

PREBENDALISM AND NATIONAL POVERTY
ERADICATION PROGRAMME IN RURAL CROSS RIVER
STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Poverty is a socioeconomic problem with severe dehumanizing conditions which renders an individual sterile with no hope, courage or voice in the society. The Federal Government in Nigeria introduced the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) as an institution to eradicate poverty. Unfortunately, the prevalence of prebendalism in the social and economic processes served as cog in the wheel of NAPEP thereby rendering it ineffective in rural Cross River State. This study therefore concludes that for NAPEP to perform creditably the task of poverty eradication in rural Cross River State, there is need for integration approach to the poverty situation in the State. This involves transparency, participation, proper targeting and accountability.

Keywords: Prebendalism, poverty eradication programme, rural

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Introduction

The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) was introduced in January, 2001 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. As a government institution created to be of service to the people, NAPEP was established to eradicate poverty at all levels in the federation. This was expected to be in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This development was imperative because, since independence in 1960, poverty have afflicted the lives of the people, with a greater percentage of the rural masses badly affected.

At present, it is estimated that about 73 percent of the rural people live below the poverty line in Nigeria (Anam, 2011). In short, the poverty profile in Nigeria is indicated as follows: (1980) 27.2%, (1985) 46.3%, (1992) 42.7%, (1996) 65.6%, (2000) 60%, (2004) 57.8%, (2010) 68.8% (NBS, 2011). Mismanagement, nepotism and corruption as prebendal indices have tended to aggravate the poverty situation in Nigeria.

Poverty, as a social problem, deprives the poor rural dwellers the opportunity to enjoy basic necessities of life like food, shelter, good health and access to qualitative education. Poverty has the effect of accepting abuses, insult, and stigmatization from the public. It robs one of integrity, voice and the courage to say no in the face of aggression or humiliation. It was these social conditions of deprivation that prompted the Federal Government to embark upon the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). The aim of NAPEP was to eradicate poverty at all cost and at all levels in the country. NAPEP

consist of multi- sectoral programmes covering areas like health, education, transport, housing, food and nutrition, finance, manufacturing, etc.

In Cross River State, Nigeria, NAPEP was aimed at eradicating poverty through the following schemes: Youth Empowerment, Skills Acquisition, Loans to farmers and Artisans, Mandatory Attachment Programme (MAP), and the provision of a three-wheel passenger vehicle popularly called Keke-Napep, to operate for wealth creation. Unfortunately, the performance of NAPEP in the State, particularly in the rural areas, was not impressive. Crime and insecurity, due to poverty, still escalated at alarming rate. Offences reported to the Police in 2012 were as follows: Armed Robbery 107, Theft 1067, Assault 1017, False Pretence/Cheating 314, Breach of Public Peace 137, Gambling 22, House Breaking 58, Burglary 101, Murder 210, Suicide 20, Kidnapping (Hostage Taking) 12 (Police Headquarters, Calabar, Nigeria, 2012). This poverty problem has been attributed to the prebendalization of the political and economic processes.

Against this background, therefore this paper attempts to empirically analyze prebendalism and its impact on the implementation of NAPEP in rural Cross River State.

Conceptual clarification

For purposes of clarity, and to facilitate understanding, it is imperative to conceptualize the terms prebendalism and poverty eradication.

Prebendalism: The term prebendalism seeks to explain what political leaders do in order to corruptly enrich themselves and transfer the wealth in the form of largess to family members, friends or supporters. It is the rapacious practices that sustains the ruling elites, and make them hold on to power as a do or die affair.

Poverty eradication: This refers to a system in which citizens are empowered to realize income for sustainable livelihood. The process involves giving assistance or skills as self reliant instrument for purposes of enhancement or wealth creation as a means to improve the living conditions of the poor.

NAPEP: What's the Problem?

Various studies, Obadan (1996), Canogarajah (1999), and Ali (1992), have shown that since 1986 when Nigeria experimented a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in line with World Bank directives, modest economic growth has been achieved whereas poverty has become more and more engraved within the fibre of the society as indicated by major socio-economic indicators like low economic growth, corruption, mismanagement (CBN, 1995, in Nyekachi, et al, 2005). Poverty eradication instrument as a government programme, emerged since independence, as Nigeria “continues to witness crushing poverty” inspite of “massive increase in wealth” (Nyekachi & Chukwuemeka, 2005).

