CONCEPTUAL PLURALISM IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF POVERTY: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA.

BY

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to all:

- who are afflicted by the plague of poverty in most countries of the world especially children who die as a result of hunger and all those who are deprived of peace due to war
- who are making efforts as individuals or organisations towards alleviating poverty and restoring human dignity

Abstract

The problem of poverty and its conceptualisation has been a central concern of many extant literatures, especially in emerging economies. A central issue underpinning these studies is the assumption that poverty is a multidimensional construct. Thus, these various concepts of poverty constitute a conceptual plurality. Consistent with the burgeoning interest in understanding the various meanings of poverty, and using the conceptual pluralism approach, this study seeks to investigate the similarities and divergences concerning poverty understanding in Nigeria. Of particular concern are concepts of poverty used by various anti-poverty organisations, and by people in communities where anti-poverty organisations work.

Using field interviews and extensive Focus Group Discussions spanning various anti-poverty organisations, and the four geo-political zones in Nigeria, this study carries out its investigation on the conceptual pluralism in the understanding of poverty in Nigeria and its relationship to formulated poverty reduction strategies.

The findings reveal that there are wide variations in the conceptualisation of poverty from the voices of the poor and anti-poverty organisations involved in poverty reduction campaigns. Of particular interest are the traditional, cultural and non-material understandings of poverty. Furthermore, the findings reveal that the definitions of poverty presented by the poor and actors of anti-poverty measures unveiled some perceived causes of poverty in Nigeria. The research also finds that there is an underlying dynamism over time in the understanding and conceptualisation of poverty; and that these changes are anchored on certain economic, social, cultural and political factors operating in different periods. It equally finds that there are underlying linkages between poverty conceptualisation and the adopted strategies and policies employed by anti-poverty organisations. This is predicated on the fact that the type of poverty identified and prioritised by these organisations largely shapes the measures taken to address poverty gaps in Nigeria. Finally, the research particularly reveals internal and external tensions as the implications of conceptual pluralism in the understanding of poverty amongst anti-poverty organisations, as well as challenges faced in the implementations of anti-poverty measures.

List of Abbreviations

ABC	Alliance for Behavioural Change
ACD	Ajamgbadi Community Development
ADP	Agricultural Development Programme
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APM	Anti-Poverty Measures
APO	Anti-Poverty Organisations
ATR	African Traditional religion
AU	African Union
BLP	Better Life Programme
BNI	Basic Needs Index
BNPL	Basic Needs Poverty Line
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CAP	Community Action Plan
CAPPA	Community Action Plan for Poverty Alleviation
CB	Community Bank
CBCN	Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CCD	Community Charter of Development
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
CDD	Community Driven Development
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
CPA	Conceptual Pluralism Approach
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DFFRI	Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure
DFID	Department for International Development

ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crime Commission
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FEAP	Family Employment Advancement Programmes
FEEDS	Federal Capital Territory Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies
FGD	Focus Groups Discussions
FOS	Federal Office of Statistics
FSI	Food Security Index
FSP	Family Support Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GR	Green Revolution
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HPI	Human Poverty Index
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPI	Integrated Poverty Index
IRM	Imo Rescue Mission

ISI	Import Substitution Industrialisation
JAMB	Joint Admission Matriculation Board
JDPC	Justice, Development and Peace Commission
LAPO	Live Above Poverty
LEEDS	Local Government Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
LLC	Limited Liability Churches
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MNC	Multinational Corporations
MPI	Multi-dimensional Poverty Index
NACRDB	Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Development Bank
NAIS	National Agricultural Insurance Scheme
NALDA	National Agricultural Land Development Agency
NAPEC	National Poverty Eradication Council
NAPEP	National Poverty Eradication Programme
NBS	Nigeria Bureau of Statistics
NC	North-Central
ND	Niger Delta
NDE	National Directorate of Employment
NDV	Niger Delta Vigilante
NE	North-East
NEEDS	National Economic Empowerment and development Strategy
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NERF	National Economic Reconstruction Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

NOA	National Orientation Agency
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPHCA	National Primary Health Care Agency
NRDCS	Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme
NW	North-West
NWA	Niger Welfare Association
OCHI	Our Community Health Initiative
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OF	Outreach Foundation
OFN	Operation Feed the Nation
OPEC	Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAP	Poverty Alleviation Programme
PB	Peoples' Bank
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PPACA	Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RBDA	River Basin Development Authority
RIDS	Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme
RWI	Relative Welfare Index
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SCOAN	Synagogue Church of All Nation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEEDS	State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
SE	South-East
SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
SOWESS	Social Welfare Service Scheme

SS	South-South
SURE-P	Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme
SW	South-West
THO	Total Health Organisation
TI	Transparency International
TOT	Training of the Trainee
UK	United Kingdom
UMT	Urban Mass Transit
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nation International Emergency Children Fund
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USDS	United State Department of States
VGC	Victoria Garden City
VFF	Vesico-Vaginal Fistulae
VoP	Voices of the Poor
WDR	World Development Report
WHO	World Health Organisation
WICAD	Women in Cooperatives, Agriculture and Development
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWII	World War II
YES	Youths Empowerment Scheme
YRAC	Youth Reformation and Awareness Centre

Map of Nigeria

https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=map+of+nigeria (accessed on 25/11/2015)

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1 General introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the introductory aspect of the thesis, especially in terms of the background, motivation and crux of the research. It presents poverty as a problem in Nigeria and briefly explains past approaches to the understanding of poverty. Most importantly, this chapter describes the Conceptual Pluralism Approach (CPA) as distinct but not excluding other approaches adopted in the past to define poverty and explore poverty perspectives. In addition, the aims, the attendant research questions and the structure of this thesis are presented in this chapter.

1.2 Background and purpose of this study

1.2.1 The case study: Conceptual Pluralism in the study of poverty in Nigeria

The problem of poverty, and the corresponding approach to it, remains one of the most challenging issues in the local and international development literature. The academic research and public policy concerned with development have been occupied with the best way to define, understand and reduce poverty. How poverty is defined is highly critical to policy and academic debates involving this concept. Hence, Alcock, (1997) states that “it is the issue of definition that lies at the task of understanding poverty, we must first know what poverty is before we can begin to do anything to measure it and before we can begin to do anything to alleviate it” (p. 10). This statement implies the pluralism in the understanding of poverty. The conceptual definition of poverty may be difficult, simply because a range of poverty definitions exist stemming from various disciplinary approaches and ideologies (Handley et al. 2009:1). In the recent past, specifically since World War II, the Western definitions have become dominant in the literature as poverty was conceived in monetary terms, using levels of income or consumption to measure poverty (Grusky and Kanbur, 2006: 11). The concept was further developed by defining the poor by a

headcount of those who fall below a given income/consumption level or 'poverty line' (Lipton and Ravallion, 1995: 1).

In recent years, different approaches have been adopted to complement this economic definition by defining poverty in a more multidimensional way (Subramanian, 1997:35). These approaches include the basic needs approach (see Streeton et al, 1981), the human development approach (see UNDP, 1990), participatory rural appraisal approach (see Chambers, 1994), the capabilities approach (see Sen, 1999a), participatory poverty assessment (PPA) as represented by the World Bank's participatory study, and the "Voices of the Poor" (VoP) (see Narayan et al., 2000; Ayoola et al., 2001; Forno, 2008). Contemporarily, poverty is, for instance in one source, defined by a sense of helplessness, dependence and lack of opportunities, self-confidence and self-respect on the part of the poor (Handley et al. 2009:1); the poor themselves see issues of powerlessness and voicelessness as major aspects of their poverty as well (Narayan et al., 2000).

Recently, the World-Bank-led VoP project has featured prominently in the literature on poverty and is argued to be different from all other large-scale poverty studies, especially in terms of approach. The VoP approach adopts participatory and qualitative research methods, and is purported to directly represent the realities of poor people's lives through their own voices. The approach presents poor people's perspectives in a multidimensional form with attendant characteristics of powerlessness, a lack of freedom of choice and action, as well as the negative effects that each dimension can have on the other (Narayan et al 2000). The theme of the VoP is therefore that "any policy document on poverty should be based on the experiences, reflections, aspirations and priorities of poor people themselves" (p. 3); in other words, not just those of experts or technocrats. This, it is argued, will enable a wide range of poor people in diverse countries and conditions to share their views and to contribute, in accordance with their experiences, to a particular approach to poverty (Narayan et al 2000).

Commenting on the VoP as one approach to poverty, Forno (2008) stresses the importance of the politics of representations of the poor. This is done in order to further validate the claims of authenticity, participation and empowerment that

are said to characterize the approach. Forno emphasizes the importance of the experiences and VoP in considering the re-conceptualization of poverty as well as the theory and practice of development communication. Forno's argument is that the process of representation of the poor and their voices in policy and development processes should be prioritized above merely communicating the VoP to the intended audience. A summary of Forno's opinion is that if the approach of the VoP in conjunction with the politics of representation could be adopted within contemporary development thinking and practice, it might constitute an appropriate strategy of addressing poverty and underdevelopment (p. 8, 11, 52).

Even though 'VoP' defines poverty as multi-dimensional, it has been criticised for primarily defining the poor in Africa as lacking in financial resources (Unwin, 2008). Pender (2002) is of the opinion that the World Bank used the voices within a VoP approach "to gain a powerful credibility and to legitimize its pre-existing agenda" (p. 112) whilst pretending "to be acting on behalf of the poorest" (p. 98). In the same line of thought, Cornwall, (2000:63) laments on the issue of the authorship of the voices, saying that these voices are "refracted through multiple layers of mediation thus raising the question as to whose voices emerge in the final analysis". In this case, editing the voices may be subjective and characterised by politics. Furthermore, there is the issue of representation bias when selecting voices because of the need to promote acceptable and constructive conclusions (Booth et al. 1998). The VoP was criticised for being instrumental because it mainly adopts PPA, which makes the poor cooperate with predetermined development programmes rather than changing the nature of the programmes (Laderchi et al., 2003). It also lacks qualities of self-determination and empowerment (ibid). The poor's involvement in the research has been described as 'cosmetic participation' (Forno, 2008, p.15) for political reasons (Laderchi, et al., 2003), perhaps because of organisational power and legitimacy of the authorship of the voices.

In relation to Nigeria, Ayoola et al (2001), use open-ended research methods to learn about people's experiences of, and responses to poverty focussing on themes of security, opportunities and empowerment. They also present the experiences, priorities, reflections and recommendations of poor people in the country with a view to enabling "a wide range of poor people to share their

views about policy for poverty reduction, in such a way that they can inform and contribute to the concepts and content of the World Development Report (WDR) of 2000/01" (p.1). However, the implications of these various understandings of poverty for poverty reduction efforts were not discussed and some actors were also excluded, especially actors from religious organisations.

All documented evidence indicates that many forms of poverty in Nigeria keep increasing. Though the country is one of the few nations in sub-Saharan Africa possessing rich natural resources, it occupies a low position within the region regarding its social statistics. For instance, it has been observed that the poor in Nigeria have a cash income which is often insignificant compare to their basic necessities within a particular period (Justin, 2001). Many empirical findings about the level of poverty in Nigeria are also distressing because Nigeria is ranked as the seventh largest exporter of oil in the world (see Aigbokhan, 2008:26; Oyekale, 2007). This is also important to further understand the complexity and diverse nature of the perceptions of poverty in Nigeria as we will see below. UNDP (2015) describes Nigeria as a country with very low human development, especially in terms of health, welfare and education; and ranks her as one of the poorest countries in the world, further justifying the UNDP's (1998 and 2001) description of the country as being increasingly worse off today than it was in the 1980s. For instance, the UNDP (2015:2) stated that Nigeria's Human Development Index (HDI) value for 2014 is 0.514, which put the country in the low human development category at 152 out of 188 countries and territories. Furthermore, the HDI value also increased from 0.467 to 0.514, an increase of 10.1 percent or an average annual increase of about 1.07 percent, between 2005 and 2014 (UNDP, 2015:2).

Nigeria remains the most populous country in Africa, with over 170 million people, which account for 47% of West Africa's total population. Nigeria's population is further described as diverse, with around 300 ethnic groups speaking 500 indigenous languages, and practicing two major religions: Islam and Christianity (World Bank, 2007:23). Though the country is blessed with oil wealth, a large proportion of Nigeria's population is said to be living in poverty, with approximately 70 million people living on less than US$1/day (World Bank and DFID, 2005: 8). Ironically, while Nigeria became a major exporter of oil, the proportion of Nigerians experiencing income poverty has increased, especially

during the period of 1971-1995 (IMF, 2002). According to UNDP (2006), Nigeria's poverty is multidimensional: the country experiences infant mortality, millions of people living with HIV/AIDS; and school is not accessible for millions of children (DFID, 2007 cited in Higgins, 2009:2).

The issue of extreme poverty in the case of the vast majority of Nigerians has raised a lot of concern. Though the Federal Government, based on its economic policy, recently signed a $2.3bn assistance agreement aimed at fighting and reducing extreme poverty with the United States Agency for International Development (Punch, 2015 p.1, 2), this does not indicate that policymakers, despite their official claim, are in fact practically occupied with poverty reduction issues. This may be due to other factors influencing policy making such as elite enrichment. However, the official line was that the agreement would help the government to combat extreme poverty among Nigerians over the next five years within a more stable and democratic society, as well as stimulating inclusive economic growth, promoting a healthier, more educated population and helping to strengthen good governance.

The above instances validate a main tenet of this study: that the phenomenon of poverty increasingly manifests in Nigeria and therefore calls for further investigation. In view of this, it has become necessary to conduct another poverty assessment using participatory methods that focus on the VoP and anti-poverty organizations (APOs) to improve the report submitted by WDR (2000/01), especially as it concerns pluralism and its implication in the conceptualization and understanding of poverty. This justification is premised on the fact that previous assessments on poverty perceptions (see for example, WDR, 2000/01; Ayoola et al., 2001; Narayan et al 2000; Narayan and Petesch, 2002), need to be updated. Besides, a comparison of "VoP" with people from the poverty policy organisations, especially in relation to Nigeria, needs to be conducted. This comparison becomes imperative because anti-poverty actors seem to be more interactive with the poor in terms of intervention measures. Arguably, there is also the likelihood of similarities and differences in the way the poor and the actors of anti-poverty measures (APMs) conceive poverty. The conduct of this comparison in relation to these similarities and differences are also likely to have implications for anti-poverty policies. Basically, this is the first study doing the assessment and comparison of the two sets of views.

Therefore, this study distinctively adopts CPA through the use of PPA as was done within the VoP approach to conceptualise poverty. The aim is to highlight the plurality of the voices and perspectives which characterize understandings of poverty-related questions. Therefore, this case-study of the pluralism in the understanding of poverty in Nigeria is not pre-occupied *per se* with the reduction of poverty, but with discovering the different definitions and understandings of poverty from the poor and non-poor members of the communities, as well as actors from various APOs, and its implications for poverty reduction strategies. Through the voices of the poor, non-poor, and the actors of APMs, in the form of interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), this study explores the different meanings and understandings of poverty. It also explores the changes in the conceptualisation of poverty and its underlying drivers across time; the socio-economic factors and institutional practices behind these conceptions of poverty; the linkages between poverty conceptualisations and strategies and policies for its reduction; and the implications and challenges associated with this pluralism in the understanding of poverty.

This study, like the VoP, is also not only concerned with the views of poor people in Nigeria in relation to their description of poverty based on their experiences, but focuses largely on various intrinsic poverty definitions as emanating from the poor and exploring the most common definitions as provided by the majority of the poor.

However, this study is different from the World Bank's VoP in many respects. This study is a single-country case-study in Nigeria whereas the VoP is an international comparative research project spanning three volumes: "Can anyone hear us", "Crying out for change" and "From many lands" (Narayan et al., 1999; Narayan et al., 2000; and Narayan and Petesch, 2002) and the country synthesis report on Nigeria (Ayoola et al., 2001). The 'VoP' was a study conducted in six geo-political zones in Nigeria involving organisations at the federal, state and local government levels, but was lacking in depth. For example, 'Bonugu', one of the sampled cities by VoP is mentioned once in the country synthesis report (Ayoola et al., (2001). Though, this present study covered four out of six geopolitical zones for reasons of insecurity, it provides numerous account of various actors' perceptions and experiences of poverty in relation to each zone. None of the cities sampled in this thesis was mentioned

once in terms of perceptions on the pluralism of poverty. A lot of similar and different views across zones and cities were highlighted in the thesis report. Another instance where the 'VoP' was lacking in depth is in the area of organisations studied. Although, organisations at the federal, state and local government levels were involved, but no religious APOs were included among these organisations in the 'VoP' study of poverty in these geo-political zones in Nigeria. This present study however involves in addition to other organisations, the religious APOs across these zones, as these religious organisations are also agents in the fight against poverty.

Another crucial difference is that, while VoP did not conduct a comparison of villagers' opinions with those of academics, NGOs, and public officials, this present study includes this as an objective. Unlike the VoP, this present study compares the opinions and ideas of all actors involved in interviews with a view to establishing common themes relating to the understanding of poverty in a particular society like Nigeria, while fleshing out any emerging tensions or differences. This thesis also turns out to provide a more detailed report than the VoP, because it did not rely on mere documented opinions of experts or technocrats and predetermined themes in relation to poverty as done in previous works such as WDR, (2000/01); Narayan et al (2000); Ali-Apkajiak and Pyke, (2003), amongst others. It is rather a practical report of the poor's and APMs actors' intrinsic definitions of poverty.

Although it has been suggested in some previous works, especially in Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, (2003), that policy document on poverty should be designed in accordance with the experiences of poor people themselves, these experiences have not been distinctively explored. Where such were carried out in previous works, the experiences were investigated along with reflections, aspirations, and priorities of poor people. This kind of work or report may result in multiplication of issues in anti-poverty policy. This thesis therefore focuses largely on the sensitive issue of poverty definitions in pluralistic form as conceived by poor people themselves, as well as actors of APMs. Finally, VoP probably opined that the poor's experiences of poverty were static and did not take changes in such experiences into consideration. This thesis investigated the changes in the conceptualisations of poverty among the poor and actors of APMs over time.

1.2.2 Understanding conceptual pluralism

The central assumption behind every understanding of conceptual pluralism is that concepts have a variety of structures, meanings and approaches (Stephen et al., 2006). Carey (2009) notes that, “a given concept will have a variety of different types of structure associated with it as components of the concept in question” (p. 31). The word ‘pluralism’ means diversity or multiplicity, and it exists because people find themselves in a world characterized by multiplicity of ethical, religious and cultural beliefs (Maria, 2000).

Attempts to understand the meaning of pluralism were initiated by philosophers, linguists and anthropologists, and were later popularized in the works of psychologists, educationists, historians, political and social scientists (Stephen et al., 2006). In philosophy, and particularly in metaphysics, the central point of pluralism is that there is more than one reality, in contrast to monism or realism, which holds that there is only one reality (Stephen et al., 2006). Thus, pluralism acknowledges the unavoidable reality of divergent and sometimes conflicting position on issues and opinions.

Pluralism maintains that “there can be more than one correct or true account of a given subject matter” (Maria, 2000 p. 1). This view then challenges the presupposed belief that there is only one right answer to the question of what there is, what knowledge consists of, and what, for instance, morality is all about. As a school of thought, pluralism recognizes that there can be many diverse and incompatible conceptual and moral frameworks, many belief systems and ultimate values without there being an overarching criterion to decide between them as to what is objective and uncontroversial “truth” (Bowerman and Levinson, 2001). Along the same line of thought, Carey (2009) opines that pluralism is employed in varied ways across a range of topics. He maintains that pluralism signifies a wide range of views and opinions rather than a single view, approach or mode of interpretation.

In human history, the fact of pluralism became more evident through different epochs. The ancient philosophers bumped into pluralism when they disputed what constitutes reality, whilst later epochs identified it as different phenomenal activities of man in relation to the quest for truth, universal categories and the

ultimate finality of man and the cosmos (Carey, 2009). For instance, Osler (2010) explains that the medieval era saw the elevation of religion as the only phenomenon that gave adequate answers to almost every facet of life. In this way, religious truths were said to be absolute, eternal and incontestable, since they were ostensibly divine.

However, scientific developments in the modern era entered a new chapter when the Copernican Revolution of the 16th century challenged the unrivalled authority which religion attributed to itself as the chief possessor of 'truth' (Osler, 2010). As time passed, there were proliferations of theories within science itself which dismantled the notion that one single theory was more objective than the other (Osler, 2010; Maria, 2000). This suggests that there is never a single approach or interpretation of a reality or concept. In the interpretation of a concept, there may be a plurality of opinion ranging from most similar to most different. For example, Faber's (1958) methodological pluralism holds that no single method is suitable for solving every kind of problems; thus, methods are to be judged based on their suitability for solving specific types of problems.

In the study of poverty, pluralism relates to the multiplicity of ideas and different definitions of poverty that manifest themselves through various theories of poverty (World Bank, 2000/2001; Best, 2013). Hence, poverty becomes "a multi-dimensional phenomenon, that cannot be adequately characterized by reference to a single measure, such as income, happiness or well-being but has to take into account the plurality in its understanding and conception" (Gunter and Gottfried, 2013 p. 31; see also World Bank, 2000/2001). Researchers in poverty studies aim, amongst other objectives, to find out more about poverty and its causes. However, none presumes that their own approach included all that there is to be said about poverty. Against this backdrop, there is no agreed single definition or standard of poverty worldwide. In other words, researchers do not assume that there is only one approach to the understanding and study of poverty, thus pointing to the fact of pluralism in the study of poverty.

Notwithstanding the fact that pluralism has initiated debates within most issues in political science, social theory, philosophy, sociology as well as development issues as in the case of poverty, its consequences and implications have seemingly not been fully explored. This therefore serves as the primary

motivation of this study, as it attempts to employ what this study calls the 'Conceptual Pluralism Approach' (CPA) in the study of poverty in Nigeria. CPA as a tool used in this study explores the similarities, differences, changes, implications as well as challenges in the understanding and conceptualisation of poverty in Nigeria. It does so from the viewpoint of the poor, and the various actors from within and across different anti-poverty organisations, who are involved in the fight against poverty. This approach allows us to get a better idea of the understandings of poverty as it discusses specific cultural and other non-material understandings of poverty that other literature (for example Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, (2003); Ayoola et al (2001); Narayan and Petesch, (2002)) did not refer to in their works. In this sense, this thesis seeks to treat the issue of existent poverty understandings as a social phenomenon in its own right and not as input material into policy machinery that can be meaningfully reduced.

1.2.3 The purpose and aims of this research

The overall purpose of this thesis is to explore the pluralism related to the understanding of poverty in the case of Nigeria. In other words, this study enquires into the different understandings of poverty, and the implications and challenges of this pluralism for poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria. The case of Nigeria presents an interesting scenario for a qualitative investigation of the pluralism within the theme of poverty, not only in exploring and understanding this pluralism, but also in discovering the implications of this pluralism for poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria. In other words, through the use of CPA, this study assesses whether and to what extent these different understandings of the concept of poverty impact on the poverty reduction effort.

Incidentally, several studies have either employed quantitative or qualitative data towards understanding and measuring the intensity, incidence and severity of poverty in Nigeria using income poverty line and other multi-dimensional indicators (Federal Office of Statistics, 2000; Aigbokhan, 2000; Okojie, 2002; Oyekala et al., 2007; World Bank, 2000/01; Ayoola et al., 2001; Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, 2003; Osinubi, 2003; Oyeranti and Olayiwola, 2005; Olaniyan, 2002; Okuneye, 2001; World Bank, 2010; Agu, 2011). Based on this, they made policy recommendations. For example, the study on measuring poverty in Nigeria conducted by Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke (2003), and sponsored by Oxfam, was basically a review of written documents assembled from different sources,

research institutions, government organisations as well as civil organisations. None of these has ever, to the best of our knowledge, explored the pluralism concerning the concept of poverty in Nigeria, especially with regards to the dynamism in the conceptions of poverty, and its implications to poverty reduction efforts. This is why CPA is employed in this study as a method that tries to overcome such limits and tries to investigate the implications of this pluralism for poverty reduction efforts.

