated and chosen, further illuminates the situation. The theory posits that decision-making should be a rational process based on a thorough understanding of the problem, available options, and possible outcomes. The findings suggest that there might be a gap in this rational process, particularly in understanding the full scope of poverty within the FCT and the most effective methods for addressing it. The limited reach and perceived ineffectiveness of the CCT programme could be as a result of decision-making processes that either did not adequately consider the vastness of the need or failed to involve adequate feedback mechanisms from the affected populations. This finding aligns with Adefolaju and Omole (2019) findings on social protection policies which suggests a need for more inclusive and participatory approaches in policy formation and implementation. Thus, the policy elites in the FCT could incorporate a broader range of perspectives, particularly those from the communities meant to benefit from these programmes, to incrementally adjust poverty alleviation policies to enhance socio-economic development within the FCT.

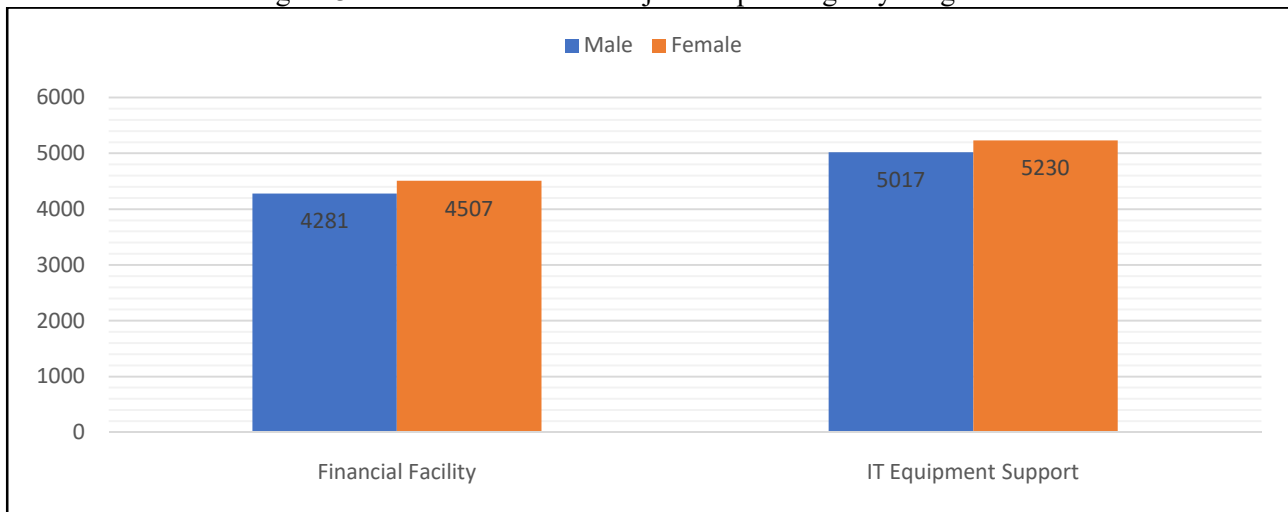
Impact of the MSMEs Programme

The Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) programmes play a crucial role in the socio-economic growth of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Particularly, the MSMEs programme carried out by the Abuja Enterprise Agency aims to bolster local businesses through financial support and technological enhancement. These programmes are instrumental in fostering entrepreneurial growth,

job creation, and technological innovation. The list of beneficiaries of the Abuja Enterprise

Agency is statistically represented at Figure 3.

Figure 3 Beneficiaries of the Abuja Enterprise Agency Programmes



Source: Field Research, (2024)

The data in Figure 3 extracted from the Abuja Enterprise Agency on the MSMEs programme indicates a significant outreach, benefiting 19,035 individuals, with a gender distribution that is almost equal – 9,298 males and 9,737 females. This balanced gender participation showcases a strong inclusivity element of the programme, essential for fostering gender equality in economic opportunities. In addition, the programme has two main forms of assistance: IT-equipment scheme and financial support, with both forms also showing a near-equal distribution between male and female beneficiaries.

The almost equal gender distribution in the beneficiaries reflects a positive impact on socio-economic development, particularly in promoting gender equality and empowering women, which are critical components of sustainable development. By providing IT equipment and financial assistance, the programme likely enhanced business operations, increased productivity, and fostered innovation among MSMEs. This would lead to job creation, improved incomes, and potentially stimulate economic growth within the FCT. The support for IT equipment is particularly noteworthy as it aligns with global digitalization trends, equipping businesses with modern tools

necessary for competitive advantage and integration into global markets.