Military and Civilian governments at different periods have tried to tackle the poverty situation in the country through several poverty programmes like Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Better Life for Rural Women, Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Operation Farewell to Poverty, Directorate for Employment (NDE). However, inspite of the

efforts by different governments to eradicate poverty, poverty seems to be rampant in the society with greater percentage of the poor in rural areas compared to the urban areas. This greater percentage of poverty in the rural areas, however, has attracted concerns in the area of research. Thus, a close examination of the dominance of poverty in rural and urban areas in Nigeria indicates that the incidence of poverty in rural areas far exceeds that of the urban areas as follows: (1980) 17.2 per cent urban, 28.3 per cent rural; (1985) 37.8 per cent urban, 51.4 per cent rural; (1992) 37.5 per cent urban, 46 per cent rural; (1996) 58.2 per cent urban, 69.3 per cent rural; (2004) 43.2 per cent urban, 63.3 per cent rural (Annual Abstract of Statistics, 2006). This deplorable poverty condition prompted the Federal Government to introduce NAPEP in 2001.

The aim of the programme is to wipe out poverty in Nigeria by establishing various Schemes like the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Schemes (RIDS), Social Welfare Service Scheme (SWSS) and National Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS). The aim of the various schemes is to create confidence and hope among the rural and urban dwellers. However, despite the introduction of NAPEP, the people at the grassroots still remain daily frustrated, deprived, oppressed and even denied access to qualitative education and social amenities that guarantee qualitative and healthy living (Eteng & Agbor, 2006). For instance, the average life expectancy of the poor does not exceed three score years. The World Bank data on life expectancy in Nigeria at birth shows that the total number of an individual's years, especially the poor in the rural areas remained as follows: (2004) 48 years, (2005) 49 years, (2006) 49 years, (2007) 50 years, (2008) 50 years, (2009) 51 years, (2010) 52 years, (2011) 52 years (World Bank, June 2012). In Cross River State, this situation calls for serious concern by both the government and all stakeholders to eradicate poverty at all costs. This is because with increase in crime, and citizens' frustration and

alienation, the average life expectancy has decreased considerably due to poverty, with little or no improvement in the living conditions of the people at the grassroots. Therefore, the various objectives for which NAPEP was established tend to remain far from being achieved and the challenges of poverty have remained unabated, especially in rural Cross River State.

Scholars (Joseph, 1999; Eteng, 2015; Ingwe, 2009) have attributed the failure of NAPEP to the incidence of Prebendalism in the society. According to these scholars, the prevalence of Prebendalism in a plural society like Nigeria, particularly Cross River State, gives rise to institutional diversities (having identities and plural divisions along ethnic, culture or religious ties). Thus, plural divisions lead to selective segregations in terms of recruitment into public institutions such as banks, hospitals, or schools, particularly in the contest over who should occupy public offices at the local, state or federal government levels. This condition creates deep “primordial identities” (Joseph, 1999) as in India (Hindus) or class in Europe. This social malaise of creating a fault line conditions of allocating major contracts and positions in the structure of government, for the leaders and their followers, give rise to material prebendal structures for purposes of resource control. This prebendal culture tends to destroy the system by causing disenchantment among the citizens and frustration of the poor rural masses.

In the light of this problem, this paper aims at empirically analyzing the link between prebendalism and the implementation of NAPEP in rural Cross River State.

Methodology

This study was conducted in rural Cross River State, Nigeria using nine local governments out of the eighteen local government areas in the State. The State is divided into three geo-political zones namely: North, Central and South. The northern geo-political zone

consists of five local government areas; the Central, six local government areas; and the southern, seven local government areas. From each zone, three local government areas were selected randomly so as to represent the entire population and to generate data needed for the study. The method of selecting the local governments was the random sampling method described as hat-and-draw method (Denga & Ali, 1998). This involved listing on pieces of paper the names of the local government areas in each geo-political zone, rolled into paper balls and mixed thoroughly in a container from where the required number of local government areas, from such political zones were blindly drawn. The same procedure, as indicated above, was equally utilized in selecting the rural communities from the sample local government areas.