There is still a dearth of study on the pluralism related to the understanding of poverty in Nigeria. Recent literature produced in conjunction with the World Bank's WDR (2000/2001) argues that conceptualizing poverty needs to go beyond the uni-dimensional approach (Best, 2013; World Bank, 2000/2001). An exploration of pluralism in relation to poverty is to be advocated in the analysis of poverty and by extension, the reduction of poverty. The need for an exploration of pluralism concerning poverty in Nigeria is underlined by gaps that are not examined in the previous studies and analysis of poverty. Such issues are:

- Similarities and differences in the understanding of poverty in Nigeria from the viewpoint of the poor and the various actors from within and across different APOs involved in the fight against poverty.
- Changes in the conception and understanding of poverty.
- Socio-economic factors and institutional practices that influence the conceptions of poverty in Nigeria.
- Linkages between poverty conceptualisations and their use in APMs.
- Implications and challenges of this pluralism for the study of poverty in Nigeria.

These are the lacunae that have primarily necessitated and motivated this work. Hence, this study adopts what we call CPA in the conception of poverty in Nigeria. CPA is an approach that can help to:

- Discover the similarities and differences in the understanding and conceptualisation of poverty among the people and the actors of APMs, across and within different APOs.

- Investigate the socio-economic factors and institutional practices that influence the concept of poverty as well as the causes of poverty.
- Unveil the changes (and various factors shaping these changes) in the understanding of poverty across time.
- Investigate the linkages between poverty conceptualisations and the strategies and policies for its reduction.
- Investigate the implications and challenges of this pluralism for poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria.

The CPA promotes an epistemology of poverty that is based on local understanding, experiences and perceptions from the poor, and actors of APMs from different APOs. The famous “VoP” maxim, which is so prominently accepted in poverty conceptualisation debates, owes its origin to Chambers (1989), but was later developed and used by Narayan et al. (2001) in their study of poverty in India. This has necessitated an exploratory investigation into the different conceptions, definitions and understandings of poverty in Nigeria through the VoP and that of actors from APOs who have the responsibility of combating poverty. The exigency to explore pluralism related to poverty and the implications of this pluralism for poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria have therefore called for the research questions stated below.

1.3 The research questions

Based on the interests and motivations of this study, the following research questions are deemed appropriate:

Primary Research Question:

- What are the different understandings of poverty in Nigeria, and in which ways, and to what extent, are there similarities and differences in this understanding between the poor and the actors of APMs, from within and across the different official and non-official APOs?

Subsidiary research questions:

- How have the various conceptions of poverty in Nigeria amongst the poor and actors (government and non-government) changed across time and why?

- Are there socio-economic factors and institutional practices and beliefs that contribute to these differing conceptions and understandings of poverty in Nigeria and how have these factors varied over time?
- Are there linkages between poverty conceptualisations and the accompanying strategies and policies for its reduction, and to what extent are these conceptions of poverty informing the measures used by actors of APMs in Nigeria?
- What are the implications of this pluralism of poverty conceptions within and across the various APOs, and how do these implications, if any, affect the implementations of APMs?
- Are there challenges confronting the APOs (official and non-official) within their own operations and in their interactions with others in the implementing of APMs due to pluralism of conceptions of poverty?

Providing answers to the above questions will enable exploration of the pluralism in the understanding of poverty, and hence, extend the on-going debates on poverty, as well as help to unveil the implications of this pluralism for poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria.

1.4 The structure of this thesis

This study begins by introducing the motivation and the basis of the case study in chapter one.

In chapter two, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that characterise the various approaches to poverty are discussed.

Chapter three offers a general overview of pluralism related to poverty, bringing out the various meanings, understandings and concepts of poverty as discussed in literature.

Chapter four discusses institutional organizations concerned with development studies and pluralism. This chapter reviews the pluralistic theories and assumptions on which the work in this thesis is also based.

Chapter five introduces Nigeria and offers a brief overview of the Nigerian economy and its poverty profile.

Chapter six explains the qualitative research methods adopted in this work and the details of the fieldwork involving interviews with individual persons, government, private and religious organisations as well as FGDs across the four geo-political zones[1] in Nigeria.

The analysis of the fieldwork material takes up the remainder of the chapters. Chapter seven dwells on the key themes that stood out from the interviews and FGDs with respect to pluralism in the understanding of poverty. This study tries, in this and the following chapters, to interpret participants' perceptions and accounts of the concept of poverty. This chapter in particular discusses the different conceptions of poverty, and the individual and environmental factors, institutional practices, governmental policies and other socio-economic factors contributing to this pluralism in the understanding of poverty. It highlights the differences and similarities in the conceptualisation of poverty as well as the various understandings of the characteristics of a poor and non-poor person.

Chapter eight gives a brief overview of some of the important key changes, patterns and trends noted by participants whilst trying to conceptualise poverty, and the factors that have brought about these changes in the understanding of poverty in Nigeria.

Chapter nine discusses the linkages between APMs and poverty conceptualisations, as well as the implications and challenges in the understanding of poverty and implementation of APMs by the actors within different APOs. The implied tensions and challenges, and what accounts for them, are also discussed in this chapter. The need for a change of attitude as proposed by some participants in the FGDs and interviewees, from the poor, the community, as well as change in practices of different APOs is highlighted in this section. The specific areas of expected attitudinal change have to do with the orientations and manners of approach in conceptualizing poverty, and implementations of APMs.

In chapter ten, this study draws a general conclusion from the major insights and findings of the fieldwork analysis, and also highlights some limitations

[1] Since, 1999, the 36 states in Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja have been divided into six geo-political zones namely: the South-South, South-East, South-West, North-East, North-West and North-Central.

encountered in the course of this study. These should be considered in any future research and debate on poverty and its reduction in Africa in general, and Nigeria in particular.

In the chapter that follows, this thesis presents and discusses the concept of poverty in terms of definitions and measurement. Various approaches to the understanding of poverty such as uni-dimensional, multi-dimensional and participatory approaches are also discussed.

2 Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

The conceptualisation and measurement of poverty have become an imperative, because of the need for innovative approaches and accuracy within the context of gauging the scale of the poverty challenge, formulating policies and assessing their effectiveness. This needs to be done in various ways to yield a clearer and wider understanding of poverty. It has been argued in the WDR (2002) that a broad conceptualisation of poverty related to many dimensions of poverty has been utilized by various poverty policies. Laderchi et al., (2003) and Schiller (2008) also posited that the way poverty is conceptualized and measured serves as the basis of poverty policies, programs and activities. Villar (2010) acknowledges that poverty can be measured in a truly multidimensional context by choosing the appropriate poverty measurements that will help to design an approach with which individuals who are truly poor can be identified. Nevertheless, this present study assumes that the concept of poverty can only be translated into appropriate policy through a more precise and intrinsic set of definitions. Consequently, this present study offers a review of conceptual and theoretical frameworks of poverty.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The concept of poverty is pluralistic both in meaning and measurement. Conceptual pluralism in relation to poverty is the use of different perspectives to define and measure poverty (See Spicker, 2007; Laderchi et al., 2003; Narayan et al., 1999; Narayan et al., 2000; Narayan and Petesch 2002; Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, 2003; Kanbur and Squire, 1999). The different definitions of poverty highlight different dimensions of poverty. Some approaches to understanding poverty are one-dimensional whereas others are multidimensional. “Poverty is considered as uni-dimensional if only one continuum of poverty is measured and as multidimensional if more than one continuum are necessary to grasp this phenomenon” (Fusco and Dickes, 2008, p. 6).

The uni-dimensional approach has a clear criterion for identifying the poor from the non-poor, which is the poverty line, whereas the multidimensional approach is flexible and distinguishes the poor from the non-poor using several criteria (Spicker, 2007). The different definitions of poverty have been debated in the literature. According to Spicker, (2007) some authors who argue for a unified meaning on poverty hold that “contradictory examples showed that certain uses were ‘right’ while others were ‘wrong’, and that disagreement was based not in a difference of interpretation or the focus of concern, but in a failure to understand the true nature of the problem” (Spicker, 2007, p. 229). Spicker however, adds that poverty “has a series of meanings, linked through a series of resemblances” (p. 229). The word ‘resemblances’ here means there are various understandings of poverty that were created as a result of similarities in meanings generated in the course of defining the concept.

The different definitions and measurements of poverty point to the complexity of the concept and efforts to understand who is poor and why they are poor. The conceptual pluralism in defining and measuring poverty also point to the interest in development studies to eradicate poverty globally. Even though the definition of poverty includes capability, social exclusion and participatory approaches, monetary measures dominate the research on the understanding of poverty (Sumner, 2007). In this present study however, ‘conceptual pluralism’ and ‘multidimensional poverty’ will be used interchangeably. I therefore turn to discuss the monetary approach to understanding poverty.

2.2.1 The Uni-dimensional approach

The uni-dimensional approach to poverty measurement relies only on one variable indicator, namely income or expenditure, both of which are embedded in monetary approaches. Thus, Alkire and Foster (2011) opine that “Uni-dimensional methods can be applied when a well-defined single-dimensional resource variable, such as income, has been selected as the basis for poverty evaluation” (p. 2). This traditional approach to poverty measurement starts first with the establishment of a specified poverty line equal to the value of some basic needs, which are seen to be sufficient to meet the minimal acceptable living standard. Hence, poverty line has been defined as “the levels of income below which people are diagnosed as poor” (Sen 1992, p.102). The poverty line helps to determine the index of poverty that Sen (1992) defines as “the

proportion of the total population that happens to be below the poverty line, i.e. the fraction of the population identified as poor" (p.102). With the establishment of a poverty line, poverty measurement and analysis is conducted using income variable information. Hence, Foster et al (1984) opine that poverty analysis through the conventional approach can distinguish the population into groups of poor and non-poor.

However, a distinction has been made between the 'uni-dimensional' and 'monetary' approaches as the two are conflated. For example, Ravalion, (2010) has argued that the monetary approach simply aggregates different dimensions, (eg, food, rent, health, insurance, education investment etc) using a metric of monetary value, which otherwise could be multi-dimensional.

Under the uni-dimensional approach, poverty has been measured in various ways. According to World Bank (1990 and 1993), Sen (1976), Foster et al., (1984), Morris (1979), UNDP (1990), these include: headcount ratios (the oldest and most used measure), the poverty income gap, and the aggregate squared poverty gap. The unit of analysis in the uni-dimensional approach has always been household or individuals. Measuring uni-dimensional poverty involves two steps. First, identification of who is poor or non-poor with the use of poverty line. Secondly, selection of poverty index through aggregation methods to determine the overall level of poverty (Sen, 1976).

The uni-dimensional measurement of poverty has some known flaws and deficiencies and has been criticized in parts of the literature. Although, it may be clear and important to measure poverty in monetary terms, evidence show that people's wellbeing depends on contributions from multiple dimensions. For example, Thorbecke, (2005) notes that "income as the sole indicator of well-being is limited, if not, inappropriate as it typically does not (or cannot) incorporate and reflect such key dimensions of poverty as life expectancy (longevity), literacy, the provision of public goods and even, at the limit, freedom and security" (p. 5). Another drawback is that some goods such as freedom and security cannot be purchased because there is no market. Also, individuals with purchasing power may not necessarily spend their income on basic needs (Thorbeck, 2005). Kanbur and Squire (1999:3) have argued that the use of the poverty line approach in many countries has led to the conclusion that a poverty line is sensitive to local situations and circumstances. In other words, the

poverty line for one particular country may not be the same as that of another country.

Furthermore, the uni-dimensional approach to poverty does not allow room for variations in income and living conditions among individuals and households within countries (Ravallion and Van de Walle, 1991). Equally, this approach does not acknowledge the dynamism of poverty because of a failure to differentiate between chronic and transient poverty (World Bank, 1990; Best, 2013). In the same vein, van de Walle and Nead, (1994) have argued that this approach values only goods and services which are made available through the market and thus could lead to misleading assessments of poverty (see also Thorbecke, 2005). For example, two households considered to be equally poor understood as living with $1 per day might have different levels of well-being, if there is variation in their access to public goods (van de Walle and Nead, 1994). The least, but not the last criticism against this approach is that it fails to put into consideration the intra-household distribution of expenditure (Haddad and Kanbur, 1990; Lanjouw and Ravallion, 1995). Considering the above, Kanbur and Squire, (1999:5) conclude that being just above the poverty line might pose the same danger as being just below the poverty line. As a result of these drawbacks of the uni-dimensional monetary approach, poverty became conceptualized as multidimensional and with it a non-monetary measurement was developed.

2.2.2 Multi-dimensional approaches

The differences in concepts and theories of poverty result from different theoretical assumptions (Laderchi et al., 2003). According to Laderchi et al., (2003:244), different people are identified as poor with the use of different measures, and the conceptualisation of poverty differs based on sex, age, socio-economic context and culture (see also Narayan et al., 1999). The multi-dimensional approach maintains that poverty conceptualisation involves the complementarities of the income factor, deprivation issues, human capital, basic functioning and capability, powerlessness, voicelessness, empowerment, security (World Bank, 2000/01; Narayan et al., 1999). As such, the multidimensional approach to poverty becomes flexible and relies heavily on several indicators, thus rendering it a more useful and exhaustive measurement (Spicker, 2007).

Fusco and Dickes (2008:53) point to three features of the multidimensional approach to poverty:

- Using non-monetary indicators to study poverty.
- Defining poverty as constituting different dimensions.
- Conceptualizing poverty as a continuum.

These elements of multidimensional poverty are also highlighted by Narayan et al., (1999) as "consisting of multiple, interlocking dimensions such as powerlessness, voicelessness, vulnerability and the inability of poor people to protect themselves from shocks"(p.51).

A further consideration here is the unit of analysis. The multi-dimensional analysis of poverty, like the uni-dimensional approach, uses household or individuals as units of analysis. However, some multi-dimensional approaches have employed the use of PPA in the analysis of poverty from a range of participants such as poor people, government and non-government officials and local elite, etc. (see for example, Narayan et al., 1999; Ayoola et al., 2001).

A consideration with the framework is choosing the version of multidimensional poverty measures. This is because some measurement exercises that claim to be multi-dimensional have also advocated and implemented participatory methods to define deprivation lines. This does not mean that multi-dimensional analyses are intrinsically participatory. For example, when the UNDP's multidimensional poverty index (MPI) was computed, there were no participatory methods involved in defining the deprivation lines for each dimension. Hence, various participatory approaches can be used under the multi-dimensional analysis of poverty. I turn to discuss these approaches.

2.2.2.1 Participatory approaches

Participatory Approaches such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA), and Voices of the Poor (VoP), have become prominent in the study of poverty and development under the multi-dimensional analysis of poverty. For instance, Pijnmburg (2004) argues that "participation had become an act of faith in development, something we believe in and rarely question" (p. 1). The Participatory Approaches also aim to "increase the involvement of marginalized people in decision-making over their own lives" (Cooke and Kothari, 2001 p. 5). This should not imply that a

multidimensional approach is intrinsically linked to participatory methods, but the people who advocated multidimensional measurement are often the same people who advocated participatory methods.

PRA is a collective approach or method that aims to enable rural people draw on their knowledge of life and conditions, and conduct their own poverty analysis for appropriate planning and action (Chambers 1994). Its emergence was also anchored on other sources such as Activist Participatory Research, but it largely uses dialogue and participatory research with a view to enhancing the poor people's awareness and confidence.

Though the PPA approach is viewed as a recent development, it is a growing phenomenon. According to (Narayan, et al 2000), "a PPA is an iterative, participatory research process that seeks to understand poverty from the perspective of a range of stakeholders and to involve them directly in planning follow-up actions" (p. 15). PPA highlights how the poor in a particular society individually or collectively experience and understand their poverty (Kanbur and Squire, 1999). It involves the poor people as the most important stakeholders in the research process, as well as decision makers from all levels of government, civil society, and the local elite. This is done with a view to uncovering divergent interests and perspectives on poverty, and increasing local capacity and commitment to follow-up action (Laderchi et al. 2003).

Understanding poverty in its local, social, institutional, and political contexts, as well as improving the effectiveness of public actions aimed at reducing poverty, are the major foci of PPA. "The premise of PPA is that involving the poor in the process will contribute to ensuring that the strategies identified for poverty reduction will reflect their concerns, including the priorities and obstacles to progress as seen by the poor themselves" (Norton and Stephens 1995 p.1; see also Kanbur and squire, 1999). PPA further intends to describe and explain poverty through the VoP. In PPA, the research participants define who is poor and generate the poverty line. The PPA allows for capturing participants' experiences of poverty from their own perspective (Norton et al. 2001). By virtue of this, Spicker (2007) argued that PPA might become a means of empowering the poor.

The rapid spread of PPA has been noted in its appraisal and extension by the VoP approach proposed by WDR 2000/2001. This spread is perhaps due to its reputation as a reliable participatory tool for involving the poor in decision making and designing policy priorities. The VoP approach is based on the realities of poverty-stricken people and focuses on perspectives of the individual poor on the meaning of poverty and the personal experience of such an individual. It also investigates major problems and dimensions of poverty such as unemployment, poor living condition and insecurity, absence of competent and responsive Non-Government Organisation (NGOs), lack of basic amenities, insufficient health care, gender discrimination in association with poverty, and ranks the problems in terms of magnanimity. In addition, it concentrates on what individuals or households view as the conditions that make them categorize themselves as poor (Ayoola et al, 2001; Okumadewa et al, 2002).

The aim of the World Bank regarding the VoP approach in the study of poverty was “to enable a wide range of poor people in diverse countries and conditions share their views on poverty as a contribution to the WDR 2000/2001” (Forno, 2008 p. 9). The method of VoP is participatory and adopted with a view to engaging the poor and making them to express their intrinsic perspectives and experiences of poverty, especially in terms of its causes and methods of alleviation (Narayan et al, 2000).

Conceptual Pluralism Approach (CPA) is similar to PRA because it also allows poor people to analyse their own poverty situation. It is also similar to PPA because it involves actors from the government, NGOs, and the poor. It also maintains a similarity with VoP because it also focuses on views of the poor as regards their conceptions and experiences of poverty. Generally, CPA also identifies with other participatory approaches through its use of sets of questions that are not predetermined, and the adoption of open-ended methods including unstructured interviews and FGDs. Though both the PPA and the CPA are likely to be complementary, the two are different approaches that can be applied simultaneously with the understanding that PPA emphasizes “participatory” while CPA emphasizes “pluralism”.

However, this present study opines that there are basic underlying principles that make the CPA different from other multidimensional research participatory approaches (PRA, PPA, VoP). Firstly, CPA further expands the participatory

method by seeking to uncover and explore the divergent interests, similarities, differences, changes and implications, as well as challenges in the understanding and conceptualisation of poverty in a particular society. This is done directly from the view point of the poor, and particularly the various actors from within and across different organizations that are saddled with the responsibility of engaging in anti-poverty activities. Secondly, unlike other participatory multidimensional approaches, the CPA does not only explore but also seeks to compare the major themes in the similarities and differences in the meaning of poverty as understood and conceived by concerned stakeholders. This present study contends that CPA is distinguished on the basis of its capability to provide unique insights and explanations of the rigor, diversity, complexity and dynamism of poverty, as perceived by different actors. CPA also investigates the implications of these similarities and divergences in the understanding of poverty for poverty reduction efforts.

Thirdly, scholars have criticized PPA as creating difficulties for differentiating the poor from non-poor (Kanbur and Squire, 1999) as people may be classified as poor in error. Others assert that PPA is demanding and uses small samples obtained on an ad-hoc basis and lacks representativeness (Laderchi et al., 2003). However, the participants for this thesis on CPA were carefully selected. The choice of participants will be discussed in the methodology chapter.

The variation in meaning and measurement of poverty points to the complexity of the concept, and the need for contemporary researchers to further their understanding of poverty. In some versions of the multidimensional poverty approach, (for instance, PRA) the standards of poverty are externally generated but in this study, the poor and local actors will decide the standards of poverty: what is poverty, who is poor, why they are poor and what they are poor in.

2.2.2.2 Participatory theory

The participatory theory has occupied the centre stage in development initiatives, processes and practices since its conception, endorsement and adoption in the 1970's (Laderchi, 2001). Participatory theory represents a metamorphosis from the global, spatial and top-down strategies that dominated the early development initiatives, to more locally sensitive methodologies (Claridge, 2004). Although different opinions on the origins of participatory

theory have been put forward in the literature, there is consensus that it stems from the political sciences and development theory (e.g. see Buchy, et al, 2000; Lane, 1995).

Cornwall (2000:3) posits that the concept of participation has been redefined over time with notable elements of continuity, and he identifies discourses of participation based on self-determination, efficiency, and an emphasis on mutual learning, as the three major features for tracing the evolution of participation. These three ways of conceptualizing participation are viewed as a process of integrating the people at whom development projects and programs are aimed, as well as the people, groups or development agencies that coordinate the initiatives.

Looking at participatory theory from the perspective of the methodology of PPAs, Booth et al. (1998) classify it as a contextual method of analysis. This refers to data collection methods that take poverty-related definitions into consideration and "attempt to understand poverty dimensions within the social, cultural, economic and political environment of a locality or of a group of people, by privileging local people's perceptions" (p. 52). Chambers (1994) had, however, argued previously that participatory approaches are not only contextual, but that they also emphasize poor people's creativity and intrinsic ability to examine and analyse their own reality. It follows that participatory theory attempts not only to understand reality at the local level, but also through local peoples' self-definition, explanation and analysis.

Despite its benefits, participatory theory is laden with limitations. Sceptics argue that the participatory theory approach is context-specific and so places too many demands on people and their time. The approach is held to be performed for extractive purposes in some cases without adequately empowering local people to contribute largely in policy processes (Laderchi, 2001).

This theory fits into this present study because it recognizes the world's poor and suggests the need for the VoP to be involved in development decisions, implementation and benefits as well as poverty alleviation programmes. For instance, since it is argued that participation has the likelihood of constituting a means of including participants in decision-making, the theory enables the findings of this present study to be used as tools for designing and

implementing relevant policy objectives. Since there is palpable lack of cooperation among poverty experts and the poor in relation to the meaning of poverty based on different approaches that have been adopted, this theory further becomes relevant for this present research because it explains how poverty can be understood by taking into consideration the different perceptions of the poor on the conceptions of poverty.

The following chapter dwells on the review of previous research works by different authors in relation to the subject, objectives and questions of the thesis.

3 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

Using the available literature on poverty, this chapter discusses how poverty has been viewed and understood in the course of history. It also explores the divergent perceptions of poverty across authors, professionals and research institutions, including the approach of some international organisations. In addition, this chapter offers a general analysis of the theories relating to the definitions of poverty that included lack of basic needs, social exclusion, human capital, basic capabilities and functioning, vulnerability, risk and insecurity, gender discrimination and abuse of children's rights. The objective of this analysis is to deepen our conceptual and theoretical understanding of poverty.

3.2 Overview of the evolution of conceptual pluralism in the understanding of poverty

The evolution of the conceptualisation, measurement and characterization of poverty and its determinants has a long and chequered history (Laderchi et al., 2003; Ajakaiye and Adeyeye, 2001a; Alaye-Ogan, 2008). This thesis argues that these shifts in the understanding of poverty might have been influenced as a result of political interests as well as scholarly innovations, as can be seen from the discussion below.

Early attempts to conceptualize poverty can be traced back to the codification of the poverty laws in England, which reached its climax with the pioneering empirical studies of Booth and Rowntree (Stedman, 2004). Using the metrics of nutritional requirements, Rowntree (1901) became the first to develop a poverty standard for individual families (Akakaiye and Adeyeye, 2001a). Hence, poverty was conceived as the inability of households and individuals to attain the basic standard nutritional requirements.

In the 1960s, poverty conceptualisation moved from a basic inability to fulfil nutritional requirements to the level of household income, mirrored as it were by

economic indicators like Gross National Product, per capita and daily per capita earning, usually measured in dollars (Alaye-Ogan, 2008). This new emphasis on the level of income became associated with economic growth both from the micro-household and macro trajectories (Pearson, 1970).