From the theoretical perspective, the equitable distribution of assistance between male and female beneficiaries might suggest that decision-making within the MSME programme is not heavily dominated by elite biases, which often skew towards one gender, typically males. This could indicate a shift towards more inclusive governance structures or an acknowledgment of the importance of diverse entrepreneurial participation for robust socio-economic development. In addition, the success of the programme in achieving near-gender parity could reflect well-structured decision-making processes that adequately address the needs and conditions of different demographic groups within the FCT, suggesting a movement away from traditional top-down approaches.

The policy implication of this result is significant. The near-equal gender distribution and the tailored support in terms of IT equipment and financial assistance highlight the potential of targeted interventions in fostering equitable and sustainable socio-economic development. Therefore, there is clear evidence supporting the continuation and expansion of such balanced support schemes within the

MSME sector. Furthermore, the success of this programme underscores the importance of incorporating gender equality into economic policies to harness the full potential of the population for regional development. It also suggests that future policies should continue to embrace technology as a critical component of business development, especially considering the evolving global economic landscape.

To enhance these socio-economic impacts, policymakers could ensure continuous engagement with community stakeholders to identify evolving needs and potential barriers to programme accessibility. In addition, a focus on monitoring and evaluation will be critical in understanding the long-term effects of these interventions on individual businesses and the broader FCT economy. This could inform more nuanced, effective policies that align closely with the actual needs of MSMEs, driving sustained economic growth and development in the FCT.

IMPACT OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Community Development Plan (CDP) under the FCT CARES programme represents a significant initiative within the Federal Capital Territory Administration's efforts to foster socio-economic development in rural communities. The programme adopts a community-driven approach to empower local communities by identifying and prioritizing projects that have immediate and tangible impacts on the community. Such projects could include; the renovation of educational and healthcare facilities or the installation of essential infrastructure like pipe-borne water systems among others. This participatory model not only ensures that development projects align closely with the specific needs and priorities of each community but also encourages a sense of ownership and collaboration among community members. By requiring communities to contribute towards project execution, whether through financial means or the provision of labour, the CDP fosters a culture of self-help and mutual assistance. These are crucial elements in sustainable community development and thus aligns with several findings in the

literature of rural development programmers (Fritz, 2010; Khandker et al, 1991; Sun et al, 2017). The list of completed CDPs are detailed at Appendix III.

The table showcases a comprehensive list of completed Community Development Projects (CDPs) under the Community-Driven Development (CDD) approach within the study area councils of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). These projects encompass various sectors including education, healthcare, and water supply, indicating a targeted approach to addressing specific community needs. For example, numerous communities have benefited from the construction and rehabilitation of educational facilities and healthcare centers, along with the drilling and rehabilitation of boreholes to ensure access to clean water.

The impact of these CDPs on the socio-economic development of the communities within the FCT is significant. The focus on critical quick-impact projects like school and hospital renovations and the provision of clean water facilities, directly contribute to improving living standards and enhancing the quality of life for residents. The emphasis on community involvement in identifying needs and contributing towards the execution of projects fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, likely leading to better maintenance and sustainability of the facilities. Furthermore, the improvement in educational and healthcare infrastructure directly contributes to better educational outcomes and health conditions, thereby addressing two pivotal aspects of socio-economic development.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings align with Mills' Power Elite Theory, where the actual decision on what specific communities benefit from these programmers, are determined by the power elites. The CDD projects are often attracted by the power elites who also have information about the programme. Therefore, through their influence, specific communities apply and receive funding for projects within their communities. This reflects the interests and initiatives of local elites or influential groups within the communities. On the flip side, the community-

driven nature of these projects suggests an attempt to democratize decision-making processes, allowing for broader community involvement and input, which could counteract the traditional dominance of elites. This group decision-making process underlines the collective approach in identifying and addressing community needs, which is inherent in the CDD approach of the CDPs, reflecting a shift towards more inclusive and participatory decision-making processes in consonance with the Group Decision-Making Theory.

The policy implications of these findings are multifaceted. Firstly, the success of the CDPs in addressing specific community needs reaffirms the effectiveness of community-driven development as a strategy for poverty alleviation and socio-economic improvement.