Nine hundred respondents (comprising both male and female), one hundred from each of the local government selected were drawn purposively. This was deliberate to facilitate in-depth analysis relating to the main issue being studied. In addition, these categories of people are better placed and necessary in providing useful information that is required to use in order to answer the questions posed by the researcher, and in particular the subject matter of inquiry.

To conduct a successive research, both interview and questionnaire were used as research instruments to elicit data from the following respondents: unemployed youths, rural farmers, businessmen, artisans and household members. In order to prove that these instruments were reliable, a pilot study was conducted with few people in a small village in Yakurr local government area before introducing it to the generality of the population, using 5 percent (45 questionnaires). The validation of the instrument was done through the use of check questions to ensure quality standard in the response of the respondents.

Method of data analysis

The Chi-square analysis was used for the study. The test was at 5 percent level of significance. The use of Chi-square (X^2) analysis was to simplify the interrelationship that exists among the variables. It thus helps to determine the degree of dependency between the variables.

Bio-data profile of the respondents

The respondents for this study consist of eight hundred and twenty (male and female) representing 91.1 percent of the entire sample of nine hundred drawn for the study. The bio-data profile of the respondents are shown in a tabular form as follows.

N=820

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Age (in year)		
16-25	150	18.3
26-35	250	30.1
36-45	300	35.0
46-above	120	14.6
Gender		
Male	450	54.9
Female	370	45.1
Occupation		
Farmers	200	24.39
Businessmen	100	11.19
Artisans	120	14.63
Civil servants	80	9.75
Unemployed	300	35.58
Others	20	1.43
Educational		

qualification

Primary	60	35.58
Secondary	180	20.95
Tertiary	300	6.31

Source: Field work, 2015

Descriptive analysis relating to the rating of NAPEP programmes in rural Cross River State

In the attempt to provide data related to the rating of NAPEP programmes in rural Cross River State, the study utilized frequency counts based on the independent rating of the respondents as well as percentage as indicated in the table below. As shown in the table, 70 respondents, representing 8.5 percent, rated NAPEP’s capacity acquisition programme as good; 750 respondents representing 91.4 percent rated the programme as substandard; 50 respondents representing 6.9 percent rated it as adequate, while 770 respondents representing 93.9 percent rated the programme as inadequate.

The Mandatory Attachment Programme (MAP) was rated as follows: 100 respondents representing 12.2 percent rated the programme as good; 720 respondents representing 87.8 percent rated it as substandard; 70 respondents representing 8.5 percent rated the programme as adequate and 750 respondents representing 91.4 percent rated it as inadequate.

Respondents’ rating of NAPEP programmes in rural Cross River State

NAPEP programmes	Rating				
	Good	Substandard	Adequate	Inadequate	Percentage
Capacity acquisition programme	70 (8.5)	750 (91.4)	50 (6.9)	770 (93.9)	100

Mandatory attachment programme	100 (12.2)	720 (87.8)	70 (8.5)	750 (91.4)	100
Keke NAPEP programme	96 (11.7)	724 (88.3)	94 (11.5)	726 (88.5)	100
Micro-Credit programme	100 (12.2)	720 (87.8)	90 (10.9)	730 (89)	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

The Keke NAPEP programme was rated as follows: 96 respondents, representing 11.7 percent, rated the programme as good; 724 respondents, representing 88.3 percent, rated it as substandard; 94 respondents, representing 11.5 percent, rated the programme as adequate, while 726 respondents, representing 88.5, rated it as inadequate. Finally, the Micro-Credit programme was rated as follows: 100 respondents, representing 12.2 percent, rated the programme as good; 720 respondents, representing 87.8 percent, rated it as substandard; 90 respondents, representing 10.9 percent, rated the programme as adequate, and 730 respondents, representing 89 percent, rated it as inadequate.

The above opinions, by the various respondents in respect of the rating of NAPEP's programmes in rural Cross River State, demonstrated in clear terms the substandard quality and inadequacy of the programmes which resulted in increased agony of the rural masses. This is because by empowering youths in capacity acquisition of tailoring, hairdressing, carpentry, or enhancing with financial assistance of a meagre sum of five thousand (N5,000.00) monthly to large households which amount to alms giving, NAPEP cannot be said to have positively touched the life of the people in a challenging world with high cost of living. This explains why most youths in some rural communities abandon their skills and migrate to the urban areas where they think they can make quick money but end up resorting to armed robbery and other forms of crime.