Thus, in the 1970s, poverty conceptualisation based on household income became prominent with Robert MacNamara's speech at a conference of World Bank Board of Governors in Nairobi on September 24, 1973, which culminated in the publication of "Redistribution with Growth" (MacNamara, 1973). The evolutionary trend in the poverty conceptualisation was underpinned by two major factors: Firstly, there was the exerting influence of the seminal works of Townsend, (1985); Runciman, (1966); and Keuning and Ruijter, (1988); which discussed poverty from the perspective of relative deprivation. These works helped redefine poverty, not just as an inability to meet minimum nutritional requirements necessary for daily subsistence, but rather as a failure to live up to the economic standard of a given society. The second factor that informed this evolutionary trend in poverty conceptualisation was the broadening of the concept of poverty viewed as level of income to encapsulate a wider set of 'basic needs' including those provided by the state (Ajakaiye and Adeyeye, 2001a). In this vein, the International Labour Organization (ILO) defined poverty "not just as lack of income, but also as a lack of access to health, education and other services" (ILO, 2003 p. 23).

From the 1980s onward, efforts to conceptualise poverty reached a new height. The major innovations that characterized this era can be grouped into five phases. Firstly, the incorporation of non-monetary aspects alongside monetary aspects in the discussion of poverty and its causes as popularized in the works of Chambers (1989). The second phase is a new interest in the issues of vulnerability and security as they pertain to the 'poor' (Lipton and Ravallion, 1995). Alaye-Ogan (2008) associates the issues of vulnerability and security with the need to understand seasonality and the impact of poverty shocks on poor people. This in turn points to the relevance of assets as buffers to asymmetric shocks and also highlights the need to study the appropriate coping strategies. The third phase focused on broadening the concept of poverty to accommodate the concept of livelihood, as expounded in the seminal works of

Ravallion (1992). Aspects of livelihood may include material wellbeing, social inclusion, skills acquisition, adequate state provision, income and productivity through self-employment.

A novel conceptualization of poverty was attained in the fourth phase with the theoretical work of Sen (1987), which factored in the concept of 'food entitlement' or 'access' in poverty conceptualisation debates. He, together with Nussbaum, further developed the idea of poverty to include capability deprivation, stressing that a basic consideration of one's level of income in poverty conceptualisation was only valuable in so far as it increases the 'capabilities' of the individual or household, and facilitates 'functioning'[2] in society (Sen, 1987). The fifth phase witnessed an increased interest in the study of gender as a determining factor in the conceptualisation of poverty. Alaye-Ogan (2008) notes that there was a paradigm shift from a focus on women to wider gender relations. As a result, policies geared at empowering women and redressing the gender poverty-gap, received more attention during this period.

In the 1990s, poverty conceptualisation became linked with well-being. Prominent in this period was the understanding of well-being as the elimination or absence of poverty. At the same time, there was an increased emphasis on how those who are categorised as poor view their situation (Alaye-Ogan, 2008). The above view was the central thesis underpinning Narayan's 'VoP'. For Narayan et al (1999), poverty as understood from the perspective of the poor means lack of basic necessities of life, hunger, an inability to realize one's capabilities and to contribute or influence decisions that affects them socially.

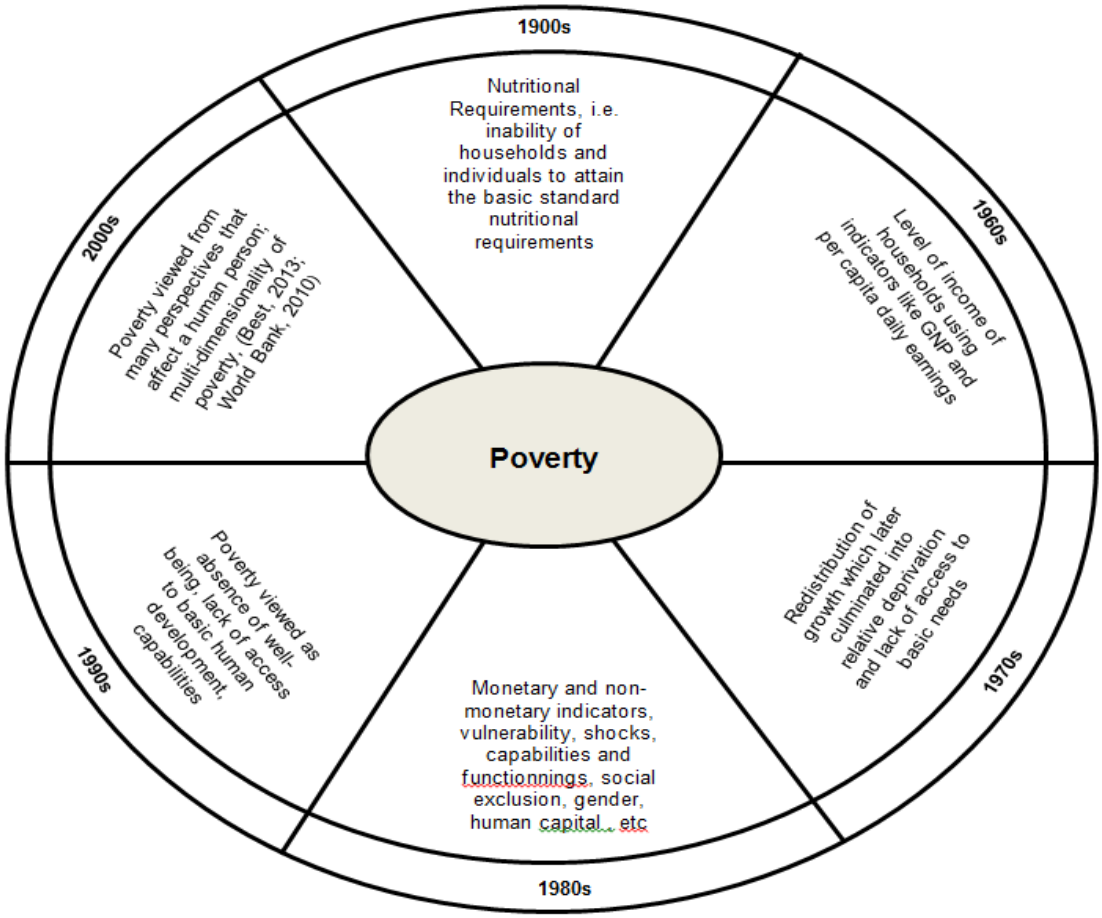
In the contemporary period, new definitions of poverty and poverty reduction strategies emerged based on the above pluralism in the debates and conceptualisations of poverty. The major idea here is that poverty should be viewed from the many perspectives that affect a human person (World Bank, 2000/2001; Best, 2013). This idea was championed by the United Nation (UN) in their Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2015, and has now

[2] Functionings are the "'beings' and 'doings' of a person, whereas a person's capability is the various combinations of functionings that a person can have" (Sen 1987, p. 34). (This will be explained in detail in the section dealing with Basic capabilities and functionings).

metamorphosed into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These are believed to have brought together all three aspects of sustainable development, including the economic, social and environmental, in a much more integrated way than the MDGs ever did. Best (2013) notes that this idea of multi-dimensionality of poverty centres on the individual and communities, and which, if not better understood and addressed, may in one way or another continue to push the individuals or the communities concerned further into poverty (see also World Bank, 2000/2001; UN, 2005).

This above historical overview of the development of the concepts of poverty is summarized in figure 1 below, and this becomes the basis for the discussion of pluralism in the understanding of poverty as well as theories of poverty in the subsequent sections.

Figure 1: Historical overview of the concepts of poverty



Source: Author's design

3.3 Conceptualizing poverty

The concept of poverty has been described by scholars and experts in relation to its nature, place, and pervasiveness. For example, Kurfi (2009) posited that poverty is a multifaceted concept that is perceived by different people using different criteria to assign a meaning to it, and therefore, it is difficult to give a concise meaning to the term. In a related view, Momoh (2005) noted that poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon related to the inadequacy or lack of social, economic, cultural, and political entitlements. Specifically, poverty is hunger; poverty is lack of shelter; poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor; poverty is not being able to go to school and not knowing how to read; poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future and living one day at a time; poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water; and poverty is powerlessness and lack of representation and freedom (World Bank, 2000/1; see also Deleeck et al 1992; Sen, 1999; Narayan et al 2000; Levine, 2004; Mckinley, 2006; Sen, 2008).

Oyeranti and Olayiwola (2005:12) found that there are three dominant views in the literature on the definitions and explanations of poverty. The first view considers poverty in terms of deprivation in material well-being that can usually be assessed in terms of money. In another dimension, the second view considers poverty as being multidimensional in nature, entailing a lack of adequate livelihood and assets, and a failure to achieve basic capabilities in nutrition, health, economic and social life, and so on. The third view considers poverty to be a phenomenon that is difficult to objectively determine. It is in line with this latter view that Adebayo (2009:37) considered poverty as subjective in nature with both physical and psychological dimensions that predispose its sufferers to hunger, violence and crime, insecurity, discrimination, victimization, political repression, and other problems (see also Apthorpe, 1997; Pansters and de Ruijter, 2005). According to Brock et al., (2002), the dynamics of poverty are complex and difficult to explain by using only economic models such as price equilibrium, perfect competition, and surplus extraction.

The social science literature is replete with attempts by economists and social scientists in general to conceptualize the phenomenon of poverty. Broadly, poverty can be conceptualized in different ways, including lack of money or limited income; living substantially lower than the general standard of living in

the society; lack of access to basic needs and goods; a result of lack of, or impaired access to, productive resources; an outcome of inefficient use of common resources; and a result of deprivation or “exclusive mechanisms” i.e mechanisms that benefit only a select few (Baratz and Grigsby, 1971; Streeten & Burki, 1978; George, 1988; Sen, 1994; Momoh 2005). Poverty as lack of access to basic needs and goods is essentially economic-or consumption-oriented. It explains poverty in material terms and specifically employs consumption-based categories to explain the extent and depth of poverty, and establish who is and who is not poor. In line with this, the ILO, (1995) opines that “at the simplest level, individuals or families are considered poor when their level of living, measured in terms of income or consumption, is below a particular standard” (p. 6). Consequently, the poor are seen as individuals or households in a particular society incapable of purchasing a specified set of basic goods and services.

Basic goods are identified as nutrition, shelter, water, healthcare, access to productive resources, including education, working skills and tools, and political and civil rights to participate in decisions concerning socio-economic conditions (Streeten & Burki, 1978). The first three are regarded as the basic needs and goods necessary for survival. Impaired access to productive resources such as agricultural land, physical capital, and financial assets leads to absolute low income, unemployment, undernourishment, and other problems. Inadequate endowment of human capital is also identified as a major cause of poverty. It has been popularly debated that a lack of access to adequate resources compounds poverty and curtails the capability of an individual to convert available productive resources to a higher quality of life (Sen, 1994).

There is no academic consensus on the operational definitions of poverty. Accordingly, definitions for extreme poverty can range from landlessness, to earning less than $1 per day, to being in the bottom half of those living under the poverty line, to income under a certain threshold. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001) reported that poverty encompasses different dimensions of deprivation that relate to human capabilities, including consumption and food security, health, education, rights, voice, security, dignity, and decent work. This means that poverty is a multidimensional concept. Several authors have also emphasized that poverty

is wider, dimensional, complex and contested (Deleeck et al. 1992; Hulme and Mosley, 1996; Rocha, 1998; Maxwell, 1999; CBN, 1999; World Bank, 2000/2001; Narayan et al, 2000).

From the foregoing, this literature review established that poverty can be viewed from different perspectives. For example, an individual can be poor in terms of food, education, or health. If poverty is linked to a specific type of consumption, it enables us to directly measure an individual's degree of poverty in relation to this type of consumption. However, if poverty is to be addressed from a more universal perspective, a broader definition is often considered necessary. The World Bank conceived poverty as pronounced deprivation in the well-being of people (World Bank, 2010). Understanding this definition entails the clarification of the concept of well-being. How well an individual is able to function in society is probably the broadest approach to the concept, and the ability to function in society can depend on one's educational level, state of health, sense of political freedom or influence on society. Most of these capabilities also require a certain amount of income to function well. Poverty, therefore, is mostly defined and measured in monetary terms, and the poor are defined as those who lack an adequate income, which makes it impossible to function well in society (World Bank, 2010).

However, it has been argued that what constitutes the heart of the debate about defining poverty is the question of whether poverty is largely about material needs or whether it is about a much broader set of needs that permit well-being (Hulme & Mosley, 1996). Looking at the former position, it concentrates on the measurement of consumption, usually by using incomes as a surrogate for defining poverty. Therefore, the use of the income-poverty approach, or the poverty line, is strengthened by the fact that the majority of national governments and development agencies use the concept for their analyses of poverty and anti-poverty policies (Garba, 2006; Maxwell, 1999). But Oriola (2009) acknowledged that income is an inadequate measurement of welfare. The reason adduced for this is that many forms of deprivation that very poor people experience are not captured by income-poverty measures.

In addition to the above position, new layers of complexity were added in the 1980s as mentioned in the previous section. These include the incorporation of non-monetary aspects such as powerlessness and isolation, vulnerability to a

sudden dramatic decrease in consumption levels, ill-health and physical weakness, social inferiority, and humiliation. Such dimensions of poverty are said to be significant in their own right and are also essential analytical components for the understanding of income poverty (Hulme & Mosley, 1996; Maxwell, 1999).

The measurement of poverty has also been recognized in some existing literature (Ajakaiye, 2002; Maxwell, 1999; Rocha, 1998). In reference to the observation by Omotola (2008), measuring poverty, though a herculean task, has become the rule rather than the exception. In terms of measurement, Rocha (1998) purported that defining the relevant and operational poverty concepts and choosing the adequate measurement procedures is the result of a sensible and informed analysis of social reality. He opined that measuring poverty is a matter of identifying the essential causes of poverty in a given society. In line with this, Hulme, Moore, and Shepherd (2001:23) identified four factors, together with their specific characteristics, from the available literature on poverty that are believed to be the main causes for poverty:

1. Economic factors: lack of skills, economic shocks, terms of trade, and low productivity.
2. Social factors: discrimination, health issues, inequality, and lack of trust.
3. Political factors: bad governance, violence, and insecurity.
4. Environmental factors: low quality natural resources, natural disasters, and remoteness. (p.23)

Therefore, the questions one would want to ask about the causes of poverty are: Are these causes widespread and do they affect the majority of the population, or are they locally concentrated? What are their roots? Are these traditional problems or do they result from economic and technological changes? What are their main features? And who are the poor in terms of some essential characteristics? This total set of information on poverty is regarded as the key element for adopting concepts and measurement instruments that seem most appropriate to a specific context in terms of social reality and data-gathering possibilities.

From the work of Rocha (1998), the general definition of poverty requires clarification between the concepts of absolute and relative poverty (see also Aliyu, 2003; Gordon et al, 2003; Obayelu, 2007; Spicker, 2007; Bradshaw, 2007; Alters, 2009). Although absolute poverty is theoretically associated with the vital minimum, the concept of relative poverty incorporates a concern with inequality or relative deprivation, where the bare minimum is socially guaranteed. Absolute poverty simply implies the inability to attain a minimum standard of living. In other words, it refers to subsistence below minimum socially acceptable living conditions, usually established based on nutritional requirements and other essential goods (Rocha, 1998). Therefore, absolute poverty is a condition of life mostly deteriorated by diseases and squalor, severe deprivation of basic human needs (including relative deprivation), lack of access to services, lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods, hunger and malnutrition, ill health, increased morbidity and mortality, unsafe environments, social discrimination and exclusion (The UN, 1995; World Bank, 2000; Bradshaw, 2007).

On the other hand, poverty can be described as relative deprivation (Rocha, 1998; Aliyu, 2003; Bradshaw, 2007). The relative definitions of poverty have been summarized by referring to poverty not as some absolute set of goods but in terms of the minimum acceptable standard of living applicable to a certain country and within a person's own society (Momoh, 2005). This summary of poverty definitions is similar to the relative poverty definition devised by Townsend (1979), a leading authority on poverty in the United Kingdom, who explained relative poverty as when someone's "resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family, that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities" (p. 251).

Relative poverty compares the lowest segments of a population with the upper segments, usually measured in income quintiles. It is also understood that absolute and relative poverty trends may move in opposite directions. For instance, relative poverty may decline while absolute poverty increases if the gap between the upper and lower strata of a population is reduced by a decline in well-being of the former whilst a greater number of households fall below the absolute poverty line (Rocha, 1998). Even within so-called absolute poverty, countries often distinguish between indigence or primary poverty, and

secondary poverty (sometimes referred to as extreme and overall poverty). By this, indigence usually refers to those who do not have access to the basic necessities for human survival, and other forms of poverty refer to degrees of deprivation above that threshold (Momoh, 2005:22).

In another dimension, Gore (2002) explained the concept of all-pervasive poverty, whereby the majority of the population live at or below income levels sufficient to meet their basic needs; and the available resources, even when equally distributed, are barely sufficient to meet the basic needs of the population. Gore further added that pervasive poverty leads to environmental degradation. This is because people eat into the environmental capital stock to survive. This, in turn, undermines the productivity of key assets on which the livelihood depends. It can also be argued that where extreme poverty is all-pervasive, state capacities are most likely weak.

Poor people are described as those who are considerably worse off than the majority of the population and who do not have the resources to cover basic needs due to a lack of income (Rocha, 1998; United Nations Millennium Project, 2005). The first MDG is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. This has become an issue of concern both at local and international levels since the MDGs were established. It is in view of this that the World Bank defined poverty as the state of living on less than $2 a day. Thus, poverty remains difficult to eradicate even for the billion in question (World Bank 2000/2001).

In line with the above overview of pluralism related to the issue of poverty, the introduction of the different poverty perceptions can be seen as an intellectual tradition of perceiving poverty and making it the object of analysis (O'Connor, 2001). According to UN (2010), it is commented that "the results achieved to date highlight, once again, the multifaceted nature of poverty, the interactions of its various causes and manifestations and the wide-ranging and mutually reinforcing nature of the actions that have to be taken. The poor are not only those with the lowest incomes, but also those who are the most deprived of health, education and other aspects of human well-being" (p. 5) (see also World Bank, 2000/2001). It can be derived from this argument that there is no universal perception of poverty. Poverty is experienced and perceived differently by men and women based on their status, context and backgrounds (see Narayan et al 2000; Deleeck et al 1992).

Many definitions and perceptions of poverty have been argued for across various approaches to poverty, as discussed above. In all, the consensus remains that there is no universal definition of poverty due to the fact that poverty is a multidimensional social phenomenon with divergent understandings. The core of the argument of this thesis is that it uses the CPA to explore the implications of these divergences for poverty reduction efforts. However, in doing this, the author has incorporated, in addition to other definitions of poverty discussed above, the understandings and perceptions of poverty from various actors, especially those from the private and religious organisations, which to some extent are overlooked while trying to analyse and measure poverty in most of the literature on poverty. The questions that CPA seeks to answer include: what are the implications of this pluralism for poverty reduction efforts? If there are any, can they be addressed and how? These are some of the issues that this present study will also attempt to address in the subsequent empirical chapters.

3.4 Some World International Organisations' approaches to poverty

This thesis in an effort to understand the different approaches used to conceptualize and measure poverty has briefly looked into the approaches used by three international agencies namely: the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. These three agencies have each adopted various approaches towards understanding and measuring poverty.

The IFAD is referred today as one of the most important agencies on the rural poverty in the world. IFAD defines poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon and has designed four poverty indices to understand, capture and measure poverty and deprivation (Jazairy et al, 1995:35). These indices are: Firstly, the food security index (FSI) which aims at measuring a country's composite food security situation. Secondly, the integrated Poverty Index (IPI) which is an economic index calculated by the combination of the headcount measure of poverty and income-gap ratio together with the annual rate of growth of per capita GNP. Thirdly, the Basic Needs Index (BNI) which aims at measuring the social development of the rural areas. This measure is composed of education index and health index which seems similar to the UNDP Human Development

Index as will be discussed below. The fourth measure is the Relative Welfare Index (RWI) which is the arithmetic average of the other three indices mentioned above (Jazairy et al, 1995:35-40).

All these approaches to poverty from the point of view of IFAD though multidimensional in nature, were mainly done quantitatively and were mostly orientated towards the material, economic and social understandings of poverty. IFAD depends mainly on the use of available secondary data. Understanding poverty from this arithmetic and quantitative perspectives might end up over-estimating or under-estimating poverty. The findings of this thesis have shown that understanding poverty needs to go beyond the approaches adopted by IFAD. There is need to explore in addition to what IFAD had done, the various understandings of poverty from both the poor and actors of anti-poverty measures (APMs) and make a comparative analysis of these, especially from the cultural and traditional and non-material point of views.

On the other hand, the idea of poverty as an inhibition to basic human development gained ascendancy in the work of the UNDP. UNDP opined that poverty is “the denial of opportunities and choice... to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and the respect of others...”(UNDP, 1995:29). Thus UNDP, (1995:29) defines poverty in terms of human development and introduced measures such as the Human Development Index (HDI) and Human Poverty index (HPI). The HDI centres on three areas of human deprivation, namely longevity, living standard and educational attainment. Life expectancy at birth is used as a measure of longevity; educational attainment is measured by a combination of adult literacy, while living standard is measured by real GDP per capita. The HPI is made up of five weighted components. These include: the percentage of those who are expected to die on or before the age of 40; the percentage of adults that are illiterate; the percentage of those who have access to health services and safe water and finally, the percentage of children under five years who are malnourished (UNDP, 1995:30; see also Kanbur and Squire, 1999). It is important to note that while HDI aims at the average achievements recorded in a country, the HPI focuses mainly on the deprived of the society (UNDP, 1998).

Even though information garnered from these measures is valuable, this aggregation into a single index raises some fundamental issues, largely because it leads to loss of vital information needed for policy making and implementation (see McGillivray and White, 1993; Ravallion, 1997; Cahill, 2005). For example, though the HPI is popularly reckoned with in the ranking of countries, it still does not tell us anything about the poor; and life expectancy cannot be used as a distinction between the poor and non-poor (Kanbur and Squire, 1999). This might be as a result of the absence of household survey data which are considered relevant in the computation and measurement of poverty. However, the level of household data has been improved upon since 2010 when the UNDP's HPI was replaced by MPI, which accounts for an individual's simultaneous deprivation across multiple dimensions including housing, education and health, etc (see Dhongde and Haveman, 2015). The use of MPI has resulted in the contemporary consideration for the availability of household data. Equally, it has been argued that analysis of poverty that rests only on micro indicators such as poverty ratio and HPI as propounded by the UNDP does not reveal the basic problems of society. This is unlike the situation when poverty is seen from multi-dimensional processes such as MPI, which gives an opportunity to find situations that explain the fundamental problems affecting communities (Spicker, 2007). The above notwithstanding, we need to know who the poor are, where are the poor located and what distinguishes the poor from the non-poor. These are the gaps that this present thesis sets out to fill through the VoP and actors of APMs.

Given the need to monitor the progress in the reduction of poverty, World Bank (1990) in the WDR introduced the $1 per day poverty line measurement. This was based on poverty lines used in most of the low-income countries, and expressed as 1985 PPP dollars, using household expenditure per person (Kanbur and Squire, 1999). In this way, WDR (1990) defined poverty mainly in monetary terms, which is in line with the uni-dimensional approach to poverty. Understanding poverty in this sense led the WDR (1990) to propose strategies of combating poverty based on human capital development, labour-intensive growth and safety nets.

Notwithstanding the strength of this approach in being simple to understand and apply, as well as not requiring an arduous collection and compilation of data,

there are still yet some weaknesses associated with it. This poverty line measurement can lead to under-estimation or over-estimation. Equally, the measurements of the extent of poverty are most times based on a general statistics of national income or expenditure rather than the available data on individual as well as family. Furthermore, using this approach may aim to interpret needs in terms of lack of material goods alone excluding lack of capacity to accomplish other social roles and involvement in the activities of the society (Ravallion, 1992). Finally, the claim to use $1 per day as a global poverty line ended up being used only for the poorest countries. In this way, this measurement and approach ceased from becoming an international standard as it was not open to scientific investigation and verification. Considering the above, Kanbur and Squire, (1999:5) conclude that being just above the poverty line might pose the same danger as being just below the poverty line. In view of this, it becomes exigent to go beyond this one measurement of using $1 per day as a poverty line. This has thus necessitated the WDR of 2000/01 to look at poverty as a multi-dimensional phenomenon.