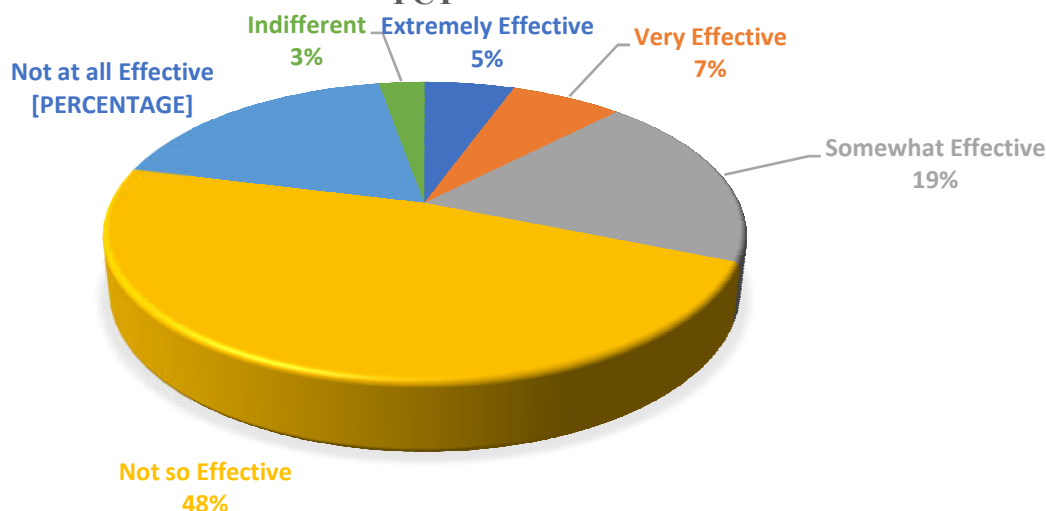
However, the sustainability and wider impact of these initiatives necessitate continuous engagement, proper monitoring, and inclusion of diverse community voices, especially marginalized groups, to ensure that the projects meet the broad spectrum of community needs. In addition, there is a need for policies to encourage greater transparency and accountability in the project selection and implementation processes to enhance community trust and participation. Overall, while the CDPs under the FCT CARES programme show positive strides towards community development, ongoing evaluation and adaptation are essential to maximize their impact on socio-economic development and to ensure they serve as a model for inclusive and effective community-driven development.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents Showing the Effectiveness of the Overall Government Poverty Reduction Programme in the FCT in Percentage.

Scale Options	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Extremely Effective	79	5
Very Effective	111	7
Somewhat Effective	301	19
Not so Effective	762	48
Not at all Effective	286	18
Indifferent	48	3
Total	1,587	100

Source: Field research, (2024)

Figure 4. Effectiveness of Government Poverty Reduction Programmes in the FCT



Source: Field research, (2024)

Based on Table 3 and figure 4. on the effectiveness of government poverty reduction programmers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), it is evident that there are varying perceptions among respondents. A significant portion of respondents, comprising 48%, reported that these programmers are "Not so Effective," while 18% deemed them "Not at all Effective." This suggests a considerable level of dissatisfaction or skepticism regarding the impact of government poverty reduction efforts in the FCT. On the other hand, a smaller proportion of respondents, 5% and 7% respectively, indicated that the programmers are "Extremely Effective" or "Very Effective." While these percentages are relatively low compared to the negative responses, they still represent a segment of the population that

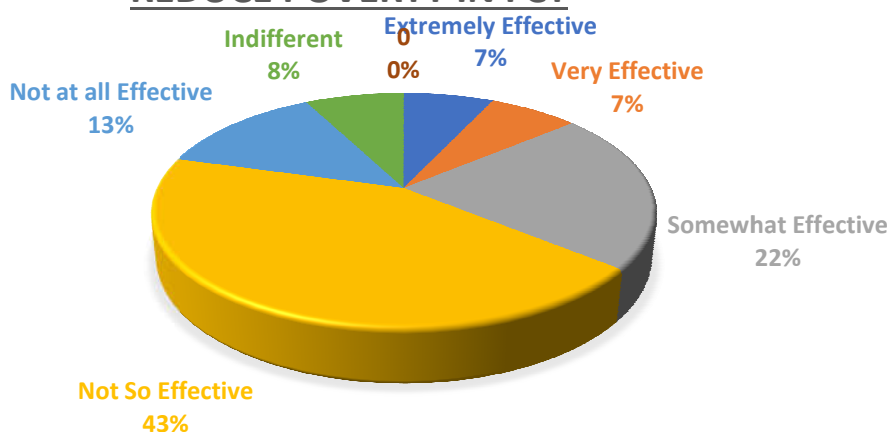
perceives these programmers positively. Furthermore, 19% of respondents considered the programmers "Somewhat Effective," indicating a moderate level of effectiveness in their view. In addition, 3% of respondents expressed indifference towards the effectiveness of these programmers.