In terms of adequacy, the programmes were not adequate enough to address the needs and aspirations of the people in rural communities. The implication of this is that a very high proportion of the target population (beneficiaries) still needs more of the NAPEP programmes for poverty eradication in their communities. Fundamentally, it shows that there is a limit to what NAPEP can do in rural Cross River State. Thus, while it is true that these programmes were necessary, useful and timely at all seasons, their inadequacy highlights that poverty eradication is still a mirage in rural Cross River State. Therefore, NAPEP's administration of poverty eradication in rural Cross River State should be taken more seriously than before. Efforts should however, be seriously complimented by all stakeholders such as the Federal government (owners of the programme), State and local government areas. In addition, Non-governmental Agencies, International Donor Agencies, and other philanthropic groups, religious bodies, trade unions, and student unions in tertiary institutions, should come together to compliment the government efforts in the war to eradicate poverty in rural Cross River State.

Test of hypothesis

Chi-square analysis of prebendalism and National Poverty Eradication Programme in rural Cross River State

	National Poverty Eradication Programme				
	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
Mismanagement	150	70	200	400	820
	(18.3)	(8.5)	(24.4)	(48.8)	
Nepotism	145	75	250	350	820
	(17.7)	(9.1)	(30.5)	(42.7)	

Chi-Square analysis= Mismanagement = 289.3

Nepotism = 212.5

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

Discussion of findings

One of the cardinal findings made by this study is that mismanagement and nepotism as indices of prebendalism have significantly hindered the effectiveness of NAPEP in the drive towards of poverty eradication in rural Cross River State. The result indicates that there is a significant relationship between prebendalism and mismanagement as well as nepotism. The Chi-square statistical method used in testing the hypothesis clearly shows this significant relationship suggesting that NAPEP has not positively impacted on the lives of the rural people in Cross River State. This ugly situation and ineffectiveness of NAPEP has been attributed to such prebendal practices like embezzlement, siphoning, stealing, and other forms of rapacious activities of nepotism thereby rendering NAPEP ineffective.

However, although budgetary allocations were adequate for NAPEP yet the overall performance, and the social picture created was one of a zero-sum game. Mismanagement resulting in embezzlement, and stealing of NAPEP funds was so rampant that in February, 2009 the National Assembly invited the NAPEP National Co-ordinator (Dr. Magnus Kpakol) to appear on the floor of the Senate (Parliament) to answer questions of alleged-mismanagement of funds meant for poverty eradication. While answering questions in reaction to Senate allegation of mismanagement, the NAPEP Boss disclosed that between 2001 and 2008 the Agency had received about N34 billion from various sources like state governments, commercial banks and the Millennium Development Goals (Daily Champion February 18, 2009.7). Of this amount, Dr. Kpakol claimed that about N21.725 billion had been expended on NAPEP poverty eradication programmes like Mandatory Attachment Programme (MAP), Keke – NAPEP

programme, Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP), Micro-Credit Programme, and Capacity Enhancement Scheme, involving Care of the People (COPE). The question now is, if so much funds had been disbursed to NAPEP, why is the agency still not capable of administering the national poverty eradication programmes effectively?

The inability of NAPEP to perform creditably well in the task of poverty eradication in rural Cross River State, despite budgetary allocations, is due to prebendalism that result in mismanagement of funds. This finding supports the view that no matter how much funds are allocated to an Agency for programme implementation, it is never enough (Eteng, 2015). In the case of NAPEP, most respondents were of the opinion that the NAPEP funds meant for poverty eradication were very often diverted into the payment of the law makers' constituency projects that were used for political and electioneering campaigns in order to win votes in their constituencies. Many respondents interviewed claimed that prebendal practices have taken different dimensions. To some, it assumed the form of stealing of public funds and to others; it assumed the nature of robbery of the citizens in the society. These descriptions of prebendal practices clearly corroborate the opinion of both Wale Adebani and the famous Afro Beat king, late Fela Anikulapo-kuti. For instance, Wale Adebani described prebendal politics as "authority stealing" (Joseph, 2013). He justified this claim by pointing to the positions of authority that the political leaders occupy and which they covert to amass personal wealth. Similarly, the late Afro Beat king, Fela Anikulapo-kuti, described prebendal practices in a lyric as "armed robbery" (Joseph, 2013).