World Bank (2000/2001) seems to recognize a multidimensional view of poverty and as such conceives of poverty as vulnerability as well as a lack of voice, power, and representation. This multidimensional view of poverty can be argued to have added more complexity to the approach of poverty conceptions. It is suggested by the World Bank that this complexity can be addressed through the mechanisms of empowerment and participation, where national governments are expected to be absolutely accountable to their citizenry for the development path they pursue. On the other hand, it is being argued as to whether the participatory approach is capable of providing sufficient voice to poor women and men.

The World Bank approach to poverty is discussed around the core themes of opportunity, empowerment, and security (World Bank, 2000/01). Opportunity is understood as continuous growth of economy which is said to be valuable for reducing poverty, and it considers redistribution as a vital instrument of attacking poverty and creating more equal societies. It has to do with expanding economic opportunity for poor people through the stimulation of the overall growth and building up their assets, as well as increasing the returns on those assets. Empowerment is another theme that emphasizes participation and how

state institutions can be continuously built and positioned to be accountable and responsive to poor people. It also strengthens the participation of poor people in major political processes and local decision-making, and seeks to remove all forms of social discrimination. Security is promoted to address the issues of risks, mitigation, strategies for natural disasters, economic crises, and various forms of individualistic risk, as well as to help poor people cope with adverse shocks emanating from poverty.

The World Bank adopted VoP approach in its *WDR 2000/2001 Attacking Poverty*. The essence of this approach is to ensure that the VoP, which includes the poor's intrinsic experiences, priorities, and recommendations, are documented and utilized. This approach embarks on a series of studies with a view to understanding the voices of almost 60,000 poor men and women from over 60 countries around the world, collectively articulating the VoP through 81 participatory poverty studies (Narayan et al., 2000). The field studies used participatory and open-ended methods, and were carried out mainly by local research institutes and NGOs, under the supervision of the World Bank. The findings from across countries revealed the psychological experience and impact of poverty on the poor.

For example, the World Bank's WDR 2000/2001 carried out consultations through the use of a direct participatory research approach with 16 communities randomly selected across Nigeria (World Bank, 2000/2001; Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, 2003). The report outlines how the poor in the country experience and understand poverty, and the findings link the concept of poverty to present and future feelings of insecurity in the country. In other words, the report revealed that the poor in Nigeria were perceived as suffering from lack of security, good housing, essential services, and money to meet immediate needs.

This thesis consequently argues that the World Bank's approach to poverty so far has not adequately addressed the problem of poverty hitherto. The awareness of this inadequacy of approach has influenced the proposal made by World Bank President, Jim Yong Kim to *end extreme poverty by 2030* (Kim, 2013). This proposal is in line with the Ravallion (2013:134) investigation in which he looks at two paths to poverty reduction. The first path examines the fast rate of poverty reduction since 1990 and concludes that this will not be maintained. For instance, Ravallion (2013) argues that though China may stay

on track of poverty alleviation, if growth slows down, it will take another 50 years to lift 1 billion people out of extreme poverty. The other path indicates optimistically that gross domestic product (GDP) in developing countries will keep growing at 6 % in the coming years, or 4.9 % per capita. If this is the case, according to Ravallion, it means one billion extremely poor people will get above the 1.25 dollar a day line by 2027. Though Ravallion is optimistic that this linear progress is theoretically possible, higher growth rates will be necessary to reach the target if inequality continues to rise. Consequently, Kim (2013) adds that there is a need to work collectively with a view to helping all vulnerable people all over the world to lift themselves well above the poverty line; even though many developing countries are not growing as fast as China, partly due to the end of the commodity price boom. This thesis describes this argument as a new World Bank approach or strategy to poverty.

Notwithstanding these approaches adopted by the World Bank and other agencies, especially with regard to Nigeria, it is observed to the best of our knowledge that no comparative studies were done by these agencies on the VoP and that of actors of APMs, as regards their understanding and conceptualisation of poverty. The reports of these agencies have not included actors from the different religious organisations who are also major stake holders in the fight against poverty. Equally, some of the NGOs studied by these agencies are sometimes located mainly in the urban areas, thus excluding the NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) located in the rural areas, through whose voices poverty could be understood from the traditional, cultural and non-material point of view. These are the gaps that this thesis tries to fill as it uses the CPA to assess the implications of these various understandings for poverty reduction efforts.

3.5 Theories of poverty

In his analysis of the dimensions of poverty, Schubert, (1994) stresses the relevance of using the multi-dimensional approach in understanding the concept of poverty. He classifies all the available definitions of poverty into three general types: resources (that is, the available income or actual consumption expenditure per capita); conditions (that is, the sense of well-being attained by people or otherwise); and capacities (people's actual freedom to opt for the life

they desire) (Schubert, 1994:23). These three general typologies, on which the various definitions and conceptions of poverty are established, will be elaborated upon in the following theories below.

3.5.1 Lack of Basic Needs

Ajakaiye and Adeyeye (2001b) argue that poverty is a functional derivative of education, child mortality, health and other demographic variables, which is the result of an individual or household being unable to afford the barest basic necessities of life, due to social, political, economic and psychological incapacitation. In view of this, the “basic needs” theory of poverty conceptualizes poverty as severe deprivation of some basic human needs both at the individual and household level (Oyeranti and Olayiwola, 2005). It designates poverty as deprivation in terms of material requirements needed to minimally fulfil basic human needs, including food and employment (UNICEF, 2007). Furthermore, UNICEF (2007) describes “basic needs poverty” as “based on the lack of essential goods or services such as water, minimum food calories, and children not attending school” (p. 26). Using this definitional framework, UNICEF (2007:26) concludes that over 69.5% of the Nigerian population can be regarded as living in poverty. The metrics of Basic Needs Poverty Line (BNPL) serves as a useful instrument in estimating the incidence of poverty. The BNPL as noted by Gounder (2012:4) is the monetary value of goods and services that a household needs to consume in order to be regarded as having a decent standard of living by the society. This implies that, any household whose income falls below this designated BNPL at any given point in time is regarded as poor.

Jhingan, (1997); Mankiw, (2001); Millen and Holtz, (2000) explain this concept of poverty as a basic lack of material comforts, which the vast majority of the population of a nation need for survival. In other words, poverty portrays a situation where most people do not have access to basic needs and basic infrastructure, which includes food, good roads, shelter, clothing, portable water, electricity supply, health facilities and basic education among others. Galbraith (1958:268) summarizes this concept of poverty as a physical and relative matter. It is physical because its effects are seen on those afflicted by it, and relative, because what makes an individual poor in one country may not be the

same in another country. Therefore, poverty is seen in people with limited access to food, and people who live in crowded and dirty environment, who cannot afford nor have access to medical facilities and treatment, and who may not be able to meet their basic family and community obligations as well as other life necessities (Galbraith, 1958:268). This definition, even though old, is classic and is still being used today.

This poverty conceptualisation is essentially economic and consumption-oriented as whilst it is assessed in monetary terms, it also employs consumption-based indices to explain the depth and severity of poverty on the one hand, and also delineates clearly, who can be classified as being poor or otherwise (Alaye-Ogan, 2008; Ajakaiye and Adeyeye, 2001a). Thus, the poor in any given society are viewed as those individuals or households who are incapable of purchasing a designated set of basic goods and services (World Bank, 1990; Alaye-Ogan, 2008). Chambers (1989) supports this conceptualisation of poverty: “a household is characterized as poor when it has few assets, its hut, house or shelter is small and made of wood, bamboo, mud, grass...; the household has no land or has land that does not assure or barely assures subsistence...; the household’s stocks and flow of food and cash are low, unreliable, seasonal and inadequate...; returns to labour are low” (Chambers, 1989 cited in Okurut, et al., 2002, p. 3).

Conceptualisation of poverty as lack of basic needs is articulated by Gold (2009), who opines that poverty is to be seen specifically as a deprivation which more or less involves every inadequacy in meeting basic human needs, thereby preventing one from achieving a well-being that is acceptable at the international level. Poverty as discussed above becomes a material deprivation which is assessed only in monetary terms. Conceptualizing poverty in this sense makes the understanding of poverty a quantitative analysis and allows room for researchers who may want to compare poverty over time and between countries. However, this approach towards conceptualizing poverty has failed to recognize other forms of non-material deprivation like exclusion, discrimination based on gender, illiteracy, empowerment, abuse of rights of children, lack of capabilities, amongst others. This failure has necessitated another theory of poverty based on exclusion to which I now turn.

3.5.2 Social exclusion theory

“The grim realities that underlie and concretize the concept of social exclusion are ubiquitous and global. Virtually no country, rich or poor, ‘traditional’ or ‘modern’, can credibly claim to be unaffected by them; they seem to be woven into the fabrics of societies, embedded in the system with deep roots, which lead to their continuous reproduction” (UN, 2010 p. 65). Social exclusion remains a widely contested concept. Some researchers and analysts tend to attach various values and meanings to social exclusion as a concept (Oyen, 2002). On the other hand, others, such as Townsend, (2002) and Levitas, (2000) have noted that social exclusion has limited the efforts made to address poverty. It is a concept that has contributed to the understanding of poverty, thereby encouraging a deeper reflection on poverty reduction policies.

Social exclusion as a term was used first in 1981 in the French Socialist government policy to refer to the disparate group of people living below the socially acceptable standard of society, and especially those who are unable to access the social insurance system (Room, 1995; Jordan, 1997; Burchardt et al., 1999). Barry (1998) opines that the concept of ‘social exclusion’ is no more than the presentation of the concept of poverty in a new garb. Hence, Percy-Smith (2000:5) notes that, social exclusion is sometimes used as a synonym for poverty or disadvantage.

The above idea is reflected in the conventional definition of social exclusion, as referring to the multi-faceted and varying factors culminating in the exclusion of people from the normal practices, exchanges and rights of our modern society (Commission of the European Communities, CEC, 1993). CEC (1993:2) maintains that social exclusion, which manifests itself in the form of inadequate rights to housing, education, health, and access to services, are essential characteristics of poverty. Expanding this, Narayan (1999) gives a broad definition of the concept, to include all the institutional and societal processes that prevent certain groups of people from engaging fully in the social, cultural, economic and political life of the society in question. This implies that the concept transcends a mere focus on income deprivation as the cause for marginalisation of some groups in the society (Gore and Figueiredo, 1997:43). The above stance reinforces the fact that, despite the close nexus between

economic stratification and the phenomenon of social exclusion, it seems obvious that social exclusion can exist between groups that are not economically distinguished from each other, since “people can be poor without being socially excluded or excluded without being poor” (Narayan, 1999 p. 4).

Even if social exclusion cannot be restricted to economic factors, economic factors are key determinants of social exclusion. Economic factors in this sense are viewed not only as poverty, but also as exclusion from the labour market, suggesting an endemic disadvantage (Percy-Smith, 2000). The definition of social exclusion as taken from the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) of Great Britain supports this fact: “Social exclusion is a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems, such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown” (SEU, 1997 p.1). In the same vein, Wilson (1996:185) notes that the underlining feature of a poor person is his inability to become a member of a certain social network or may be actively excluded from such networks and institutions that would facilitate securing good jobs and decent housing. In other words, chronic poverty is predicated on social exclusion, which by its nature is fundamental, given that the socially excluded are denied access to land ownership, labour market and any other income-generating assets (Bird et al., 1998).

In his study on social exclusion, Sen (2000:14-15) makes a distinction between active and passive exclusion: active exclusion is associated with wilful acts which lead to exclusion itself, while passive exclusion occurs when there is absence of such an act which may manifest in the workings of a wider economic process or through the whole system. Interestingly, Kabeer (2000:12) advances a radical view of this concept in what he designated as ‘Hard-core exclusion’. This occurs when the principles underpinning inequality of gaining access to different institutions reinforce instead of offsetting each other, culminating in situations of extreme disadvantage. She further notes that, despite the widespread poverty in sub-Saharan Africa, variations within poor communities in terms of access to social networks create and exacerbate the differentiation, such that some groups are more disadvantaged than others

(Kabeer, 2000:12). This is amply manifested in the myriad kinds of exclusion from opportunity that characterize resource-poor Hausa households in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the UN (2010:81) classifies yet another four spheres of social exclusion, as encompassing the spheres of disability based on the societal bias against persons with disability; the sphere of ageing where the aged are being relegated; statelessness that amounts to expulsion from homes and denial of citizenship, and finally sexuality that is exclusion based on gender bias. It is also important to note that gender issues do affect the degree of social exclusion. Hence, Kabeer (2000:13) states that gender can differentiate other kinds of disadvantaged persons, and this is factored into the destructive synergies that underlie hard-core exclusion. She further explains that, female-maintained households are seen as a radically disadvantaged group, in that the loss of male head in a household can result in both social vulnerability as well as economic hardship.

In Africa, social exclusion "stems from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, inequality, unbalanced rural/urban development, unequal distribution of assets or unequal access to services, persistent conflicts and instability, often resulting from long-term exclusion, impede poverty reduction efforts" (UN, 2010 p. 67). In view of this, UN concludes that about 12.7 million people in 2007 were displaced on African continent internally. In Latin America and the Caribbean, social exclusion is influenced by high level of poverty and unemployment leading to inequality, racial and ethnic discrimination (UN, 2010:67). The focal issue of social exclusion everywhere is the powerlessness of those who are being excluded. Accordingly, the UN (2010) holds that "the ability of a person living in poverty to improve his or her material and non-material well-being depends on the socio-political structure of the society the person lives in" (p. 68). In other words, the institutional structures and practices such as culture, religion, amongst others, play a role in the social exclusion present in a given community.

Social exclusion as gleaned from the above discussion becomes another way to conceptualize poverty, thus adding to the pluralism in the understanding of poverty. Notwithstanding the value which social exclusion has added to the understanding of poverty, it has been argued that its measurement still poses a

difficulty and constitutes a major problem for those using quantitative approaches to analyse poverty (Oyeranti and olayiwola, 2005). There is still more to this pluralism in understanding poverty than just lack of basic needs and social exclusion. Poverty can also be conceptualized from the human capital perspective, which is explained in the next section.

3.5.3 Human capital theory

In general terms, human capital is used to describe the investment people make in themselves that has a positive bearing on economic productivity (Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2008). Human capital is a broad concept used to designate acquired human characteristics that promote income: it is generally taken to include acquired knowledge and skills, and also to involve an individual's strength and vitality, which are dependent on their health and nutritional conditions (Appleton and Teal, 1998; Adamu, 2002; Birasneav and Rangnekar, 2009). Hence, the theoretical framework aligning the goals of education with developmental initiatives is known as human capital theory (Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2008:480). The appeal of this theory consists in the fact that investment in human capital "provide returns in the form of individual economic success and achievement" (Olaniyan and Makinde, 2008 p. 480).

The economic prosperity and functioning of a nation is said to be hugely dependent on its increasing resources and human capital stock (Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2008; Gennaioli et al., 2013). Whereas the former has conventionally been the concern of economic research, factors affecting the advancement of human capital, as noted by Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008), are increasingly receiving greater attention in the field of the social and behavioural sciences. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, World Bank research expressed the same interest in the development of physical capital as its concern with poverty was fundamentally GDP growth-oriented, and concentrated more on reviving and accelerating the labour market and rural development respectively (Birdsall and Londono, 1997).

But from 1980s onward, research interests increasingly focussed on the critical role of human resources in fostering growth and ameliorating poverty, reinforcing the view of MacNamara in his address to the Board of Governors World Bank Group in Nairobi, that the real growth process of a nation, if

grounded on human capital accumulation, would go a long way toward reducing poverty (MacNamara, 1973:5). According to this view, development seen through the trajectory of poverty reduction has to be advanced through the joint strategy of investing in human capital and promoting macroeconomic growth (World Bank, 1990). Hence, economists generally agree that investment in human resources, not just physical or material resources, is the pivot on which the pace of economic and social development rests. “Human resources constitute the ultimate basis of wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, human beings are the active agencies who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization and carry forward national development” (Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2008 p. 480).

In line with the works of Sakamota and Powers (1995); Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997); and Gates and Langevin (2010), human capital theory is predicated on the assumption that formal education is instrumental to improving the production capacity of a nation. This theory further emphasizes how formal education is factored into the positive relationship between productivity and efficiency of workers. The central thesis here is that, education enhances the economic productivity and human capability of a society (Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2008). Many classical economists have also argued for government’s active support of education on the grounds of the positive externalities that trickle down to the society on account of a more educated labour force (Van-Den-Berg, 2001; Birasnav and Rangnekar, 2009; Smith, 1976; Schumpeter, 1973). For example, Smith (1976) argues that the positive externalities derived from education are necessary not only for the proper functioning of the economy but also for a stable and progressive democratic society.

UN (2010:22) reports that, between 1999 and 2006, there was an impressive growth in Sub-Saharan Africa in the number of primary school enrolments, which was seen as an improvement when compared with the rate in the last six decades. The same was observed in South and West Asia where the number rose by 5% between 1999 and 2006. Nevertheless, as the reports explained further, there were gaps in progress as more than 55% of children in the Sub-

Saharan Africa were noticed to be out of school, suggesting that millions of school children will be out of school by the year 2015, which was the year for the MDG target date, that ensures basic primary education for all (UN, 2010:23). The inability to achieve this might have necessitated the metamorphosis of the MDG into SDG 2030.

Deriving from the above discussion, poverty conceptualisation in this discourse could therefore be described as a dearth of human capital accumulation, which has its two major indices as education and health. Statistics on Nigerian public spending on social services, such as education and health care, which are the underlying issues in human capital formation, are disturbing. For instance, from 1999-2010 the average national budgetary allocation to education relative to the total budget was 8.86% (Federal Ministry of Finance, 2010:32). The resultant effect of this low spending in the educational sector is the decline in not only the educational opportunities and standards in the country, but also in the infrastructural provisions in the state-run schools (Ejere, 2011). Education has been considered to be a major means through which skills and capabilities can be improved, thereby reducing poverty. Umo (1997) holds that high quality education offers a good means to solving most of the economic and social problems, including poverty in any given nation (see also Soderbom and Teal, 2001; Yusuf et al., 2009). Apparently, Olaniyan (2004) reveals that the rate of increase in poverty may be a result of the refusal of many households to send their children to school. In view of the above, Ejere (2011) and Yusuf et al. (2009) maintain a positive and strong relationship between poverty and human capital and as such, lack of adequate human capital becomes one of the various ways to conceptualize poverty.

This leads us to the next sub-section where poverty is discussed as a lack of basic capabilities and functioning.

3.5.4 Basic capabilities and functioning theory

The Capability approach, which centres on the notions of capabilities and functioning pioneered by Sen (1976) and developed by Nussbaum (1988, 1993, 2000 and 2006), can be traced back to Aristotle, Karl Marx and Adam Smith (Grusky and Kanbur, 2006). Authors such as Sen (1992), Qizilbash (2008) and Robeyns (2005) have argued that the capability approach is basically

understood as a changing multi-dimensional framework rather than being concerned only with well-being theory. Based on this, the capability approach is then employed in the conceptualisation of poverty, inequality, social change and quality of life.

The innovative idea of Amatyr, Sen on poverty is in line with the pluralism in the understanding of poverty. Sen (1999a:86) emphasizes that poverty should not only be seen as lowness of income, since income on its own does not necessarily capture other attributes like public goods, life expectancy, housing, non-markets goods, social participation, amongst others. Thus, he advances a conceptualisation of poverty to include not only lowness of income but also a lack of basic capabilities and functioning. In other words, poverty is to be understood as a deprivation of basic capabilities, which can either arise through ignorance, lack of financial resources, government oppression, and false consciousness (Sen, 1999a:86). In this way, he argues that poverty is to be measured in "terms of substantive freedoms one enjoys to lead the kind of life one has reason to value and also as failures of certain basic capabilities rather than of lowness of income per se" (Sen, 1999a p. 87). Sen's argument does not exhibit a denial of the importance of low income as a cause of poverty since the absence of income can contribute to a person's capability deprivation. For him, capability poverty and lowness in income are related, since income is a much needed means of capabilities and when enhanced, capabilities will increase the ability of a person to becoming more productive and therefore able to create opportunities for higher income. Thus, higher income, all things being equal, enhances a greater capability to function (Sen, 1999a:88).

The two concepts, 'capabilities' and 'functioning' are the main core of the theoretical work in Sen's capability approach, and their use has been helpful in the evaluation of economic inequality and poverty. This approach is very different from the welfare economics that focuses more on the income, utilities and wealth paradigm (Sen, 1992). Functionings are the "'beings' and 'doings' of a person, whereas a person's capability is the various combinations of functioning that a person can have" (Sen 1992 p. 34). In conceptualizing poverty within the capability approach theory, Sen (2009:231) holds that it is necessary to hold a view from which overall individual advantage can be

assessed. This could be done based on Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism that has to do with individual pleasure or happiness, or based on the assessment of a person's income, resources or wealth. Further still, it could be based on the capability of a person to do the things he or she has reason to value. In this way, the capability approach proposes that the quality of life of an individual or a group should be assessed and measured in terms of capabilities and functioning, rather than in terms of utility and resources alone (Sen, 2009:231). Thus, he defines the capability approach as "primarily a reflection of the freedom to achieve valuable functioning and it represents a person's freedom to achieve well-being" (Sen, 1992 p. 49).

What the capability approach really does, according to Sen (2009), is not just to focus "on what a person actually ends up doing, but also on what a person is in fact able to do, whether or not the person chooses to make use of that opportunity" (p. 235). Therefore, the approach emphasizes the importance and significance of freedom of choice, heterogeneity and the multi-dimensional nature of the welfare of the individual (Sen, 2009). The capability approach asks whether people have the capability or ability to be happy, healthy, and well-nourished in order to acquire a good education, and participate in political activities. It also asks whether the resources needed for these capabilities (like access to clean water and medical doctors, high quality education, protection from diseases and infections, sufficient food supplies, opportunity to participate politically in the community) are available, and at the reach of the people (Sen, 2006a). In this way, the capability approach covers the entire spectrum of people's well-being, and does not really depend on how wealthy or rich a person is but on the functioning capabilities. Hence, the well-being of a person is determined by the person's capabilities to function, the freedom one has to carry out one's activities and being free to be what one wants to be. These 'beings and doings' are what Sen referred to as achieved functionings (Sen, 1999b:19).

Sen explains that functioning "can vary from most elementary ones, such as being well nourished, being in good health, avoiding escapable morbidity and premature mortality, to quite complex and sophisticated achievements, such as being happy, having self-respect, being able to take part in the life of the

community, and so on" (Sen,1992 p. 5). On account of this, he argues that selecting and weighing the different forms of functioning can impact on the overall assessment of the capability to achieve other forms of functioning bundles. In other words, he seems to believe that functioning constitutes the well-being of a person and therefore its evaluation must assess the constituent elements involved (Sen, 1992). From the above then, it becomes important that the analysis of poverty should be a focus on the capability to function and not on the achieved functionings.

Sen did not propose a list of capabilities and functioning, but Nussbaum (1988), another author of the capability approach, has done. This was arguably their main line of disagreement. Sen opines that the selection of capabilities should be an 'act of reasoning', and that there is never a single list which works out for all cases, but that a new list should be drawn up at every point in time for each case (Sen, 1999b). Despite him being sceptical about reducing human development to a single indicator, he still operationalized this by contributing to the HDI, which combines three major capabilities indicators, namely, life expectancy, average income and educational attainment. These are used to measure progress in human development (as discussed above). It is worth noting that, this has been further developed into MPI (UNDP, 20010).

This approach to conceptualising poverty has broadened the view that poverty is multi-dimensional and suggests that lowness of income should not be the only way to understand and conceptualise poverty, bearing in mind the plurality related to the concept of poverty. Understanding poverty from the view point of lowness of income is a uni-dimensional approach, which in the overall assessment may not give a comprehensive conception of poverty. It may simply be misleading and could lead to a wrong evaluation and analysis of poverty. Therefore, there is the need to include also the two core elements in the capability approach theory, 'capabilities' and 'functioning', in the conceptualisation of poverty as discussed. However, notwithstanding the many advantages of conceptualizing poverty in terms of a lack of capabilities and functioning, it has been criticized as an approach that requires a variety of data as well as lacking consensus on how to compute and measure the capability deprivation at the household level (Yusuf et al., 2009).