Therefore, these findings suggest a mixed perception of the effectiveness of government poverty reduction programmers in the FCT. While some respondents acknowledge their effectiveness to some extent, a larger portion remains unconvinced or dissatisfied with the outcomes of these initiatives. This further underscores the need for further evaluation and possibly restructuring of these programmers to better address the root causes of poverty in the FCT.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents Showing the Effectiveness of Training organized by the Government that are Programmed to Reduce Poverty in the FCT in Percentage

Scale Options	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Extremely Effective	110	7
Very Effective	110	7
Somewhat Effective	350	22
Not So Effective	689	43
Not at all Effective	207	13
Indifferent	121	8
Total	1,587	100

FIGURE 5: EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING ORGANISED TO REDUCE POVERTY IN FCT



Source: Field research, (2024)

The survey data in Table 4 and figure 5 indicates that only 14% of respondents view the government's training programmers in the FCT as highly effective (extremely or very effective) in reducing poverty, while a larger proportion (56%) perceives these programmers as not very effective or not effective at all. This suggests that while there is a small segment of the population that benefits significantly from these initiatives, the majority do not perceive them as adequately addressing the issue of poverty. The 22% who find the programmers "somewhat effective" suggest there is some recognition of the programmers' potential benefits, but also room for significant improvement. In addition, the 8% indifferent responses could indicate a lack of awareness or understanding of the

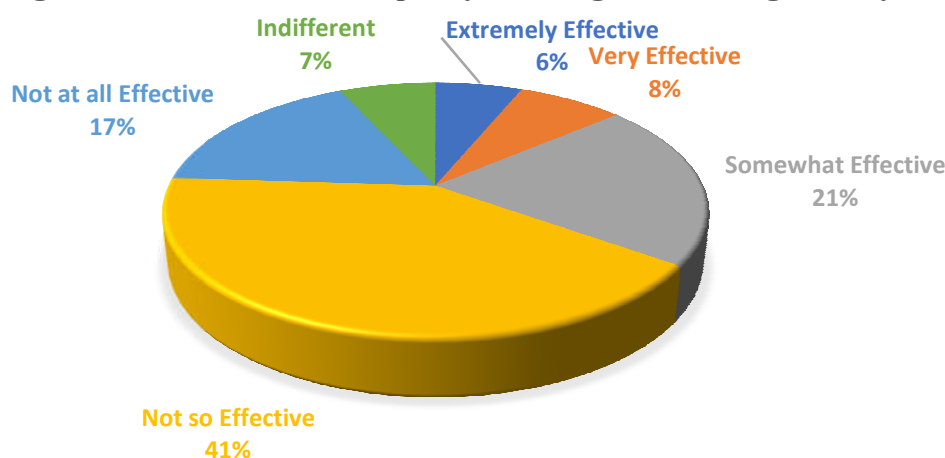
programmers' aims and outcomes. Hence, to enhance the effectiveness of training programmers aimed at poverty reduction in the FCT, it is crucial to reassess and realign the programmers with the needs and realities of the target demographic. This could involve conducting needs assessments to tailor the training more closely to those that need them. Also, there is the need to improve accessibility of these training programmers for underrepresented or marginalized groups, and increasing follow-up support to ensure sustainable training outcomes. In addition, there could be an increase in transparency and communication about the successes and opportunities of these programmers to build public trust and engagement.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents Showing the Effectiveness of Capacity building organized by the government that are programmed to reduce Poverty in the FCT in Percentage.

Scale Options	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Extremely Effective	98	6
Very Effective	120	8
Somewhat Effective	336	21
Not so Effective	652	41
Not at all Effective	272	17
Indifferent	109	7
Total	1,587	100

Source: Field research, (2024)

Figure 6: Effectiveness of Capacity Building In Reducing Poverty in the FCT



Source: Field research, (2024)

The survey results in figure 6 indicate that a small percentage of respondents (14%) consider capacity-building policies and programmes in the FCT to be highly effective in reducing poverty, which points to a perception that these initiatives have some impact but are not reaching their full potential. A significant majority (58%) perceive these initiatives as ineffective and 21% only somewhat effective, suggesting that while there may be some positive outcomes, they are not sufficient to significantly alter the poverty landscape in the FCT. The 7% indifferent responses could signify a lack of awareness or engagement with these programmes. Accordingly, to improve the effectiveness of capacity-building programmes aimed at poverty reduction in the FCT, it is