Authority stealing, as earlier noted, takes place when the programme managers short-change the beneficiaries. This attitude commonly manifests, in the implementation of the Care of the People Programme (COPE) where selected households and destitutes under the Conditional

Cash Transfer (CCT) are paid monthly basic income guarantee of five thousand naira (N5,000.00), as financial support to better their living conditions. Unfortunately, this programme was abused by those who managed it. The programme managers saw it as opportunity to corruptly enrich themselves by short-changing some of the beneficiaries. In an interview with some respondents, the payment of this basic income to the beneficiaries was short-changed. Most beneficiaries interviewed claimed that they were denied payment intermittently over a period of time on the excuse that their names were officially omitted from the payment vouchers. This ploy was used to deny most beneficiaries the chances of benefiting from the scheme. In turn, a large amount of the unpaid money ends up in private pockets for personal gains and corrupt enrichment.

It has been observed that NAPEP funds come from different sources. From 2001 to 2008, NAPEP had received N10 billion from state governments, and commercial banks, and additional N8.2 billion from the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (Daily Champion February 18, 2009). As was expected, NAPEP was to partner with the state to monitor the disbursement of these funds for effective administration of poverty eradication programmes. Unfortunately, when the funds were finally released to states, NAPEP in Cross River State was sidelined and excluded in the disbursement. The implication of this nefarious activities and actions is that the funds that were meant for poverty eradication were either diverted, siphoned off, stolen, or mismanaged for personal gains. A senior staff of NAPEP, when interviewed, confirmed these unpleasant practices and claimed that the practices have been in existence ever since NAPEP was established in 2001.

Another major finding by this study is nepotism in terms of favouritism in the choice of beneficiaries of the programmes. This is commonly indicated in the practice of providing

beneficiaries with financial assistance, skills and jobs for wealth creation. In order to understand how nepotism is practiced, it is necessary to examine the choice of beneficiaries against the background of where the programme managers come from. It is not therefore uncommon to discover that most of the beneficiaries and the programme managers share common origins or geographical areas. In most cases, tribal kinsmen, relatives, friends or party supporters were preferred. Most of the respondents interviewed attested to this nepotistic practice where beneficiaries are selected on the basis of tribe, affiliation or party support. In an interview with some programme managers, they admitted that this is done in order to maintain a satisfactory social structure for purposes of social security. This nepotistic practice however conforms with the research findings on Kenya and Uganda by Bo Rothstein which demonstrated why political leaders behave the way they do that made it so difficult to eradicate prebendal politics. In his analysis, Bo Rothstein maintained that “if you have not helped your family, they are actually going to curse you” (cited in Joseph, 2013). There is therefore pressure on programme managers to eat and allow some crumbs to fall on others who are with them. This thinking, perception, and attitude in the choice of beneficiaries predominantly served as basis for selecting beneficiaries in all the NAPEP programmes.

Nepotism was also expressed in the choice of beneficiaries of the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme as enhancement scheme. The baseline data on this programme indicates that only few households are favourably chosen by political leaders at the Ward and Chapter levels of the rural areas to benefit from the programme compared to the vast number of families in the rural communities. As already indicated earlier, beneficiaries of this programme were to get a monthly petty cash transfer of five thousand naira (N5,000.00). Most of the households consist of about six to seven members. However, what is striking here is, how does

this petty cash transfer positively touch the lives of the rural poor? The implication of this cash transfer to each of these households, particularly those with more than five members, is that, on the average, less than one thousand naira (N1,000.00) is given monthly as financial assistance to members of such households. This poor situation cannot be said to be poverty eradication of any kind. It merely amounts to alms giving, and is considered as an exercise in futility.

When we compare this petty cash transfer, which is given as favour to what a cook earns in government, it can be said that the quality of poverty eradication strategy adopted by NAPEP is grossly inadequate, substandard, and merely favoured those that are connected with the political leaders in power. This is a clear manifestation of prebendal practice which finds lasting rest in the hands of political faithful men and party master riggers (Eteng & Agbor, 2006).