There are yet others who see poverty from the view point of vulnerability, risk and insecurity which are discussed in the next section.

3.5.5 Vulnerability, risk and insecurity

Based on the recent understanding of poverty as multi-dimensional as well as a phenomenon that goes beyond capabilities and material deprivations, it has been argued that a dependence on past understandings as usual will not reduce or alleviate poverty (Karlsson, 2001). In view of this, the WDR (World Bank, 2000/01) proposed and extended the understanding of poverty to go beyond consumption and income to include vulnerability, risk, insecurity, voicelessness and powerlessness (see also Best, 2013). This novel approach is focused on the vulnerability of individuals, households and the community to shocks and risks that could push them further into poverty (UN, 2010). Therefore, to conceptualize poverty one needs to understand the dynamic nature of poverty.

Yusuf and Adepoju (2012) maintain that, “vulnerability to poverty is one of the factors that explain the ever-increasing level of poverty” (p. 430). Vulnerability to poverty simply means the risk that economic units, like individuals, households or communities, who are poor currently, will continue to be poor; or that such units, which are not poor currently, will fall into poverty in the future (Holzmann and Jorgensen, 1999; Kasirye, 2007; UN, 2010; Yusuf and Adepoju, 2012; Best, 2013). According to Best (2013), poverty in terms of vulnerability may be the result of shocks and insecurities coming from the economic systems or due to personal mishaps. Chambers (1989) describes vulnerability as “defenceless, insecurity and exposure to risks, shocks and stress” (p.1), while the World Bank (2000/2001) describes it as “the likelihood that a shock will result in a decline in well-being” (p.139). Pritchett et al. (2000) and Chaudhuri et al. (2002) offer a strong definition of vulnerability “as the ex-ante risk of facing poverty in the future” (p. 56). Some of these shocks and insecurities may range from a change in economic circumstance, such as loss of a job, illness that prevents one from working and loss of a family member. Estimation shows that the current financial and food crisis pushed about 100 million of people into poverty (UN, 2010:2).

The UN (2010:49) estimated globally that many households who are near the poverty line standard are perhaps seen as facing economic insecurity, especially when the poverty line of $1 per day is used according to World Bank's standard. These were viewed as the shortcomings of the World Bank's 1990 and 2000 approaches to global poverty as the poverty line was set too low and the number of poor in the world also underestimated (Gordon et al., 2003:13). There are large populations above the poverty line but still vulnerable to poverty even as the official poverty rates seem to be low. In most developing countries, so many middle income earners are vulnerable to poverty due to the fact that they are seen to be at the edge of poverty line (UN, 2010:49). The inability of poor people to cope with these shocks can result in the loss of their capabilities, and thus affects poor families who may end up withdrawing their children from school as a result of fall in income. In addition to this, the nutritional status of the family is also affected due to a cut in family consumption (Thomas, 2004; Dercon, 2006).

Conceptualizing poverty from the point of view of vulnerability shows the dynamic nature of poverty. Poverty is not static but dynamic: "Poverty is seen as more fluid and contingent; the techniques used to manage it must also be more fluid and proactive" (Best, 2013, p. 110). According to Christiansen and Subbarao (2004:5), the urgent need to address vulnerability in the conceptualisation of poverty stems from two facts. The first is the intrinsic value attached to not being vulnerable, when one is considered to be non-poor. Second is the fact that vulnerability to poverty has an instrumental value for the poor as a result of the many risks and shocks which households face. These risks and shocks according to them are irreversible, and when they come, may keep the household in chronic poverty. In this case, some people may be trapped in poverty, i.e they become chronically poor, and not just transiently/temporarily poor. Hence, a data 'snapshot' may not identify these people. Only a panel dataset which tracks people over the long term can do that. Based on this, Alwang et al. (2001) state that the degree of vulnerability is dependent on the features of the risks and the ability of the household to respond to those risks, and these abilities depend, in turn, on the characteristics and features of the household assets (see also UN, 2010).

Therefore, vulnerability, risks and insecurity as described above become one of the ways through which poverty is conceptualized and thus add to the pluralism in the understanding of poverty. Further still, poverty can be conceptualized from a gender perspective as discussed in the next section.

3.5.6 Gender discrimination and abuse of children's rights

The understanding of poverty in the last few decades has not only been focused on the material deprivations discussed so far, but has also included the gender perspective, as well as the abuse of children's rights. Conceptualizing poverty from the gender perspective has broadened the heterogeneous nature of poverty. It is a methodological and theoretical analysis, stemming from cultural understandings of the differences observed between men and women (UN, 2010). Hence, Godoy, (2004:10) notes that, poverty analysis from the perspective of gender helps us to understand the processes, dynamics, features and characteristics that are inherent to this phenomenon, and this enables us to better explain why some groups are more likely to experience poverty.

The conceptualisation of poverty from a gender perspective can be traced back to 1980s, when a group of Third World women began to analyse and view poverty from a gender perspective (Godoy, 2004:12). They came to a conclusion (not without its criticisms) that women are more affected by poverty than men, and that female poverty showed an increasing tendency as a result of increases in the number of households being headed by women. This was how the 'feminization of poverty'[3] began (Godoy, 2004:12; see also Chant, 2006).

Bravo (1998:63) notes that women have fewer opportunities to gain access to social and material resources and assets, and to participate in the making of decisions in the areas of political and socio-economic policies. This, he attributed to the gendered divisions that assign women to more domestic affairs than men. This limited access to socio-material resources, assets, and making of socio-political and economic decisions granted to women then manifests in the deprivations experienced in the household, labour market and welfare/social

[3] 'Feminization of poverty' is a phenomenon used to explain situations where poverty is seen to be more prevalent in female headed households than in male headed households (Godoy, 2004).

protection systems (Ruspini, 1996). Equally, Holmes and Jones (2010) observe that gender inequality cuts across the social and economic dimensions of poverty. It is evident in the differences in the distributions of resources, social roles and responsibilities among men and women, which tend to favour men.

The UN (2010) Human Development Report (HDR), suggests that in many developing and developed countries, women still suffer from some forms of relative poverty, such that, women are perceived as inferior and subordinate to men. These are sometimes linked with cultural perceptions prevalent in most societies (UN, 2010). For example, Alonge et al. (2014:518) note that, due to the patriarchal system in most West-African countries, women are not allowed to own land or even have access to basic education. They are meant to see domestic and kitchen work as their major responsibilities.

In the area of education, ECLAC, (2003:32) reports that many women in Latin America abandon their studies in order to take domestic work at home, while their male counterparts continue on to earn paid jobs. For example, the report noted that in 2000, over 30.3% of women in Latin America are illiterate as opposed to 22.2% of men, and in 2010, 10.1% of men were illiterate as opposed to 12.2% of women (ECLAC, 2003:34). The report further maintains that between 1990 and 2000, the rate of unemployment and gained access to material and social assets was higher in women at 5.1% and in men, with 4.3% (ECLAC, 2003:31). It has also been estimated since 2000, that about 565 million women are living in abject poverty in the developing countries, and out of this figure, 130 million are in Africa alone (Godoy, 2004:13).

With regard to Nigeria, Ajani (2008:2) observes that gender inequality is pervasive, and manifests itself in areas such as access and control of land, technologies, credit facilities health and education amongst others. In view of this, the Social Watch (2005:221) notes that poverty intensely affects women more than men, and this, according to the report, might be one of the reasons why female-headed households in Nigeria tend to be poorer than the male-headed households. Existing cultural practices tend to inhibit women from owning and inheriting land following the death of a husband. Equally, food insecurity is also found to be higher among women than men in Nigeria (Ajani, 2008:2). Participation in the labour market is also very low when compared to

that of men (Rural Poverty Portal, 2010:2). The UNDP (2010:59) notes that the labour market participation rate for women is 39.5%, as against that of men, which is 74.8%. Conceptualizing poverty from a gender perspective provides a wider appreciation of the pluralism regarding the understanding of poverty.

Following the same line of thought, poverty can also be conceptualized beyond income considerations from the perspective of children's rights abuses. This is also a form of deprivation that so many children experience globally. Acknowledging this, the UN (1989) 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' (CRC) offered a framework towards conceptualizing poverty from the perspective of children's rights abuses. Thus, the CRC listed the following basic human rights that every child anywhere should have, namely: the right to survival; the right to protection from harmful influences and practices, abuse and exploitation; the right to develop to the fullest; the right to participate fully in family, social and cultural life (UN, 1989). Child well-being according to Haar (2005) implies the realisation of the above basic rights, and if these are denied, then it becomes deprivation. Furthermore, the CRC requires that all children be protected by states from all forms of mental or physical violence while in the care of others. This means that every child should be protected from corporal punishment (UN, 1989).

To ensure adequate realisation of these rights, the UN (1995:3) highlights the role of the family. The report maintains that young children are highly vulnerable, and as such, very dependent on their family environment for access to the basic necessities of life such as clean water and health care facilities. Likewise, the UN (2002) HDR, affirms that, recognizing child poverty as the denial of the human rights of children, entails a wider responsibility on the duty bearers (family and state), who are entrusted with the power and responsibility to protect, respect and fulfil the rights of children. UNICEF (2007) asserts that children who live in poverty always experience some sort of deprivation ranging from an absence of the material, emotional and spiritual resources that are needed in order to fully enjoy their rights to survival and participate as members of the society in which they live.

In Nigeria, the protection of child rights is a major issue confronting the nation. This is the result of the dangerous and harmful environment that Nigerian

children are exposed to, including child labour, child trafficking, and early marriage, amongst others (UNDP, 2009:68). These leave them unprotected and prone to an early death (UNICEF, 2007; Cimpric, 2010). Following the above discussion, poverty conceptualisation is not limited to only material deprivations, but in its pluralism has also been conceptualized in relation to gender discrimination and abuse of children's rights.

3.6 Gaps in the Literature

The literature reviewed in this chapter has revealed that poverty is a potent challenge to a great number of individuals in underdeveloped or developing countries. Also found was the fact that various approaches to poverty have been explored by experts, academics, and organisations. Alongside the participatory poverty assessment (PPA), as mainly represented by the World Bank's participative study, the VoP approach was found to have become prominent in the literature. The subsequent challenges which they pose to other methods are also notable, and by virtue of this, quite a lot of attention has been drawn and devoted to exploring the differences between methods and approaches of poverty. The World Bank's sponsored PPAs were further found to have approached poverty differently by exploring how the poor people themselves identify and understand the problem based on their experiences.

This thesis argues that the approaches of the World Bank and other literature (see for example, Ayoola et al., 2001; Ali Akpajiak and Pyke, 2003; Narayan and Petesch, 2002; World Bank, 2000/2001), using PPA, VoP, etc, to study poverty in Nigeria so far have not adequately and generally addressed the problem of poverty hitherto from the aspect of understanding and conceptualisation. The different actors within poverty have not been investigated in a comparative manner with regard to extracting the key or most popular definitions of poverty from their own accounts of the concept. None of the existing theoretical underpinnings was tested on pluralistic conceptions of poverty to ascertain dominant definitions and understandings of poverty.

Past studies (see for example, Ayoola et al., 2001; Ali Akpajiak and Pyke, 2003; Narayan and Petesch, 2002; World Bank, 2000/2001), have equally explored poor people's definitions of poverty as documented in various methods of poverty studies such as the PPAs and VoP. There is no concentration on other

actors such as NGOs (including religious organisations) and government agencies that have the responsibility for alleviating poverty. Much of what was done was the assembling of desktop information and materials gathered from representatives. For example, the study measuring poverty in Nigeria conducted by Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke (2003), and sponsored by Oxfam, was a desktop review of written documents assembled from different sources, research institutions, government organisations as well as civil organisation. The desktop review did not involve a direct interaction with the poor and the actors of APMs, and is therefore seen as a gap that needs to be filled. This gap is filled as the author of this thesis reached out to, and involved these actors from both Church, private and government organisations.

It is also noted that the different ways that people describe poverty are present in the literature, especially in relation to Nigeria, but there is an absence of the historical changes underpinning the understanding of poverty in Nigeria as well as the factors responsible for these changes. Equally, there is the absence of the traditional, cultural and non-material understanding and causes of poverty in Nigeria within the literature. This thesis will fill these gaps.

This thesis equally looks at the multiple definitions of poverty as they emerged from the personal experiences and understandings of the poor themselves, as well as the actors from the various organisations studied. In all, the consensus remains that, there is no universal definition of poverty due to the fact that poverty is a multi-dimensional social phenomenon with divergent understandings. But none of the literature has attempted to investigate the implications of these different understandings of poverty for poverty reduction efforts. This is a gap that this thesis attempts to fill by exploring the implications of these divergences for poverty reduction efforts. The questions posed by this thesis are: what are the implications of this pluralism for poverty reduction efforts? If there are any, can they be addressed and how?

Also lacking in the literature is juxtaposition between the views of the poor in the villages and actors in the organisations; and by extension the contrasting views of agencies such as government, religious, and private organisations. This thesis will address this deficiency in the current literature. Based on this and the above arguments, it therefore shows that the conceptual pluralism approach to

poverty has not received adequate attention in the literature. Consequently, this is the area where this study becomes relevant.

In the next chapter, this thesis discusses the epistemological assumptions on which this study is based.

4 Institutional organizations and pluralism

4.1 Introduction

In its study of pluralism in the understanding of poverty, and its implications on poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria, this thesis draws from the theories, debates and epistemological assumptions of the following literature on conceptual pluralism within development. The key references include:

- The work of Christoplos (1995), on the pluralism of Agricultural Extension in Vietnam.
- The analysis of Oyen (2002), on the pluralism in the understanding of Social Capital.
- The study of Anderson et al. (2007), on the pluralism of the Forestry Concepts and Rural Development in America.
- The work of Hoffman (2011) on the pluralism of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in the United State of America.

In line with the above, this chapter reviews the pluralism within several issues of development, and explores how actors in institutional organisations react to policies and concepts that are plural. These observations will serve as analytical and theoretical insights on which our discussion and analysis of poverty from the fieldwork will be based.

4.2 Conceptual pluralism within development schools of thoughts

As previously explained, pluralism has a longstanding philosophical and political origin, even though the term is now used in development thought and concepts (Clément, 1997). Pluralism explains situations where different groups or actors are independent and autonomous, but also interdependent with authentic claims and divergent positions on substantive critical issues, thoughts and concepts. In other words, pluralism explains the dynamism between different

interests and ideologies among various institutional actors (Anderson et al., 2007:69).

For example, social capital is a concept with a plurality of meanings and has been used to explain a wide range of phenomena such as health, voting patterns, economic growth and development of countries, amongst other phenomena (Durlauf and Fafchamps, 2004:4). Social capital was developed by James Coleman (1988), Glenn Loury (1981) and others as an interpretative way of making a reference to some structures such as relationships, trustworthiness, information and norms that usually facilitate the collective action and endeavours of institutions (Prakash, 2002).

As a development concept, Oyen (2002:12) argues that understandings of social capital in the development context are also plural. He therefore explains how various experts understand and classify social capital. Some of them believe social capital can be acquired by an individual as the individual participates in informal networks, different associations, organisations and movements, while some others believe that social capital is only possible through participating in some formal organisations. In addition to this, social capital is employed in the social sciences as an analytical and political tool for the analysis of poverty. It has been argued by Oyen, (2002) that with reference to poverty, social capital might be reckoned as a wider conception of poverty. In this way, social capital in the context of poverty could be seen either as a means to an end or an end in itself, depending on the way poverty is defined. In the world development report, the World Bank sees social capital formation as a major strategy for poverty reduction, while the many NGOs now see social capital formation as a strategy that has given legitimacy to their investment in community work and other participatory approaches in an effort to understand and reduce poverty (Oyen, 2002). Political scientists for instance have built a new paradigm around social capital. As a political tool, it is argued that social capital enforces rule of law. It also supports contract enforceability and ensures civil liberties (Oyen, 2002; see also Lesser, 2000).

Economists on their own side have tried to use human capital and economic development as basis for social capital. Temple (2000:4) holds that, as the individual is the bedrock of human capital, so also human capital forms the

bedrock of social capital. Human capital includes skills and knowledge that are gathered in both formal and informal learning. Based on this, Falk (2000) argues that social capital established by meaningful interaction between people could help to facilitate learning and the use of these acquired skills and knowledge. In this way, social capital ends up promoting active and sustainable learning even in the midst of pluralism. More so, interest in social capital has arisen because its absence might be detrimental to economic development (Durlauf and Fafchamps, 2004). Woolcock (1998) explains the role of social capital in the development of economies and societies, and most of these uses of social capital in economic development can be seen in the works of Dasgupta and Serageldin (2000) and van Bastelear and Grootaert (2002).

Equally, in social capital, it is the nature of people to participate and interact with others through what Putnam (1995) calls voluntary association. Putnam's concept of voluntary association is connected with his ideas on the American theory of pluralism. “Voluntary association is the most important form of horizontal interaction and reciprocity, ‘and thus’ influences social interaction and co-operation between actors in several ways” (Putnam, 1995, p. 174). These interactions and co-operation enhance the communication of information as regards the trustworthiness and authenticity of the individuals involved in the association (Putnam, 1995). Therefore, drawing from the discussions above, this thesis maintains that understandings of social capital in the development context are also plural. These differences and similarities thus create tensions in the understanding of social capital (Oyen, 2002). If we consider also the pluralism in the understanding of poverty, then there is the probability that this pluralism might have the implications of also creating tensions and conflicts in the conceptualisation of poverty.

Another interesting area, where pluralism dominates, is in the management of Forestry and Rural Development in the United State. In his work, “Accommodating Conflicting Interest in Forestry-Concepts Emerging from Pluralism”, Anderson et al. (2007) argue in favour of pluralism in the understanding of the changes involved in forestry sustainability and rural development. The term pluralism recognizes that, in the management of forestry and rural development, there are many actors with interests in forestry,

but these interests though valid still conflict (Anderson et al., 2007:69). Actors in 'forestry and rural development', "though concerned with the same resources, often act independently and have different and sometimes conflicting perceptions, values, objectives and even knowledge systems" (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 69). Each of these groups or actors sees itself as legitimate in the role of decision making concerning the management of the natural resources (Anderson et al., 2007).

The above view of Anderson et al. (2007) runs contrary to the opposing view, that there exists only one rational and reasonable system in forestry management and rural development, as posited and upheld by government forest service actors alone. The government actors in America tend to impose their own conception of natural resource management on other actors. This initiated the urgent need to consider pluralism in sustainable forestry and rural development, and to give recognition to the growing numbers of organisations and institutions, whose influences are being felt in sustainable forestry management (FAO, 1997). The report argues further that the reason for pluralism in the understanding of sustainable forestry and rural development might be based on an appreciable range of political, economic and social interests shown by different actors, groups and stakeholders (FAO, 1997).

Equally, in Agricultural Extension reviews and analysis of Vietnam's Mekong Delta, Christoplos (1995) stressed the importance of pluralism in the concept of 'extension' within the management of this natural resource. Extension, explained Christoplos (1995:3), is one of the forums through which governmental and non-governmental agencies come together to meet with the farmers, take decisions on the management of natural resources and address other issues, such as poverty alleviation, gender inequality, sustainable environment among others. This has given rise to complex and turbulent environmental and social conditions as a result of pluralism, thus raising an important question of how an agency can strategically work with a myriad of organisations, institutions and individuals that provide services and other information to the farmers (Christoplos, 1995:4).

Christoplos (1995:11) states that acquiring awareness of pluralism makes room for institutional actors to accept that it may be difficult for them to perform and

co-ordinate all functions and activities. He underlines the fact that by acknowledging pluralism a basis is created for bringing together actors from different institutions and organisations for discussing coordination and implementation (Christoplos, 1995:11). Pluralism entails not an invitation to expand planning and implementation efforts, but an acknowledgement that our conceptions, definitions, plans and implementations are not the only ones in existence (Christoplos, 1995:12).

The work of Hoffman (2011) on the new health reform law in the United States, known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) of 2010 is also imbued with pluralism. When Americans speak of health insurance, and the mode of its implementations, it is obvious they are not talking about the same thing. They have different conceptions and understandings of what health insurance is, and the mode through which it can be implemented (Hoffman, 2011). Some have the conception that health insurance has the responsibility of paying to maintain health, while others conceive it as a tool that should protect people against medical bankruptcy or other financial insecurity that might arise due to increment in the medical care cost. Others see it as a compensation for cost that may arise as an unavoidable risk (Hoffman, 2011:1875). The pluralism that underlies the health insurance, Hoffman (2011:1876) argues, may be a reflection of the desires of the heterogeneous population of America.

In unveiling these various meanings, Hoffman (2011:1944) makes explicit the pluralism in health insurance debates by noting the accompanying tensions, challenges and conflicts in the implementation of the PPACA. Hence, he called for a better understanding of health insurance from the different regulators and implementers of health insurance, so that the law of health insurance can be restructured to accommodate the various conceptions of health insurance. The real challenge faced in sustaining health insurance and its policy is not to abandon any approach as a result of tensions and conflicts, but rather to manage these tensions and conflicts when they arise. Through this, a better understanding among the many visions and conceptions of health insurance is reached, and this shapes and provides Americans with what they expect from insurance in time to come (Hoffman, 2011). Nevertheless, one might argue that the issue of tensions and conflicts should spur competition among the various

regulators and implementers of health insurance, which in turn might create the need to work harder.

The preceding examples of pluralism in the understanding of some development concepts, as in the case of poverty, highlight different ways in which various actors have come to understand the meanings, implications and challenges associated with certain concepts and policies. These implications and challenges associated with pluralism might be in form of tensions and conflicts, and these are what this thesis investigates. The next sub-section looks briefly at institutional actors and conceptual pluralism, explaining ways through which actors of different organisations address issues of pluralism in concepts and policies.

4.3 Institutional actors and conceptual pluralism

Concepts that are plural in nature have become a challenge for many organisations and institutions in recent times. This often leads to conflicts, tensions and challenges in the understandings of concepts, and also, in the management and implementations of policies. The question of how institutional actors address the issues of pluralism of concepts is therefore an important one (Greenwood et al., 2011; Dorado, 2010). Arguing for the negative and positive consequences of pluralism, Stryker (2000:201) and Heimer (1999) clearly state that pluralism brings the potential for incoherency, fragmentation, goal-ambiguity, conflict and sometimes organisational instability, thereby creating tensions among organisations or within organisations (see also Christoplos, 1995; Oyen, 2002; Anderson et al. 2007; Hoffman, 2011). These tensions and conflicts pose serious challenges for the assimilation of these differences in order to try and put a better understanding among the many visions and conceptions of a particular phenomenon, as in the case of poverty.

In response to the above, it is argued that there ought to be organisational or institutional networks propelled by good communication amongst actors and groups in either different or the same institutions (Oliveira, 2002:17). Sometimes there might be some actors or agencies from a particular institution or organisation who entertain fears of participation from other actors, who they regard as undue interference in their own activities. Likewise, some see

participation from other actors or agencies as putting themselves at risk of being overshadowed or manipulated by other actors. However, Oliveira claims that the benefit of interaction and dialogue among actors supersedes whatever fear of intimidation or manipulations that may arise (Oliveira, 2002:17).

Woolcock (2002:27) holds that, whenever there is a proper relationship and participation among actors, there is a notable change in the way that a particular concept is viewed. This begins to open up a learning process for the actors or agencies involved, whereby each actor, based on its comparative advantages, contributes and adds value to the understanding of the concept in question, without fear that this might result in the denial of their own identities or a confusion of roles. Pluralism entails differences and disagreements in the understanding of concepts, just as we have differences and disagreements in democracy (Woolcock, 2002; Clegg, 2010). Tensions and conflicts are within the nature of democracy (Woolcock, 2002:38).

In view of this, Reay and Hinings (2009:643) state that pluralist concepts and logics do not imply a threat to the institutional set up, but may be a means of achieving a better understanding of such concepts. What matters is that various actors from within and across institutions to come together, even in their differences and disagreements, and achieve their set goals (Reay and Hinings, 2009). We shall draw from this in our discussion of various anti-poverty organisations (APOs) and their understanding of poverty and implementations of anti-poverty measures (APMs), among other concerns. In the next sub-section, this study briefly discusses the possibility of maintaining stability in the face of pluralism.