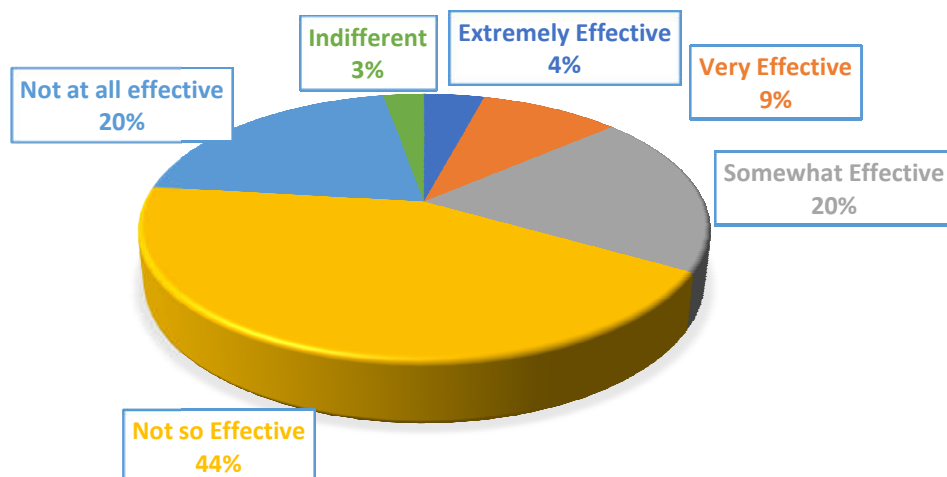
essential to reassess their design and implementation strategies. This could involve enhancing programmes relevance by aligning them more closely with local economic needs and labour market demands, increasing accessibility and inclusivity to reach more marginalized populations, and improving monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure accountability and continuous improvement. In addition, efforts could be made to increase community engagement and awareness about these programmes to ensure higher participation rates and better alignment with the community's needs. By addressing these issues, capacity-building initiatives can become more effective tools for poverty reduction in the FCT.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents showing what they consider the Effectiveness of Poverty Alleviation policies on socio-economic Development in the FCT in Percentage.

Scale Options	Respondents	Percentage
Extremely Effective	65	4
Very Effective	151	9
Somewhat Effective	313	20
Not so Effective	691	44
Not at all Effective	323	20
Indifferent	44	3
Total	1,587	100

Source: Field research, (2024)

Figure 7 Impact of Government Poverty Alleviation Policies on Socio-economic Development in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja



Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The survey results depicted in figure 7 shed light on the overall perception of respondents regarding the effectiveness of government poverty alleviation policies on socio-economic development in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. It is evident from the data that opinions vary widely among the respondents. A mere 4% of respondents deemed the poverty alleviation policies as extremely effective, while 9% considered them very effective. This indicates that only a small minority of respondents hold a high level of confidence in the impact of these policies on socio-economic development. On the contrary, a substantial portion of respondents, comprising 44%, viewed the policies as not so effective, with an additional 20% expressing the view that they are not at all effective. These figures suggest a prevailing sentiment of skepticism or disillusionment among the majority regarding the efficacy of the government's poverty alleviation efforts in the FCT. Interestingly, 20% of respondents indicated indifference towards the effectiveness of these policies, implying a lack of strong opinion or awareness among a subset of the surveyed population.

Drawing from these findings, it is apparent that there is a significant gap between the intended outcomes of government poverty alleviation initiatives and their perceived impact as experienced or observed by the respondents. While a small proportion acknowledges some level of effectiveness, the majority view the policies as falling short of addressing socio-economic challenges adequately. Hence the need to enhance the impact of poverty alleviation policies in the FCT, a more targeted and comprehensive approach is warranted. This could involve the implementation of conditional cash transfer programmes (CCTs) tailored to specific demographics in need, coupled with clear and achievable conditions aimed at promoting long-term economic stability. Also, the need to ensure that funds are reaching the intended beneficiaries and contributing to tangible improvements in their living standards should be prioritized.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of poverty alleviation policies on socio-economic development

in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. The study examines the major economic policy focus of the government geared towards poverty reduction. The study finds that the annual capital appropriation and the FCT CARES programmes are the major economic initiative put in place to reduce the preponderance of poverty in the FCT. The investigation finds that the economic policy framework is robust enough to reduce poverty and engender socio-economic development in the FCT. However, the study finds that the programmes are not effectively implemented to enhance socio-economic development in the FCT. The findings underscore the critical role of financial resources, political commitment, training, and transparency in enhancing the effectiveness of poverty alleviation efforts. The research also emphasizes the importance of inclusive and participatory decision-making processes, reflecting the theoretical perspectives of Elite Theory and Decision-Making Theory. By leveraging the insights from this study, policymakers and stakeholders can develop and implement more effective strategies to address poverty and promote socio-economic development in the FCT.