Another finding of this study is that NAPEP failed to focus on the target population due to favouritism. As a form of reward system, prebendalism formed the basis for the choice of the beneficiaries of the Keke NAPEP programme. Thus, between 2001 and 2010, a total of two hundred (200) tricycle passenger vehicles commonly called Keke NAPEP were provided by NAPEP as a form of capacity enhancement scheme for wealth creation (Field work, 2015). In this programme, a beneficiary buys, at a significant discount, a 3-wheel passenger vehicle to operate for business. This laudable programme was however hijacked by political leaders in power during this period. Most respondents interviewed maintained that the programme lacked proper coordination and focus due to prebendal politics. A senior civil servant interviewed maintained that all the Keke NAPEP vehicles brought to the State during this period were purchased by the political leaders in power and were given to their supporters for the purpose of election. Many respondents opined that there are “quick fixes” for those who are friends, supporters or family members of the political leaders. Consequently, the target population was

sidelined and the programme became infested with dysfunctional malaise which marred its effectiveness.

Finally, the study found that due to prebendalism, the micro-credit programme, meant to assist rural farmers and businessmen, failed to benefit the target population. The programme offers financial assistance to beneficiaries through selected Micro-Finance institutions and Community Banks. Some of the Micro Finance Institutions and Community Banks selected for this programme include Ogoja Micro Finance Bank, Obudu Micro Finance Bank, Utugwang Micro Finance Bank, Livingspring Micro Finance Bank, and the Bakassi Microfinance Bank. This idea hinges on the anticipation that millions of the poor rural masses will become very successful entrepreneurs if and when they are assisted to access loans from these banks by legalizing and standardizing their assets. Unfortunately, this expectation was marred by prebendal forces, and rendered the task of poverty eradication ineffective. Virtually, all chances of securing these credit facilities or loans were made difficult for non party supporters. What is of striking importance is that local farmers and businessmen were made to form associations or business groups to enable them obtain loans but these chances were hijacked by those who are connected to the politicians. Most of the respondents claimed that the conditions for obtaining the loan facility was very stringent and could not be easily fulfilled by them. They asserted further that the interest's rates were high and the loan repayment would rather worsen their already impoverished social conditions. Some respondents who were fortunate to belong to associations or groups to obtain loans also complained of frequent harassments by their group leaders resulting in the seizure of their property for failure to repay their loans. A senior staff of one of the Community Banks, when interviewed, opined that the cumbersome process of obtaining the bank facility was primarily due to administrative handling and regulations guiding the granting

of the loans. In an interview with some respondents, most of the beneficiaries of the bank facility are merely those who were selected by the political leaders for the bank's consideration of the loan facility. Therefore, what seems to be for the rural poor to better their living conditions turned out to be exclusively for those who have connections to the political leaders. This condition hindered the effectiveness of NAPEP in the administration of poverty eradication programme.

In all, NAPEP Youth Empowerment and the Capacity Enhancement Schemes, designed to provide needed resources and enabling environment to the unemployed youths, artisans, local farmers, businessmen, and households or destitutes, suffered serious setbacks as a result of the evil forces of prebendalism. What used to be the slogan, "life more abundant for all" became life more abundant for the few friends and supporters of the politicians. The promise to eradicate poverty at all cost in line with the United Nation Millennium Development Goals (MDG) was therefore marred by prebendal practices and NAPEP could not perform creditably in the task of poverty eradication in rural Cross River State.

Conclusion

The poverty situation in rural Cross River State, Nigeria, needs a serious pursuit with abundant resources to embark on a total war against it. Poverty is a serious problem and therefore any programme meant for its eradication must be implemented in such a manner as to benefit the rural poor and improve their living conditions.

This study reveals clearly that NAPEP is a colossal failure due to prebendalism. Prebendal practices of stealing, embezzlement, mismanagement, and nepotism resulted in lack of funds and consequently diverted the attention

of the programme managers from the target group (beneficiaries) to the political class who used their position for their own interest and that of their relatives or friends. Therefore, in view of these challenges, and the great task of poverty eradication in the State, it becomes imperative to utilize an integrated approach to combat poverty. This will involve transparency, participation, accountability, and targeting of the beneficiaries, etc, to eradicate poverty. This view is based on the dehumanizing effects of poverty which calls for its total eradication, at all costs, and in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



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