4.4 Stability within Pluralism

A pluralism of concepts exists both within institutions and among individuals on a daily basis, but such pluralism, as has been argued, does not always end up leading to change despite the fact that it can potentially be contradictory (Thevenot, 2006:242). Hoffman (2011:1954) explains that an increasingly divergent organisational and institutional environment faced with pluralism of concepts and policies signifies the existence of autonomous and interdependent actors. Therefore, pluralism is acknowledged as a growing reality at the local,

national and international levels, where there are different organisations and institutions with divergent opinions and logics (Hoffman, 2011). However, there is a growing vision for every institution to always achieve their goals despite conceptual differences and differing management of policies (Roche, 1994:148).

The potential tensions and conflicts arising as from conceptual pluralism are likely to instigate individuals as well as actors at the collective level to develop the ability to manage these conflicts. In this way, it becomes crucial for individuals and collective actors to be knowledgeable about their institutions as well as their environments. This, of course entails attention to the meaning of a particular phenomenon, and how they evaluate it (Stark, 2009:33).

Kekes (1993) explains that pluralism generates unavoidable conflict but maintains there can be reasonable conflict management. These conflicts, should not be seen as stupidity, perversity or wickedness, but as something that keeps on occurring as long as conceptions and values are plural, incompatible and incommensurate (Kekes, 1993). The acknowledgment of pluralism as regards the conceptions of a phenomenon, logics or thoughts and implementations of policies is characterised with various consequences. Therefore, acknowledgement of pluralism should develop ways and means of accommodating it, so that various groups and actors can come together, collaborate and work for sustainability of the policies in question.

Cooperation by various actors to handle policies or concepts that are imbued with pluralism normally follows a well-defined pattern (Woolcock, 2002; Oliveira, 2002). Through this, more sustainable policies (Daniels and Walker, 1997:92) might be achieved. This well-defined pattern is what Oliveira (2002) describes as, “when several partners join forces, the resources they mobilize are broader and more diverse; the redistributive impact of the public programmes is greater, while the risks of waste, patronage and corruption are diminished” (p. 18). He cites an example using the concept of social capital, which exists due to the relationship between and among various actors, and which is based totally on mutual trust and understanding (Oliveira, 2002:18).

To buttress his point, Oliveira, (2002:19) argues the case of solidarity among actors of social capital in Brazil, where social capital has increased the confidence of the community in particular and that of the nation in general. These actors, he claims, are both from the government and civil organisations, of which NGOs and the Church are a part. This has strengthened the bonds of social connection and reciprocity and has given rise to philanthropy in Brazil. In the case of Brazil, when various actors are mobilized in the interest of the society, starting from government actors to that of NGOs, resources might be increased and innovations stimulated (Oliveira, 2002).

This section has discussed the existence of pluralism in concepts and policies amongst individuals and within institutions. Further, it argued that pluralism is a growing reality that could be managed despite it being potentially contradictory, as well as a potential source of tension and inaction, amongst other obstacles. Consequently, this study draws on popular political, economic, social and scholarly discourses on poverty, as well as data from fieldwork to argue for the case of pluralism in the understanding of poverty and the implications this has for poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria. In the next chapter, we discuss Nigeria, its economy and poverty profile as the basis for this case study.

5 Nigeria and its poverty profile

5.1 Introduction

This chapter offers vital information on Nigeria. It introduces the country as the basis of this case study, particularly its economy and poverty profile. It also reviews the various anti-poverty organisations (APOs) from the three main organisations targeted in the study, namely: governmental, non-governmental and religious organisations. The chapter highlights their activities in the fight against poverty.

5.2 Nigeria, its economy and poverty profile

Nigeria is the most populous country in West Africa, with a population estimated to about 170 million according to the last census of 2006[4] (Eyo, 2013:261). With a land mass of 923,768 square kilometres situated between longitudes 30 and 150 East, and latitudes 40 and 140 North; Nigeria is located within the tropics characterised by two main vegetation zones, the rain forest and savannah zones. Nigeria shares borders in the West with the republic of Benin; in the East, with Cameroun and Chad, and in the North, with Niger (Obayelu and Ogunlade, 2006). With over 300 ethnic groups and over 500 indigenous languages/dialects, Nigeria is an ethno-culturally diverse nation. The three major ethnic groups in Nigeria are the Yorubas, Hausas and Igbos which are located mainly in the West, North and East, respectively.

Currently, Nigeria has a total of 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, and these are grouped under six geo-political zones: South-East (SE), South-South (SS), South-West (SW), North-Central (NC), North-East (NE) and North-West (NW) (Eboh, 2003). Christianity and Islam are the predominant religions in Nigeria, and concentrated mostly in the SS and SE, and NW and

[4] The Nigerian census is conducted every ten years. Unfortunately, no census has been conducted this year, 2016. The government has given reasons ranging from economic recession to insecurity in most part of the country, especially in the Northern and Niger Delta of Nigeria.

NE, respectively. After achieving independence in 1960[5], Nigeria has undergone periods of political turbulence and struggle under various military dictatorships until 1999, when there was a successful handover to a democratically elected president. Nigeria is a member of the African Union (AU) and the Commonwealth of Nations.

5.2.1 The structure of the Nigerian economy

The Nigerian economy is structured into five distinct parts: Agriculture, manufacturing, mining, building and construction, and general commerce (Anyanwu, 1993: 6-13; see also Onagunisiaka et al., 2014). Prior to 1970s, the Nigerian economy was built on a well-diversified agricultural sector, which consists of the cultivation of land, fishing, rearing of animals and forestry. According to Ekpe, (2011:184), this sector accounted for 75% of foreign exchange earnings, 68% of GDP, 78% of export, and provided a stable nutritional base of almost 94% to the population of the nation (see also Akinbobola and Saibu, 2004; Obayelu and Ogunlade, 2006; Arongudade et al., 2011). Theoretically, this sector is expected to stimulate the economy through the creation of employment opportunities, reduction of poverty incidences, provision of stable revenue generation base for the nation, and improvement of the living standards of the people. But so far, this has not been achieved due to the large dependence of the Nigerian economy on oil (Ekpe, 2011:184).

The growth of the manufacturing sector from the early-1970s brought about stagnation in the agricultural sector. It was generally believed that the emerging strides in the manufacturing sector had the potential of taking the economy from an agrarian to an industrial economy (Ollawa, 1981; Ekpe, 2011; Anyanwu, 2012). This method involves employing foreign capital in the domestic production of goods, predicated on the belief that it would not only bring about a rapid increase in the level of industrialization, but would also help to reduce the outflow of surplus foreign exchange committed to buying imported goods (Obayelu and Ogunlade, 2006). It was also argued that this strategy, by generating employment opportunities, would help in poverty alleviation and improve the standard of living for the average Nigerian (Ekpe, 2011:184).

[5] Nigeria got her independence from British colonization on October 1st 1960 and became a republic in 1963 with Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe as the first governor general.

The manufacturing sector was not without its deficiencies. Ekpe (2011) remarks that: “Nigeria’s manufacturing is characterized by low technology and light industries” (p.184). The inability of this sector to generate foreign exchange earnings for the country despite the prevalence of many small and medium scale industries is underpinned by such factors as a lack of capital, absence of technology, unsteady power supply, and the domination in this sector of Multinational Corporations (MNCs) (Ekpe, 2011). Moreover, the absence of inter-sectoral linkages like technological transfer as observed by Eleazu (1988), Ijaiya et al. (2011), and Anyanwu (2012), is another undermining factor in the manufacturing sector.

The mining sector in the middle of 1970s became the live wire of the Nigerian economy, with increasing sophistication in the quarrying industries and in the upstream and downstream sectors of the petroleum sector. Nigeria is richly endowed with abundant natural resources, ranging from metallic, ceramic, chemical, crude oil, natural gas, iron-ore, coal, bitumen and other precious metals and gemstones. These potentially make it one of the richest in terms of natural deposits in the world (Akinbobola and Saibu, 2004; Ekpe, 2011). Over the past 50 years, the country’s oil sector has grown phenomenally in both production and export.

The petroleum industry in Nigeria is the largest sector. Studies of the Nigerian economy in the last decade show that the petroleum industry has been playing a dominant role and occupies a strategic position in the economic development of Nigeria (Aleyomi, 2013). During the oil boom of 1970s, Nigeria received huge incomes from oil production due to the rise in the price of oil in the international markets, and joined the organization of petroleum exporting countries (OPEC) in 1971. Eboh (2003:12) notes that, the substantial resource endowments of Nigeria, which includes nearly 37.2 billion barrels of proven crude oil reserves, 173.96 trillion cubic feet of proven gas reserves (equivalent to 30 billion barrels of crude oil) and other solid minerals, show its enormous potential. Based on this, Oviasuyi and Uwadiae (2010:113) observe that Nigeria has the seventh largest oil reserves in the world and earns over 80% of annual revenues from oil resources.

In terms of production, oil has witnessed steady progress though there were fluctuations in some periods, as was the case between 1967 and 1969 due to civil war when the production of oil declined sharply (Oviasuyi and Uwadiae, 2010:113). Equally, CBN (2011:23) notes that, in the 1980s, there was another sharp decrease in oil production and revenue due to the effects of oil oversupply in the international markets. Thus, Nigerian oil production dropped from 760.1 million barrels in 1986 and 1987, respectively (CBN, 2011:23). Since the 1990s, oil production and supply rose to 711.3, 742.3 and 772.9 million barrels in 1992, 1996 and 1998 respectively (ibid). The increase continued between the year 2000 and 2009, as production went from 20,575,881 million barrels in 2000 to 27, 052, 0677 million barrels in 2011 (CBN, 2011:24). In 2014-2015, oil production has dropped and has been fluctuating between 2.37 million barrels per day and 2.17 million barrels per day due to crisis in the sector, oil vandalism and a drop in price in the international markets (CBN, 2014:25).

The contribution of oil to GDP in Nigeria increased steadily over time. In 1965, oil accounted for just 3.43% of the GDP, but the share increased from 9.27% in 1970 to 19.32% in 1975 and 38.87% in 2005 (Baghebo, 2011: 34). However, the oil share of the GDP decreased marginally to 37.44% in 2009 (ibid). This sector also accounts for job creation in the country. The construction of refineries gave Nigeria employment in such areas as the building of roads and bridges, the clearing of drilling sites, transportation of materials and equipment. Later, professional jobs were given to Nigerians who underwent training in various areas of specialization (Baghebo, 2011:35). The oil sector has also contributed to foreign exchange reserves a great deal and has attracted various foreign investments, thereby increasing the FDI as evidenced by CBN (2011:26) reports.

While oil dominates the Nigerian economy by generating 70% of fiscal revenues and earnings 90% of its foreign exchange (UNDP, 2003: 3), the country's record in reducing poverty is evidently held to be disappointing and striking considering the size of the oil sector. For instance, between 1970 and 1999, the Nigerian petroleum industry generated about $231 billion in rents, or $1900 for every man, woman, and child, in constant 1999 dollars (Ross, 2003:8). Oyejide and

Adewuyi (2011) argue that “a critical issue with respect to Nigeria and some other oil-rich economies is the existence of poverty in the midst of plenty” (p.1). It follows accordingly that Nigeria, whilst “richly blessed with good quality crude oil is still being described as a developing country with a high level of poverty” (Oyejide and Adewuyi, 2011 p.1). Nigeria is said to be more endowed with natural resources than many developed countries, yet there seems to be a problem of reaping the benefits of these natural endowments in terms of translating oil-led growth into development.

According to Ngwafon et al., (1997), the extremely poor became poorer, despite the fact that the standard of living improved between 1985 and 1992 in Nigeria. Though the period covered by the study (1985-92) was viewed as one of rising incomes in Nigeria, incomes generally fell between 1992 and 2000 (Ross, 2003). In a similar view, Bevan et al., (1999) conclude that per capita consumption was lower, and the incidence of poverty was “probably higher,” in 1992 than it was in 1950 (p.164). In relation to constant dollars, Nigeria’s per capita income reportedly rose about 13% between 1960 and 2000 (Ross, 2003:3). Yet all of these gains occurred between 1960 and 1970, when the oil sector was still relatively small and since 1970, Nigeria’s per capita income has fallen by about 4 percent (Ross, 2003:4).

It can also be argued that the problems created by abundant mineral wealth or resources are not peculiar to Nigeria. According to Auty (2001), mineral exporting countries tend to suffer from a cluster of economic and political ailments. Econometric studies have shown that states that depend on mineral exports are likely to have relatively slow economic growth (Sachs and Warner 1997, 2001; Manzano and Rigobon 2001), unusually high rates of corruption (Sachs and Warner 1999; Leite and Weidemann 1999; Gylfason 2001); abnormally low rates of democratization (Ross 2001); and extremely high risks of civil war (Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Fearon and Laitin 2003). Generally, it has been argued that the more a state depends on mineral exports, the more likely it is to suffer from these ailments (Auty, 2001). Nigeria is not an exception in this case. Since Nigeria is remarkably dependent on oil, it has been highly susceptible to these problems, especially because mineral dependence also tends to aggravate poverty (Ross 2003). Ross, (2003) suggested five ways that mineral wealth can hurt the poor: “by causing economic volatility; by crowding

out the manufacturing and agriculture sectors; by heightening inequality; by inducing violent conflict; and by undermining democracy" (p.4).

The high dependence on oil export clearly shows that Nigeria is a monoculture economy. The country's non-oil exports were remarkably small. The share of non-oil exports when taken against total exports was consistently less than 5% over the period of 1980-2009 (CBN, 2011:24). This has great consequences for the growth and development of the economy. Nigeria's over-dependency on oil is a major contributor to unemployment since the sector is more capital, as opposed to labor intensive. It requires a few individuals who are able to operate the sophisticated machinery used in the sector, as well as a few people in the management and distribution.

Another critical economic issue resulting from dependency on oil was the foreign exchange crisis. As a result of dwindling foreign exchange earnings on crude oil, the nation had experienced a shortfall in foreign exchange. This manifests in terms of balance of payment problems, rising external debt and a debt servicing burden, as well as the inability of the nation to import crucial capital and intermediate goods to execute development projects (CBN, 2011). Due to the nation's inability to pay for its import and dwindling foreign reserve, the country accumulated trade arrears, coupled with external borrowing that led to a mounting external debt and a servicing burden. This led the country to the twin problems of high rate of inflation and unemployment, which gave rise to stagflation in the early 1990s (CBN, 2011). In terms of the exploration of oil, foreign-owned oil companies dominate this sector due to the low level of technological development in Nigeria. Six oil companies dominate: Shell, ELF, Agip, Exon Mobile, Chevron and Texaco.

Another core sector of the Nigerian economy is building and construction. This sector involves all the economic activities undertaken by civil engineers and builders, contractors, and all those involved in repairs alterations, maintenance, expansion of buildings and other construction and engineering structures (Anyanwu, 1993). Statistics show that this sector, which is expected to be one of the touchstones of development, is mainly dominated by the activities of such Multinationals Corporations as Julius Berger, Tailor and Wood, MCC, Costain and RCC construction companies (Ekpe, 2011:184).

General commerce is another important sector of the Nigerian economy. This sector involves buying and selling, exchange markets and the distribution of goods and services. It is expected that this sector will contribute to the growth of the economy, but the expectation is far-fetched due to some structural rigidities. For instance, the twin problems of bad and unrepaired roads, as well as poor transportation systems, make movement of individuals and transportation of goods and services difficult. In addition, most traders do not have access to credit facilities due to lack of collateral security.

5.2.2 The performance of the Nigerian economy

Despite the statistics shown above, which vouched for the apparent strength of the nation's economy, indices of economic growth indicators seem to suggest the contrary. Nigeria's economy is still underdeveloped and dependent on its colonial past and other foreign powers, despite the super-abundance of natural and human resources (Ekpe, 2011; Anyanwu 2012). To this date, CBN reports that the Nigerian economy is over-dependent on imported capital and manufactured goods from the Western World (CBN, 2014:36). In view of this dependency and in an effort to move the economy to the frontiers of self-reliance, the country adopted the import substitution industrialization (ISI) in the early-1970s (Ekpe, 2011:185; see also Ollawa, 1981). ISI involves production of goods locally through the use of foreign capital and inputs. Areas of concentration were on agro-allied industries which included oil extraction, textiles, tanning, cement manufacturing among others. With the strength of the oil boom in the 1970s, this strategy was extended to heavy and light industries which included vehicle assembly plants as well as the expansion of heavy industries like steel, petrochemical projects and iron (Uwechue, 1991). This was expected to bring a rapid level of industrialization as well as helping to cut the outflow of surplus (Ollawa, 1981). In addition, this strategy was also viewed as being important for poverty alleviation, since it had the capacity of generating employment opportunities and improving the living standard of the average Nigerian (Ollawa, 1981; Ekpe, 2011). However, the cumulative effect of this strategy can be summed up thus: "In practice, import substitution industrialization did not contribute meaningfully to the economic growth. It also failed woefully with respect to poverty alleviation" (Ekpe, 2011 p.185). The

capital-intensive nature of the strategy, as well as the requirement of capital goods, foreign spare parts, technical skills for maintenance from abroad to sustain production, were adduced as reasons for its failure. It was more increasing the level of poverty (Ekpe, 2001).

Further still, the Nigerian economy between 1981 and 1991 was afflicted by external shocks as a result of collapse in world oil prices, which had a serious adverse effect on the revenue of government. Government revenue fell from $22.4 billion to $16.7 billion between 1980 and 1988, and further declined to $14.4 billion in 1991 (Ekpe, 2011:186). As a result of this, the Nigerian government decided to source funds externally and internally in order to sustain the economy. According to CBN (1999), this led to the beginning of the foreign debt profile for Nigeria, which then had serious financial implications for its economy.

The dwindling economic situation is further exacerbated by unrivalled devaluation of the local currency (Naira) within the last few decades, such that from N0.89 per $1.00 in 1982, the exchange rate went up to N105.00 and N152.00 per $1.00 in the first quarter of 1999 and 2010 respectively (CBN, 1999; 2011). Since the inception of the new government under president Buhari, the exchange rate has gone up to N350 per $1.00. This drastic devaluation has had deleterious effect in the country's debt servicing obligation, as it brought about an increase in the bills of servicing foreign denominated debts. It also has had a negative effect on the current account balance of payments. Akinbobola and Saibu (2004) note that: "Nigeria spends one third of its budget on external debt service, three times what it spends on education, nine times what is spends on healthcare and 7.8 percent of its export earnings on servicing outstanding debts" (p.177). This generally has had a serious effect on poverty in Nigeria.

Against this backdrop of poor economic situation, the Babangida's administration in 1986 adopted the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) to revive the crisis affecting the economy. The report of CBN (1999) notes that, instead of bringing succor, the deregulation and liberalization of the economy complicated and worsened the development crisis of the country. Furthermore, the Obasanjo regime, in line with rescuing the economy, introduced a new

economic reform program known as the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) in 2004, to be discussed in the next section on Government organisation anti-poverty programs. But suffice to say that the policy of NEEDS features many of the components of SAP, namely deregulation and privatization (Ekpo, 2004). However, this strategy is still implemented by the current administration. Like SAP, the much positive outcomes expected of NEEDS are yet to be realized due to maladministration and corruption (Ekpe, 2011).

5.2.3 Nigeria poverty profile

The increase in the rate of poverty is still pervasive in Nigeria. Statistics available show that since the 1980s, poverty level has been on the increase in Nigeria. For example, UNDP (2010:63) reports that between 1980 and 1996, the percentage of those who were poor according to a head count ratio rose from 6.2% to 29.3% and slightly declined in 2004 to 22%. According to CBN (2014:26), about 70% of the population of Nigeria lives in poverty.

The ratings of other development indicators in Nigeria, when compared to the global standard are worrisome, which seem to confirm the severity of poverty in Nigeria. In Nigeria, life expectancy is ranked 155th out of the world's 177 countries; infant mortality is ranked at 144th out of 173 countries, and this is consistent with the low income per capita rating of the country (Oshewolo, 2010:267; UNDP, 2013:143). Moreover, it is estimated that 70.2 percent of the Nigerian population survive on less than $1 a day; statistics also show that 55.7 percent of the total income is earned by the richest 20 percent of the population, while the total income earned by the poorest 20 percent is a paltry 4.4 percent, indicating apparent disparity and inequality between the rich and the poor in the country (Oshewolo, 2010:267).

Further, between 2000 and 2007, 27.2 percent of the children who are under the age of 5 were malnourished, compared to the 3.7 percent of the same category of children in Brazil within the same time period (Oshewolo, 2010:264). In 2006, the mortality rate of children under five years old in Nigeria stood at a staggering number of 191 per 1,000 births (Oshewolo, 2010:264). In comparing Nigerian mortality with other African countries, the World Bank notes: "This situation [Nigerian mortality rate of children under five years old] is ridiculous

compared to the figures of 69 per 1,000 births in South Africa, 108 per 1,000 births in Togo, 120 per 1,000 births in Ghana, and 149 per 1,000 births in Cameroun" (World Bank, 2013: p.12).

Poverty is not restricted to a homogenous unit or group in Nigeria (Obi, 2007). Evidence from World Bank poverty assessment on Nigeria, using 2010/2011 household survey data indicates that, the nature of those classed as poor can be identified on the bases of the following characteristics: sector, age, employment status of the household, education and gender (NBS, 2012:15). Poverty in Nigeria varies according to different regions. Based on the above survey, statistics from the Nigeria Poverty profile of NBS (2012:16) show that the poverty rate was higher in the NE and NW zones, with a record high of 71.4% and 73% of the population respectively, relative to the SW and SE zones at 30.9% and 44.0% of the population respectively (see also Federal Office of Statistics, (FOS), 2010).

Balogun et al. (2011:48) note that, with an estimated population of 190 Million in the next couple of years, about 85% of Nigerians will live below poverty line of $2 per day. 63% of these (about 48 million) will live in the rural areas, while the remaining reside in urban areas. This brings to light the urban-rural dimension of poverty in Nigeria. The rate of poverty is higher in the rural areas compared to the urban areas. For example, Oshewolo, (2010:266) notes that 67% and 31% of the urban and rural population respectively had access to water in 2004, while 53% and 36% of the urban and rural population respectively had access to sanitation services. This situation seems to be worse when compared to the situation in South Africa, Zambia, Cameroon and Zimbabwe (World Bank, 2008). The figures above describe why the rural dwellers in Nigeria are grappling with difficult living conditions as well as the challenges of diseases, compared with those living in the urban areas.

Studies and reports have shown that Nigeria is faced with high rates of unemployment, increasingly poor standard of living, low per capital income, low life expectancy, inflation and corruption (CBN, 2014; NBS, 2012; Bawa and Mohammed, 2007). For example, CBN, (2014:26) when considering this ugly situation of poverty amidst vast oil wealth and other natural resources, asserts that "Nigeria with all its oil wealth has performed poorly, with GDP per capital

income today not higher than at independence in 1960" (p. 27). This means that the average Nigerian was better off before independence in 1960. The Nigerian government needs to diversify its source of revenue to all sectors of the economy as this will bring more development, reduce unemployment and create better means of poverty alleviation.

Next, this study reviews the activities of the governmental and non-governmental APOs in Nigeria. The findings from the fieldwork investigating their understanding of poverty are also good grounds for understanding the relationship between the conceptions of poverty and different anti-poverty measures (APMs) employed.

5.3 Anti-poverty organisations in Nigeria

The APOs reviewed here are: the governmental, religious, and private (NGOs) APOs. There are different strategies and measures used by these organisations to fight poverty in Nigeria, but these measures might, to some extent, be dependent on the ways poverty is conceptualized by different organisations. Each actor from the various APOs has its own strategies, depending on how their perceptions and conceptions of poverty are rooted. This varied and peculiar strategy further show that the idea of conceptualizing poverty and implementing these APMs may not go down well among these various APOs. This is because there are likely to be different approaches, thereby creating tensions, conflicts and challenges, as noted in the discussion on pluralism in the previous chapter.