Recommendations

1. The FCT Administration should prioritize increasing financial allocations to poverty alleviation initiatives. Adequate funding is essential for supporting and sustaining these programmes. The government should ensure that funds are allocated transparently and used efficiently to maximize socio-economic impact.
2. The FCT Administration should prioritize regular training and sensitization workshops for policy implementers and beneficiaries to enhance the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programmes. These workshops should focus on practical skills, financial literacy, and entrepreneurial training, tailored to the specific needs of the target population.
3. The FCT Administration should promote robust anti-corruption measures to ensure transparency and accountability in the allocation and utilization of resources. This should include stringent auditing processes, publicly accessible financial records, and independent oversight bodies to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programmes.

4. The FCT Administration should foster community engagement and participation. Active involvement of local communities and civil society organizations in the planning and implementation of poverty alleviation initiatives is essential. This participatory approach ensures that programmes are relevant, culturally sensitive, and responsive to the diverse needs of the population.

5. The FCT Administration should leverage Public-Private Partnerships to explore alternative funding for poverty reduction programmes. Exploring alternative funding sources can help supplement government funding and expand the scope of poverty alleviation efforts. Collaboration with non-governmental and community-based organizations can also leverage additional resources and expertise.

6. The FCT Administration should strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to continuously assess the impact of poverty alleviation programmes. Regular assessments and feedback can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that interventions are effective and aligned with the needs of the target population.

7. The FCT Administration should address infrastructure gaps, particularly in rural and urban slums. Investment in critical infrastructure, such as roads, healthcare facilities, schools, and water supply systems, is essential for supporting socio-economic development in the FCT. Adequate infrastructure can improve access to essential services, markets, and employment opportunities, thereby reducing poverty and promoting economic growth.

References

- Adepoju, A.O., Yusuf, S.A. (2012), Poverty and Vulnerability in Rural South-West Nigeria. *ARPN Journal of Agricultural and Biological Science*, 7(6), 430-437.
- Chaudhuri, S., Jalan, J., Suryahadi, A. (2002), Assessing Household vulnerability to Poverty: A Methodology and Estimates for Indonesia, Discussion Paper, No. 0102-52, Columbia University.
- Chenery, H. B. (1975). The Structuralist Approach to Development Policy. *The American Economic Review*, 65(2), 310-316.
- Deonandan, R. (2019), Defining Poverty: A Summary of Competing models. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, Vol.2, (1), 17-21.
- Easton, D. (1965) *A System Analysis of a Political life*. New York Willey and sons.
- Laderchi, C. R., Saith, R., Stewart, F. (2003), "Does it matter that we do not agree on the definition of poverty? A Comparison of four Approaches", *Oxford Development Studies*, Volume 31, Issue 3.
- Mund, A. (2000), Understanding Poverty in Nigeria. A Multidimensional approach. *Journal of African Economics* 15 (3), 367-385.
- Okhiria A. O (2015). Poverty, an African Epidemic: Empirical Evidence of Nigeria *Developing Country Studies* Vol. 5(6),29-39.
- Oyekale, A., Oyekale, T. (2008), An Assessment of Income Shocks and Expected Poverty Dynamics in Rural Nigeria. *International Conference on Applied Economics – ICOAE*.
- Townsend, P. (1962) 'The meaning of poverty', *British Journal of Sociology*, 13(3), pp.221-227.
- Townsend, P. (1979). *Poverty in the United Kingdom: a survey of household resources and standards of living*. Univ of California Press.
- Townsend, P., and others (1997) 'An International Approach to the Measurement and Explanation of Poverty: Statement by European Social Scientists', circulated on social-policy@mailbase.ac.uk.
- UNDP (2020), Human development, United nations development programme.
- West, E. G. (1969). The political economy of alienation: Karl Marx and Adam

SSAR Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (SSARJMS)

Smith. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 21(1),
1-23.

World Bank. (2021). Poverty and Shared
Prosperity 2020: Reversals of Fortune.

Washington, DC: World Bank. Available online
at:

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34496>

THE END