A review of these organisations and their activities follows in the sub-sections below.

5.3.1 Government organisations

The World Bank (2010) highlights that the fight against poverty is a challenge that ought to be central to the plans of every government. Governments of any country can do this depending on how they understand and conceptualise poverty. What is obtainable in the Western world may or may not work effectively in developing countries, as there are cultural, political or social differences (World Bank, 2010). With regard to Nigeria, Obi (2007) and

Anyanwu (2013) argue that, the collapse of the oil boom[6] in the 1980s, and the subsequent economic mismanagement of the nation's economy, necessitated the introduction of poverty alleviation programmes through the establishment of APOs by the government.

In the 1980s, all socio-economic indicators showed signs of distress. The private sectors were declining, all economic activities (including the non-oil sectors) were collapsing, the purchasing power of people and the rate of unemployment were showing negative signs, amongst other indicators. In all, macro-economic imbalance, both at the domestic and external level, was on the increase, pointing to the fact that the economy needed some form of adjustments. Poverty and inequality were increasing substantially (Nwagbara, 2011:32; Omotayo et al., 2014:159).

The Federal Government of Nigeria, through their different APOs, adopted various strategies in the fight against poverty. These were: economic growth, basic needs, rural development, targeting and employment-oriented strategies and approaches (Aigbokhan, 2008:17). The economic growth approach may be traced back to the pre independence era, which had its main focus on GDP growth and investments in human capital, and which is considered central to any poverty reduction policy (Aigbokhan, 2008).

On the other hand, the basic needs approach had the targets of satisfying the essential needs required for the minimum living standard. This approach is generally concerned with the way the poor earn their income, the way services are provided for the poor and for the households, and finally, the way the poor are allowed to participate in getting their needs met (Aigbokhan, 2008:17). The rural development approach has its focus on poor people living in the rural areas, and the need to focus development on rural sector infrastructure, employment, provision of social services for sustainable livelihoods (Aigbokhan, 2008:17; see also Aliu, 2001). The targeting approach directs its efforts at groups within the country, by providing credit facilities as well as health services to those with incomes that are inadequate to meet their basic needs and those

[6] The Nigerian economy in the 1970s experienced a golden decade in terms of the boom in its oil. During this decade, Nigeria became the wealthiest country in Africa. Production of barrels of oil per day as well as government revenues saw an increase of 100%. This led to Nigeria joining OPEC in 1971. However, this economic prosperity of the oil boom was short lived (Aminu, 2008).

that are vulnerable to external shocks. Included here are also rights, empowerment and freedoms that are necessary for human dignity and security (Aigbokhan, 2008:17; see also Obadan, 2003).

Poverty alleviation according to Aigbokhan (2008) “has been an integral component of the country’s development plans” (p.18). In view of this, the following specialized agencies were inaugurated between 1970 and 2006 to foresee the promotion of the country’s poverty reduction. They are: Agricultural Development Programs (ADP), Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Development Bank (NACRDB), National Agricultural Insurance scheme (NAIS), National Primary Health Care Agency (NPHCA), Urban Mass Transit (UMT), National Agricultural Land Development Agency (NALDA) and National Economic Recovery Fund (NERF) (Aigbokhan, 2008:17). Oyeranti and Olayiwola (2005:6-7) classify the above programs into three categories: income generation programs, income-wealth redistribution programs, and finally, access to empowerment through resources and facilities. This will be explained more, as we discuss the past and present strategies of the Nigerian government as vehicles of poverty alleviation.

5.3.1.1 Past strategies of government as anti-poverty organisation (1945-1998)

The pre and post-independence periods were devoted to the reduction of poverty in the rural areas in Nigeria. According to Oyeranti and Olayiwola (2005:17), between 1946 and 1956, the British colonial masters drew a ten year plan for the welfare and development of Nigeria. The main objective was to improve crop production in the rural areas, and roads and communications in the urban areas. Attention paid to the rural areas was centred mainly on tree crop plantation through farm settlement and small farmer credit schemes. The independence of 1960 gave the nation an opportunity to embark on wider national development plans from 1962 to 1968. This was seen as the first national development plan for the eradication of poverty, both in the rural and urban areas. It aimed at the creation of employment opportunities among the people (Oyeranti and Olayiwola, 2005:17).

The second development plan came about between 1970 and 1974. During this period, effort was centred on the establishment of livestock, forestry, fisheries and national credit institutions. This period saw the APOs from the Federal and state governments working together to progress these projects (Oyeranti and Olayiwola, 2005; Anyanwu, 2013). Although the third national development plans between 1975 and 1980 focused on poverty reduction through income increments for the average citizen, they were implemented by the military dictatorship, and as such, remained more or less, a political slogan that achieved few positive effects (Aliu, 2001; Ijaiya, 2011; Anyanwu, 2013).

The activities in the pre- SAP era in the early 1980s, which were essentially ad-hoc, included the provision of basic facilities and amenities, which incorporated both social and economic infrastructures. It was meant to generate employment, increase productivity, enhance income earning capability, and ensure equal distribution of income (Oshewolo, 2010:268). The central ideology, underpinning the Nigerian Government policy on poverty alleviation during the pre-SAP, was the attainment of sustainable livelihoods by those categorised as poor (Aliu, 2001). For example, this approach was geared towards economic empowerment of communities, families and individuals through a comprehensive, well-organized and sustainable programme of poverty reduction (Aliu, 2001:23).

The government efforts during this period (1980-1985) could be categorized into the following groups: the Agricultural sector programme; health sector programmes; nutrition-related programme; education sector programme; transport sector programme; housing sector programmes; financial sector programmes; manufacturing sector programmes and cross-cutting programmes (Oshewolo, 2010:268). The government did not relent on its resolve to address the increasing incidence of poverty, as can be gleaned from the National Rolling Plan of 1980-1984. This plan involved such programmes as: economic programmes for women empowerment; the Primary Health Care programme intended to avail preventive healthcare, particularly for the grass roots of the Nigerian Society; ADP in all the States of the Federation; establishment of the People's Bank (PB) with the singular aim of providing small amounts of credit to the labour force in the informal sector of the economy; establishment of NERF,

with the aim of making credit easily accessible to small and medium scale enterprises; establishment of National Directorate of Employment (NDE), a self-employment promotion campaign; education of itinerant and overtly indigent communities like the Fulani nomads, Ijaws and some communities in the Niger-Delta[7] (ND); establishment of the River Basin Development Authority (RBDA), charged with the responsibility of providing rural access to good road networks (Alaye-Ogan, 2008:68). Iroegbu (2009:25) argues that these pre-SAP programs yielded less fruit than expected. For example, he claims that in Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and Green Revolution (GR) the poor were wrongly targeted, hence, these became avenues through which the influential people acting as the organizers and supervisors enriched themselves and acquired more grants and loans for their own businesses.

As the economy continues to deteriorate, the administration of president Babanginda on July 1986 introduced SAP. The Nigerian SAP was introduced in line with the IMF-World Bank structural adjustment packages. Anyanwu (1992) notes that, "SAP was meant to effectively alter and restructure the consumption and production patterns of the Nigerian economy, and to eliminate price distortions and heavy dependence on the export of crude oil and imports of consumer and producer goods. It is a program which combines a nexus of measures to promote economic efficiency and long-term growth, with stabilization policies designed to restore balance of payments equilibrium and price stability" (p.6). The general motive for adopting SAP was to revamp the country's economy. According to Anyanwu (1992:6), the SAP specific objectives were:

- Restructuring and diversifying the productive base of the economy towards reducing dependency on oil and imports.
- Achieving fiscal and Balance of Payment over the period.
- Laying a foundation for sustainable non-inflationary growth.
- Reducing dominance of unproductive investment in the public sector.

[7] Niger Delta is the collective name given to the South-South Nigeria where the bulk of oil production is located. The problem in these areas is the militancy of a group of the Niger Delta people protesting against the exploitation, neglect and oppression from the hands of the federal government despite the fact that the majority of the oil production and the national revenues are from their areas. Most of the multi-national oil companies are located in these areas, such as Shell, Mobil, chevron, etc (ICG, 2007).

During the SAP era (1986-2002), the government made attempts to fight poverty through the introduction of anti-poverty programs. Ilori (1999:142) categorizes these programmes into three broad divisions: the developmental plans and programmes, which involved the rural electrification and banking schemes; the social dimension of development that encompasses the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), NDE, Better Life Programme (BLP) and Family Support Programme (FSP); and the poverty programmes related to public and private sectors, which include the NALDA, Family Economic Advancement Programmes (FEAP) and other credit schemes like Community Banks (CB) and PB (see also Omotola, 2008:498).

The main objectives of these programmes were to speed up the rate of economic growth and development, by increasing the level of GDP growth, enhancing the capacity of the manufacturing sector and the promotion of employment opportunities (Ajakaiye and Adeyeye, 2001b). It also emphasized the need to resuscitate the ailing agricultural sector, which hitherto was the pillar of the Nigerian economy (Akinbobola and Saibu, 2004; Obayelu and Ogunlade, 2006; Obi, 2007; Anyanwu, 2013). Thus, it advocated the provision of machinery/equipment to enhance agricultural productivity. However, these measures were judged as being ineffective as poverty continued to increase in the country (Obi, 2007). Obadan (2001:172) attributed this ineffectiveness and failure to inappropriate targeting mechanisms for the poor, as well as policy and political instability, lack of appropriate coordination and supervision of the programmes, and governance problems and lack of accountability.

5.3.1.2 Present strategies of government as anti-poverty organisation (1999-2015)

From the early part of the new millennium, the concern for poverty reduction was not just limited to Nigeria alone but became a global concern. This gave rise to the formation of “New Partnership for Africa’s Development” (NEPAD). The ideology underlying this initiative was to fashion a comprehensive and integrated strategic framework for the socio-economic development of Africa (Alaye-Ogan, 2008). This initiative was structured to provide a sustainable framework for public-private partnership between Africans in particular, and the rest of the world in general (Alaye-Ogan, 2008). Ogujiuba (2014:208) notes that,

the primary objective of NEPAD was to achieve the MDGs of poverty reduction in Africa by 50% by the year 2015, and also to place the global African economies on the path of sustainable growth and development. In Nigeria, the objective of NEPAD is to devise new partnerships between the organized private sector and the government, on the grounds that this union will help the eradication of poverty (ibid).

With the inception of democratic government in 1999, efforts were made by the administration of President Obasanjo through government APOs to correct the experiences of the past with regard to policies and programmes used in the fight against poverty. In 1999, President Obasanjo introduced the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) as an interim APM. According to Obadan (2001:176) the objectives of PAP were to create a credit delivery system that could help farmers gain access to credit facilities, create jobs for almost 200,000 people, increase adult literacy, raise the rural water supply, improve the health care system, increase rural electrification, develop small-scale industries and increase immunization of children, amongst other outcomes. Despite these measures and objectives, the incidence of poverty kept increasing in the country. For example, there was a significant rise in the case of polio in 2000 as a result of lack of immunization, as persons in charge of the programme diverted the money for their own personal use and were not prosecuted (Obadan, 2001:177).

Oyeranti and Olayiwola, (2005:28) note that between 1999 and 2000, there were also two commissions that were set up by the government: the Ahmed Joda Panel and the Ango Abdullahi Committee. These commissions were charged with the responsibility of looking at the existing poverty reduction policies and suggesting ways of streamlining and rationalizing them. The reports of these commissions led to the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC) in 2001. NAPEP was introduced to address the issues of the country's escalating unemployment and the crime rates prevalent amongst youths. Its objectives were: to reduce unemployment problems and create avenues of increasing productivity in the economy. In fact the target of NAPEP was to wipe out poverty completely from Nigeria by the year 2010, which at the time seemed ambitious.

The program according to Oyeranti and Olayiwola, (2005:29) was structured to incorporate four other sectoral schemes: the Youths Empowerment Scheme (YES), the Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme (RIDS), the Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS), the Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS), amongst others (see also Omotola, 2008). Although NAPEP appeared to be well planned and positioned, the various dimensions that poverty has taken on in Nigeria since its inception have shown the activities of NAPEP to be unsuccessful (Omotola, 2008). One might argue here that part of the reasons for the failure of NAPEP is connected to the selfishness of the government officials/ruling classes, who misappropriated the funds mapped out for the NAPEP projects and programmes. In this way, these government officials/ruling classes meant to fight poverty ended up becoming poverty producers and thus multiplying the plight of the poor in Nigeria.

The World Bank assisted Nigeria in 2001/2002 to formulate poverty programmes and policies, by adopting an interim poverty reduction strategy paper, aimed at building on the gains of the initial efforts of poverty programmes (NBS, 2005). This strategy later culminated into the NEEDS, that was launched in mid 2004 (NBS, 2005). NEEDS was initiated as a medium term strategy (2003-2007), and was derived from the long-term poverty reduction goals of the country, that include wealth creation, value-reorientation and employment creation (NBS, 2005). NEEDS is a framework that has close collaboration with the States and Local Government Areas in Nigeria. Hence, there are State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Government Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS) respectively.

NEEDS was charged with the responsibility of overseeing the social, economic and political challenges hindering the growth and development of the Nigerian economy. The strategy, albeit supervised by the National Planning Commission (NPC) of Nigeria, has the added duties of combating poverty, corruption and ensuring transparency and accountability in government (NBS, 2005). Alaye-Ogan (2008:72) notes that the prominence and publicity given to this strategy elicited its endorsement by various state and FCT actors in APOs. This led to the introduction of SEEDS and FCT Economic Empowerment and Development

Strategies (FEEDS). Abuja, the capital territory, laid down its FEEDS priorities as the promotion of small and medium-scale industries, agriculture, rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructures, reforms and transparency in the public finance sector. This project, both at the state and national level, was heavily funded by the NPC and other donor agencies (Alaye-Ogan, 2008:73). The impacts of NEEDS and its subsidiaries are yet to be felt by the Nigerian citizens as poverty continues to soar high in the country.

Part of the reasons for this ineffectiveness in using these programmes to fight poverty in Nigeria might lie heavily upon the government. The government through their programmes seem to be just managing the poor and not really resolving the poverty issue. The resources no doubt are there, but the ruling classes are misappropriating them (see for example Ijewereme, 2015). This is greed rooted in capitalism, though argued comprehensively as an economic system benefiting more people and bringing about rapid development. This is because a few individuals benefit from the available wealth and resources of the nation, while the income of the majority class remains stagnant or even collapse. In such situations, the ruling classes/government officials keep on amassing wealth at the expense of the degradation of the working class wealth. In this way, these capitalists, in the form of ruling classes/government officials keep on producing poverty instead of fighting it.

The administration of President Yar Adua began in 2007, and was faced with the enormous problems of poverty and inequality. It immediately launched a seven-point economic agenda to pull Nigeria out of its economic predicaments, and reduce poverty and inequality using the nation's resources judiciously. The seven-point economic agenda as summarized by CBN (2009:34) includes:

- Power and energy agenda, which entails developing an adequate and sufficient power supply by the year 2020.
- Food Security and Agriculture, through the introduction of modern technology and modern agricultural production that will end up increasing outputs from the farmers.
- Wealth Creation and Employment, through solid minerals, and diversified agricultural production.

- Mass Transportation, geared towards the rehabilitation and modernization of roads and railways.
- Land Reforms that focus on making land available for commercial farmers and other large business operators.
- Security that ensures adequate attention given to the Niger Delta (ND) problem, which remained a force against the growth of the Nigerian economy. A good security system ensures a viable economy.
- Standard educational sector in Nigeria, which embraces global best practices and focuses on the provision of qualitative education for all.

CBN (2009:35) notes that these economic agenda are still to be met. The report notes that agriculture has not yet been revitalized. Unemployment is still soaring, especially among the youth, which has led some of them into armed robbery, kidnapping, militancy, and other crimes. Nigeria cannot boast of a strong transport system, and roads are death traps for so many unfortunate Nigerians. The report concludes that insecurity of life and property results in the migration of many Nigerians to other countries where they can feel secured. High quality and functional education is also yet to be realized in the country.

Assessing these APMs, Anyanwu (2013:12) notes that these have yielded little fruit since independence. He adduced the reasons to lack of adequate guidelines for poverty reduction, absence of clearly defined policy frameworks, poor governance, political instability, and lack of continuity, violence and militancy, corruption and massive looting. The UNDP (2010) is implicated in this conclusion as the reports summarized the poverty situation in Nigeria as being rooted in poor governance and corruption.

5.3.1.3 Timeline for major government poverty alleviation efforts.

Table 1: Summary table of Presidential poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria

PROGRAMME	YEAR ESTABLISHED	HEAD OF GOVERNMENT	TARGET GROUP	NATURE OF INTERVENTION	DURATION OF INTERVENTION
National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP)	1972	Yakubu Gowon	Peasant Farmers	To educate farmers	Ended in 1975 with the end of Gowon administration
Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB)	1972	Yakubu Gowon	Peasant Farmers	Agricultural Financing	Has currently metamorphosed into the Bank of Industry and Agric Bank
Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)	1976	Gen Olusegun Obasanjo	Rural dwellers	Food production	Ended with the Obasanjo Military regime in 1979.
Green Revolution (GR)	1980	Alhaji Shehu Shagari.	Entire Nation	Boost food production and increase agro-base resources	Ended in 1983 with the Shagari administration
Go Back to Land (GBL)	1983	Muhamadu Buhari and Brigadier Babatunde Idiagbor	The entire society/ nation	Increasing agricultural awareness to all.	Very short lived programme that ended with the Buhari military regime
The Agricultural Development Project (ADP)	1983	Muhamadu Buhari and Brigadier Babatunde Idiagbor	The Rural Dwellers	Raise productivity, increase farm output, income and standard of living of the rural settlers	Now managed under UN agricultural interventions and the Agricultural Bank projects
River-Basin Development Authority (RBDA)	1983-84, 1986.	Gen Ibrahim Babangida	The entire Nation	Self-sufficient in food production, uplift socio- economic standard of rural dwellers.	Ended with the regime of Babangida.
National Land Development Authority(NALDA)	1986	Gen Ibrahim Babangida	The entire Nation	Prospering land usage and boosting agricultural production.	Currently managed by the ministry of land and survey

Strategic Grain Reserve Programme(SGRP)	1986	Gen Ibrahim Babangida	The whole nation	Adequate storage of grains crops.	Ended in 1993
Rural Electrification Scheme.	1986	Gen Ibrahim Babangida	Rural dwellers	Major infrastructural incentives to rural farmers, curbing rural-urban migration	Ended with the Babangida regime in 1993
Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure(DFRRI)	1986	Gen Ibrahim Babangida	Rural dwellers	Federal road rehabilitation, rural water supply and rural electrification	Ended with the Babangida regime in 1993
National Directorate Of Employment(NDE)	1986	Gen Ibrahim Babangida	Unemployed youth	Training, financing and guidance	Still existing under the ministry of labour and employment
National Directorate for Social Mobilization(NDSM)	1987	Gen Ibrahim Babangida	The entire nation	Call for responsibility, social right and duty and rural development	Not in existence any more, lasted while the Babangida regime was in power.
The Better Life Programme (BLP)	1987	Gen Ibrahim Babangida	Rural women	Self-help and rural development programme, skill acquisition and health care	Same with the above
People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN)	1989	Gen Ibrahim Babangida	Underprivileged in the rural areas	Securing loans and credit facilities	Has been scrapped.
Community Banks (CB)	1990	Gen Ibrahim Babangida	Rural residents and micro enterprises in the urban areas	Securing loans and credit facilities.	Now existing as private banks with no government interference except for the general banking rules
Family Support Programme (FSP)	1998	Gen Sani Abacha	Rural families	Health care and child welfare development	Ended with the Abacha regime in1998
Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP)	1998	Gen Sani Abacha	Rural dwellers	Credit facilities to support the establishment of cottage industries	Same fate with the above

National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)	2001	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	The entire nation	Youth empowerment, job creation and capacity building	The programme and the evidences of its empowerment projects still exist.
National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)	2004	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	The entire society	To provide easy access to health services	Still fully operational and constantly being improved on
National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)	2004	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	The poor in the society	Government reformation, growing private sector, access to health, education, welfare, employment, security and participatory governance.	The programme and the evidences of its empowerment projects still exist.
War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC)	1999	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	Public and private office holders	Battling money laundering, recovering looted and misappropriated national fund and punishing the perpetrators of such act.	WAIC was brief and ended with Obasanjo administration with little or no impact.
Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P)	2012	Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan	The entire society	Creation of jobs, improve investment in the downstream sector, provision of critical infrastructure and accelerating economic transformation	SURE-P is still existing
The Change Agenda	2015	President Muhammadu Buhari	The entire society	Fighting corruption, improving public accountability, reducing cost of governance, economic diversification, and agricultural development, sanitizing the oil sector and ending insurgencies.	From 2015 till date

Source: NBS 2014

Table 2: Summary table of presidential first ladies' pet projects

FIRST LADIES	PERIOD	PET PROJECTS	DURATION OF INTERVENTION
Late Maryam Babangida	1987 - 1993	Better Life for Rural Women Programme	1987 – 1993
Miriam Abacha	1993 - 1998	Family Support Programme	1993 – 1998
Fatima Abdusalami Abubarka	1998	Women Right Advancement and Protection Alternative	1998 – 1999
Late Stella Obasanjo	1999 - 2005	Child care Trust Fund	1999 – 2005
Turai Yar' Adua	2007 - 2010	Women and Youth Empowerment/International Cancer Centre	2007 - 2010. The cancer centres are still on-going and is being improved under the ministry of health
Patience Jonathan	2010 - 2014	Women for Change Initiative	2010 – 2014
Aisha Muhammadu Buhari	2015 till date	Social Intervention Initiative	2015 till date

Source: NBS 2014

With all these efforts made towards making poverty a historical phenomenon in Nigeria, CBN (2014: 26) still shows that about 70% of the population of Nigeria lives in poverty. What went wrong with all the poverty reduction strategies adopted in the country over the years since independence? According to some reports, the poverty alleviation programmes failed due to reasons ranging from exclusion, lack of proper participation of the poor themselves in these projects, lack of political will, corruption and bureaucratic bottlenecks, to selfishness, amongst others. Other reasons given were a lack of properly defined policy framework with guidelines for poverty alleviation, political instability, interference and lack of continuity (see CBN, 2009, 2014; Ekpe, 2011). A major reason for the failure of poverty alleviation programmes, according to Ekpe (2011:187) is the politics of personal rule, the politics of those who are at a considerable distance from the ordinary people, the politics of no accountability, transparency and responsibility as well as conspiracy, clientilism and corruption (see also Uchendu, 2012:43). In this type of government, the poor, who should be the beneficiaries, are neglected at the expense of those with the responsibilities for implementing these policies and projects (Uchendu, 2012).

In the next sub-section, this study takes a look at non-governmental APOs and their activities.

5.3.2 Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and their activities

Non-governmental organisations are non-profit-making and self-governing organisations often led by volunteers (Odia and Omofonmwan, 2009). However, there are also professional NGOs with employees. NGOs are groups that are outside the circle of government in terms of formation and establishment, funding, management of objectives, and goals. These goals are geared towards the political, socio-economic and cultural transformation of all the facets of the community (Odia and Omofonmwan, 2009). NGOs are believed to offer services that are capable of uplifting people and ensuring their well-being. In terms of origin, Ehigiamusoe (1998:9) documents that NGOs evolved as a result of people's experiences, ideas, interests and the zeal and desire to attend and remedy the anomalies in the society, as it concerns people's well-being, poverty eradication and development. In other words, NGOs are established to ensure the expansion of both the neoliberal economic order as well as the liberal democratic approach to governance (Kamat, 2004; Mercer, 2002).

The problem of poverty is multi-dimensional, and as such, it is argued, needs a multi-dimensional approach to fighting it (Sen, 2009; UN, 2010). Fighting poverty from the above perspective thus becomes not the sole responsibility of government but rather the combined efforts of the government, NGOs and other civil societies. In this way, the myriad problems of poverty encountered through lack of education, poor health facilities and accessibility, lack of employment, lack of decent housing, are attended to (Oshewolo, 2010:264). NGOs can be grouped according to sector, such as community development, agriculture, micro-credit/finance, health and population, gender, youth organisations, education and social development (Oshewolo, 2011:8). These are further classified into service-oriented and professional NGOs. The former are those which provide various types of services to different people and organisations, while the latter are in the professional lines such as health, education and environment (Oshewolo, 2011:8).

Suharko (2007) argues that, if the goals of the MDGs (and now SDGs) are to be achieved, it is assumed that NGOs have and ought to play important roles in the reduction of poverty, especially in developing countries. NGOs' roles in the reduction of poverty are not new issues. Since the end of WWII, the mainstream

involvement of NGOs is in the area of poverty reduction, particularly in emergency relief and in long-term development works (Suharko, 2007). This is based on the argument that, when compared to government, NGOs have comparative advantages (Suharko, 2007). This argument, proposed by Van Der Heijden (1995), implies that the comparative advantages of NGOs stem from their ability to deliver services at low cost as well as their familiarity with the target groups at the grassroots level.

NGOs contribute to the economic and human development of several nations. Citing examples from Indonesia and India, Suharko (2007:5-8) explains that, since after the independence of the two countries, NGOs here have contributed immensely towards lifting people out of poverty and improving the welfare of the poor. To lift people out of poverty is what Sachs (2005) describes as getting the "first foothold on the ladder of development" (p.19). To help people climb out of poverty, NGOs use two approaches: the supply and demand sides (Clark, 1995). This is also echoed in the work of Fowler (1997), where he identifies two tasks used by NGOs, the micro and macro tasks, which correspond to the supply and demand sides respectively (see also Suharko, 2007:2-3). Through the supply-side or the micro-task approach, NGOs provide several services to people including provision of goods, financial and social services, process facilitations, capacity building and encouragement of linkages (Clark, 1995; Fowler, 1997). On the other hand, through the demand-side or the macro-task approach, NGOs provide advocacy for people (Fowler, 1997; Clark, 1995). This is done through policy advocacy, information gathering and analysis, public education, the generation of ideas, lobbying, mobilization, facilitation, reconciliation and mediation (Clark, 1995; Fowler, 1997; Hulme, 2001). NGOs have tended to combine the two approaches, as this is believed to increase their efficacy in poverty eradication (Fowler, 1997). Equally, successful stories about the positive impact of NGOs can be found in countries like South-Africa and Kenya, where the success of the agricultural sector has been attributed to the good initiatives of the local farmers' organisations (Holmquist, 1988). In Tanzania, the Civil Society organisation, through their advocacy, intervened and stopped the paying of school fees by the primary school pupils (Ohiorhenuan, 2003:9).

In Nigeria, the rise of NGOs began mainly in the late 1980s during the era of the military governments. There were as at 2014, about 4560 NGOs, and out of these, 3421 are registered. Those not registered are indeed believed to be fraudulent, though some registered ones might also be illegitimate and fraudulent (see Smith, 2012). However, those that focus on issues relating to development seem to dominate (Agba et al., 2014:5). These NGOs are scattered all over the nation, and are engaged with various development projects and programmes. These are geared towards political, cultural and socio-economic good of the people. This is done through the provision of services and through advocacy (Clark, 1995; Fowler, 1997; Hulme, 2001; Omotola, 2008). Those aspects of community development include various aspects of community mobilization, the creation of health and sanitation awareness, education, gender equality awareness and promotion of child's right act, capacity building and economic empowerment, amongst others (Odia and Omofonmwan, 2009; Adejo, 2006).

According to Agba et al., (2014:5-6), NGOs in Nigeria usually use the tools of mass sensitization, social rehabilitation and empowerment in carrying out the fight against poverty. Through sensitization, NGOs try to let people know the intricacies of the threat of poverty. NGOs believe in the importance of creating awareness of efforts towards poverty alleviation and the means with which the individuals or the poor themselves can contribute to these. Through social rehabilitation, NGOs engaged in fighting poverty usually embark on such things as skill acquisitions, basic human capacity building and human right protection. NGOs try to empower people to help themselves out of poverty. For example, Abur et al. (2013) explain that most of these NGOs, especially the micro-credit/finance NGOs, have assisted people not only to obtain loans with little or no interest, but also educating them on how to make use of the loans in income-generating activities. NGOs equally make efforts to defend the right of individuals and are judged as the best in that regard. In doing these, NGOs contribute to job creation and curbing of unemployment (Agba et al., 2014:6). Furthermore, NGOs specialize in offering professional assistance to most efforts aimed at alleviating poverty. They are mostly people in specialized areas and offer support programmes to both the government and the church in the fight against poverty. This professional assistance can be in the form of

personnel or training of officers and even directly helping them in the field as implementing partners (Suharko, 2007:8; Agba et al., 2014:8).

Nevertheless, the strategies employed by NGOs are also not without some flaws. Despite this progress, some commentators believe that the performance of NGOs in poverty reduction is still a difficult task, limited in terms of not being able to reach to the very poorest and the inability to manage resources (Edwards and Hume, 1999; Riddell and Robinson, 1995; Smith, 2012). This might be as a result of a lack of linkages and synergy with higher development agencies and the government (Edwards and Hulme, 1999). This may be the reason why several, if not all NGOs, face challenges ranging from finance to effectiveness in management (Ferguson, 2011). There has been corruption and nepotism in the activities of the NGOs due to clash of interests in their programmes and policies, thereby slowing down the pace of anti-poverty programs. Recently, studies in Nigeria have shown that some officers in NGOs have been in one time or the other accused of mismanagement and diversion of funds meant for projects towards poverty alleviation and other humanitarian activities (see for example, Agba et al., 2014:13; Smith, 2012). For instance, Smith, (2012:475), note that some NGOs created in Nigeria to address the AIDS epidemic are corrupt and fraudulent. According to him, the officers of some of these NGOs see this as a lucrative business through which they continue to enrich themselves. These officers receive huge and handsome compensation for their work at the expense of the donors' intention. In view of this, Smith, (2012) argues that this form of corruption witnessed in some of these NGOs leads to the broader context of inequality and poverty seen in Nigeria.

5.3.3 Other Non-Governmental Organisations

5.3.3.1 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Civil Societies

Community Based Organisations (CBOs) are non-profit organisations within communities defined by geographical location, shared work, space, and experience or concerns (Onyeozu, 2011:12). According to Abegunde, (2009), CBOs are set up by the collective efforts of the indigenous people working together for the improvement of the economic and social well-being of the members of the community, as well as the eradication of poverty from the

community. In this way, CBOs are said to respond to needs of the community rather than the market demand or pressure (Abegunda, 2009:236). Thus, community development and poverty reduction stand out as the essence of CBOs (Abegunde, 2009:237). CBOs are basically non-profit and non-governmental because all members contribute economically towards achieving their goals of meeting the immediate needs of the community, as well as being independent of the government in achieving these (Claudia, 2003). CBOs have been given various names such as ‘community development associations’ ‘united community and ‘neighbourhood councils’, amongst others (Agbola, 1998:26; Biddle and Biddle, 1968). There are many variations of CBOs in terms of size and structure. Some are formally incorporated with a written constitution and a board of directors, while others are much smaller and more informal (Abegunde, 2009:237).

It is interesting to note that though CBOs have been distinguished from non-governmental organisations on the basis of scale and location, both still share attributes in terms of their objectives and goals, which are improvement of the economic, cultural and social conditions of people as well as poverty eradication (Abegunde, 2009:238; see also CASSAD, 1992; Agbola, 1998:27). According to Abegunde, (2009:239), CBOs stand for simple institutions that operate in relatively small local communities and that have a local identity, while NGOs stand for a sophisticated and bigger structure which covers a wider remit and area. But the main objective for NGOs remains community development.

Abegunde (2009:240) notes that CBOs have opened ways for participation at the grassroots level, involving indigenous and local people who assist in identifying the needs of the communities as well as helping in the implementation of projects geared towards community development and poverty reduction. Through this form of participation at the grassroots level, CBOs serve as vehicles through which local programmes and projects are achieved, thereby satisfying the local and community needs. Such participation, as is found in CBOs, might be in the form of cash or kind, levied or entirely out of free choice. Agbaje (1990:6) argued that CBOs enjoy freedom of entry and exit, though Holdcraft (1982:203) had noted earlier that this freedom is generalised due to the exclusion of other local institutions organized by community leaders, landlords, trade unions and age group, amongst others. In

view of this, Ogundipe (2003) opines that what is most important is the development of the communities through mobilization. This mobilization revolves around the efforts of the community which, according to Abegunde (2004:6), are geared towards the protection of citizens, provision of information and infrastructure, as well as promotion of communities' culture.

Governments' poor performance in meeting the socio-economic needs of its citizens has been pointed out as one of the reasons necessitating the birth of CBOs in the new millennium (Abegunda, 2009:236). Accordingly, people and communities tend to seek solace in local institutions, which they believe will pressure the government to pay attention to the problems of development and poverty in their localities and communities. These local organisations help to confront local challenges through lobbying and nomination of representatives to the government offices, financing and execution of projects and the developing of human resources in their respective communities. In this way, the impacts of these local organisations have been felt in such areas as policy, economic development, environmental and physical development, health and infrastructure, amongst others (Agbola, 1998:27; Akinola, 2000:175).

Notwithstanding these benefits accruing from CBOs, Mercer, (2002:13) notes that "the late 1990s saw a proliferation of studies from across the developing world that collectively argued that civil societies are often fragmented, unorganized, uncooperative and weak". Most of these criticisms are centred on the means through which these NGOs are brought into the developmental plans of the states, such that they do not, in the long run, succeed in delivering their expected objectives in helping the marginalised in societies (Mcllwaine, 1998b; Mercer, 2003a).

In Nigeria, evidence from literature has revealed the activities of CBOs in various parts of the country (Onyeozu, 2011; Olomola, 2001; Abegunde, 2004). For example, the study carried out in Lagos state by Olomola (2001:34) showed that CBOs in this state relied solely on revenue generated internally in addition to a small amount of aid that came from the government. Equally, the study revealed that a particular CBO in Lagos, named Ajamgbadi Community Developer (ACD), won the Lagos state CBO award in 2000 due to numerous projects that the organisation embarked on, such as building of a community hall and primary school, court hall, post office, bank and opening up of several

roads for vehicular usage (Olomola, 2001:34). This infrastructure contributed to creating jobs as some people were employed in the school, bank and post offices amongst others.

In the same vein, a study that was carried out by Abegunde (2004:8) revealed the activities of about 160 CBOs in the Atiba local government area of Osun state, Nigeria, which included provision of social facilities such as hall building, clean water, building of primary schools, amongst others. Similarly, CBOs in other states of the country such as Our Community Health Initiative (OCHI), Live Above Poverty (LAPO), Alliance for Behavioural Change (ABC), Out Reach Foundation (ORF), Women in Cooperatives, Agriculture and Development (WICAD), amongst others, are said to be doing well, such that they have been involved in the building of schools and health centres, the construction of access roads within the community, the provision of potable water, human rights and health advocacy as well as seeing to the welfare of the members of the community without government aid (Abegunde, 2009:245). For instance, the study of Olomola (2001:36) revealed that the ultra-modern maternity centre built by Umuife Association, a CBO in the Udi local government area of Enugu state was built without the assistance of government. However, the story is different in Kano state where the government has assisted some CBOs through the provision of funds, enabling humanitarian services for the members of the communities, as well as in the implementation of community projects. (Onyeozu, 2011:24).

In the areas of human rights and health advocacy, Onyeozu, (2011:26) notes that the Alliance for Behavioural Change (ABC), a CBO based in Enugu state is purported to be very active. According to him, ABC is funded through charity from both national and international donors, and is in partnership with other NGOs. It strives to develop attitudes of tolerance by empowering people on equality and acceptance of differences in human relationships. It tries to inculcate the idea of gender equality, empowerment and taking responsibility for one's health, especially among the youth. ABC disseminates its information through several means. It hosts and organizes FGDs, training, workshops and seminars in cooperation with other stakeholders in Enugu state especially in the area of health, such as HIV awareness. It provides counselling, conducts free medical test for HIV, and teaches various biomedical HIV prevention strategies

to the youth as part of its social responsibility. Another aspect of the activities of ABC is human rights advocacy, gender identity and equality programmes. ABC defends the right of people to their choice of sexual orientation. This however, has come under heavy criticism from various religious organisations in Nigeria as well as the government, who has imposed a ban and minimum legal penalty of 14 years imprisonment for gays and lesbians.

Women in Cooperatives, Agriculture and Development (WICAD), is another CBO which is based in Ogbomosho, Oyo state. According to Oyebamiji and Adekola (2008:22), WICAD unites grassroots women together so as to help them develop various businesses through cooperative efforts. This is geared towards reducing poverty prevalent among women in that part of the country. The organisation consists of 18 societies with at least 30 members in each group. The mandate of the organisation is to improve the economic status of women and its mission is the eradication of poverty and empowerment of women. In pursuit of its objectives, WICAD holds monthly meetings at the societal and group level where revolving loans are granted to individual members and groups respectively to boost their economic activities. The credit scheme of the organisation is individual and group-based with a small interest rate of not more than 1% (Oyebamiji and Adekola, 2008:23).

From the above discussions, it transpires that though these 'civil society' organisations (NGOs community organisations), are non-governmental, they still engage with the government in different ways: sometimes cooperatively (with funding, etc. as in the case of CBO in Kano mentioned above), but sometimes in conflicting ways as in the case of the ABC and CBO. These potential sources of conflict among different types of organisations pose limits on how far they can go in delivering and achieving their objectives. In line with this, many CBOs have collapsed due to lack of funding and proper management. For instance, in Oyo state, the activities and operations of the CBOs garnered support from the people but were limited by inadequate government support and funding (Onyeozu, 2011:28). Similar economic and managerial problems affected CBOs in Cross River state of Nigeria, where according to the study of Abegunde (2004:11) CBOs in the state were poorly organized and managed, which led to poor performance and wastage of resources. In Rivers State, Onyeozu, (2011:29) revealed that the inefficiency of

some CBOs was seen mainly in the indisposition to attend meetings, since it is in such meetings that they usually generated funds with which they could ensure the progress of the activities of the CBOs.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, commentators note that CBOs in Nigeria have contributed in some significant ways towards the socio-economic development of their immediate communities (Onyeozu, 2011; Abegunde, 2009; Oyebamiji and Adekola, 2008). Any attempt to address the economic and social problems that affect participation would help CBOs in Nigeria to intensify their efforts towards poverty reduction and development of communities in Nigeria.

5.3.3.2 Religious organisations

This thesis' research is to a great extent limited mainly to Christian faith-based organisations, because of non-accessibility to the northern part of the country, where most Muslim organisations are located and "Boko Haram" is operating at the moment. Here, the researcher uses religion and church interchangeably. There are today a number of sources that have addressed churches as government supportive agents and actors in development policies in most developing countries. One such source is the Global Civil Society report (2005) cited in Alkire (2004), which explains: "there is no way we can understand the logic, strategies and dynamics of civil society anywhere in the Third World, unless we bring the transcendental (religion) dimension back into our analysis" (p. 45). The report cites examples of how the various Christian churches mobilized themselves and their members in support of an end to apartheid in South-Africa, and the campaign for debt forgiveness in most developing countries. In Latin America, religious organisations mobilized their citizens in a bid to support literacy, and this to some extent achieved success (Archer and Costello, 1990). Equally, in Benin, religious organisations were one of the networks that were very effective in the promotion of literacy (Kliksberg, 2003). Churches in many developing nations, such as Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, Episcopalian, and Pentecostals, have contributed to grassroots development, especially in poverty eradication. They have all at one time or another, responded to faith issues, as well as seeing themselves as carriers of service delivery, health care, education, and even of markets and non-markets goods (Achunonu, 2012:72).

Therefore, this thesis reviews the thought that churches and religious organisations are agents and actors in the fight against poverty. The universal call to Christianity according to Evangelii Nuntiandi[8] (1995:12) stipulates that the two-fold tasks of every church are the salvation of souls and the clarion call for structure reformation. This is known as faith and action. The Church does this through provision of education, empowerment, health and other economic development projects, in addition to her primary assignment of evangelization (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 1995:12). The poverty eradication responsibilities require the combined actions and efforts of various actors and agencies (IFAD, 2009). Therefore, besides the government APOs, the religious organisations (faith-based organisations, (FBOs), of different denominations both Christian and non-Christian, have APOs with measures and strategies with which they fight poverty.

Christianity, argues Ondari (2001), has all along viewed poverty not only as a socio-economic problem, but also as a divine challenge that demands responsibilities and obligations to reduce. Having been inspired by teachings based in scriptures, FBOs have constantly espoused their precepts of justice, peace, compassion toward the hungry and the poor, and have always defended this group of people with reference to exploitation and oppression (Ondari, 2001). This notwithstanding, there have been historical instances in which Christian authorities upheld the power of the wealthy and privileged, even while they were involved in charitable work (see for example, Achunonu, 2012). The church works to transform the political, social and economic affairs of humanity in line with the gospel of Christ. If these challenges are not faced, then, there is likelihood that it may mar its evangelizing mandate (Ondari, 2001). The challenge, this thesis argues, is urgent at this time, when there is a target set by the international world development community of achieving the MDGs by 2015, and by extension, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, with regard to poverty eradication. But how successfully they address poverty, depends largely on what their conceptions and causes of poverty are, and how effectively strategy choices are made.

[8] 'Evangelii Nuntiandi', an apostolic exhortation, meaning 'Evangelization in the Modern World' was issued on 8 December 1975 by Pope Paul VI.

The Christian idea of perceiving and fighting poverty, as with other religions, is ethical, and stems from thinking that God owns all the world resources, and that these resources have to be equitably shared among God's creatures in a way that benefits all (Anglin, 2004). Based on this, Christianity preaches moral duty by encouraging its members to share their possessions with the poor. Their motivation is based on God's promises that await people who are generous and are able to share with the poor what they have. For a Christian, more blessings are attached to giving than to receiving, and this has propelled most of the activities of religious organisations.

Religious organisations have engaged in several notable development programs in an effort to alleviate poverty. They are seen as transforming institutions and agents of community development (Anglin, 2004; Owens, 2004). The philanthropic attitudes of some religious organisations have been considered as a form of social capital that gives credence to the widely held view that religion has a connection with social capital (Madeleine, 2006). Most religious organisations run various programs both for their members and non-members, and thus, becoming a forum at times for informal social capital building (Madeleine, 2006:242).

The Christian's religious faith gives a moral footing that helps people, both at the individual and community levels, to have a clear orientation in their lives. Religious organisations as institutions ought to be a means through which communities are reached, especially through the use of social capital (Frankovitis, 2006; Madeleine, 2006). They have roles to play in helping community overcome the insurgence of poverty by creating initiatives and promoting networks of cooperation (Madeleine, 2006:242). They do this through establishing schools, health clinics, agricultural projects and other sources of empowerment. Tomalin (2005) also argued that religious organisations play a powerful role in the definition of gender roles. Religion as a structure has been used to socially define the roles of women in society, thereby giving women a chance to partake in decision making, both within the family and the society at large (Tomalin, 2005). This claim however would seem to be a contentious issue as Onagunisiaka, (2014) has argued that some religions, usually the more

conservative strands, uphold a gender division of labour where women are supposed to lead household work among others.

In Nigeria, religious organisations usually embark on reaching out to individuals and communities at large, through several programs, aimed at liberating individuals as well as communities from poverty. Ettim, (2013:7) notes that poverty incidence in Nigeria might be due to inappropriate social structures including policies, resource management and poor governance, amongst others. Therefore, FBOs address these issues through the provision of basic education, health, justice and peace, empowerments and cash transfers. It is also on record that they have intervened with some of the government policies that are not pro-poor (Ettim, 2013:8).

In their effort to combat poverty in Nigeria, Christian Churches have adopted what I call direct and indirect means of alleviating poverty. The Church makes use of some of her statutory bodies that are directly working on charity. These statutory bodies pilot the poverty alleviation affairs of the church. They partner with other agencies, both national and international, in the fight against poverty and promotion of development. Such bodies include the society of St Paul, Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), Caritas Foundation, Emmanuel charity, Niger Welfare Association (NWA) among others, scattered amongst the different Christian denominations in Nigeria. The Catholic Church in Nigeria for instance, has a body called “Caritas Foundation”, which coordinates Catholic Church and wider societal poverty alleviation. The body has consistently fought against female genital circumcision, provided cash transfer to rural dwellers, supporting petty traders, and given credit facilities to rural dwellers, especially farmers (Ettim, 2013). This foundation also oversees the activities of other bodies in the church, like JDPC. JDPC has an established national network in the fifty-five Catholic dioceses[9] in Nigeria. The efforts of these religious organisations are evident in several measures, strategies and programs employed to combat poverty, such as education, vocational training for the youth and unemployed, cash transfers in the rural areas, agricultural initiatives, health care delivery, gender orientation among others (Ettim,

[9] A diocese in the Catholic Church or any other Christian denomination is a district that is under the supervision of a bishop. A diocese is further divided into different parishes under the supervision of a priest representing the bishop.

2013:13). Hence, through the provision of these facilities, the Church contributes to human capital development and job creation.

Indirectly, the church through its leaders and its organisations forms a good check on government policy and has intervened on some of the government policies that are not pro-poor. The policies affecting the people are normally looked into by church especially on the basis of morality. For example, Ettim, (2013) notes that there are religious organisations from different churches in Nigeria who have intervened on issues concerning the legal systems in Nigeria, especially concerning accused persons detained in prison without a hearing. These organisations work together on how the legal system can be reformed, so that there is decongestion of the prisons as well as appropriate sentencing for offenders and so on. They do this via a prison apostolate.

There is also the interaction of these organisations with society and government with regards to policies formulated by government. The church and their organisations monitor those policies and make appropriate commentary on the society, especially from the moral point of view so that it reflects the prophetic role of the church (Achunonu, 2012). For instance, in May 2013, there was a death sentence on two individuals in Nigeria's Edo state which was as a result of their involvement in the dethronement of the then governor. The church and their organisations wrote a joint letter and unanimously condemned it. However, it did not stop at this, as the church leaders and some Christian legislators met with the national assembly leaders for a discussion on how to amend certain laws that are anti-life such as laws on death sentence and artificial reproduction (Ettim, 2013). The church believes too that the protection of human rights and justice will help to develop the capacity of the individual. Hence, efforts are made to defend human rights so as to maintain justice and peace (see also Nwauche, 2008).

However, these strategies adopted by the church are not without flaws. Firstly, the church in all its efforts seems to concentrate on curing the effects of poverty such as sharing food and money amongst the poor instead of attacking poverty and its causes such as class relations. Furthermore, most people, according to Antyo (2012:251), have contended that these facilities provided by the church are not affordable. For example, most schools built by the church in Nigeria are

very expensive as are hospital bills in some of the hospitals owned by the church, such that the poor sometimes cannot afford to access these facilities. The argument in defence of this has been the high cost of maintenance since there is no government funding for such projects. The church most often trains people on certain skill acquisitions, but gives little or no financial assistance to the trained individuals in terms of equipment with which to put their learned skills into practice. This equally stems from lack of funding from the government. This suggests an urgent need for the church to partner with the government, if such partnership will be devoid of costs and obstacles.

Although the church and its organisations criticize the policies of the government, especially when the church feels that morality is threatened, most of the time, the church ends up condemning such policies without actions. For example, the church would not support or engage in any form of demonstration to protest against an abuse or bad policy. However, the church has recently been involved in some peaceful demonstration as was witnessed in June 2015, when some Nigerian states government refused to pay its workers for a period of almost 8 months (Fides News, June 2015:9).

Schneible (2014) notes that the church has also been accused of being selective in standing up for the rights of individuals, forming a formidable critic to the government. In such situations, when individuals' rights are abused, the church will first consider which rights are abused and the morality of the rights. For instance, the church does not focus on issues that have to do with sexual orientation and abuse, due to its moral stand on such issues. This thesis will further investigate how these APOs conceptualize poverty, and how their fight against poverty is influenced by their conceptions in the empirical chapters.

5.4 Comparison of the strategies of major actors in Nigeria since independence (1960 till date).

The similarities and differences in the systems and nature of intervention of the major actors within poverty alleviation are outlined in table 3 below. I use the various sectors of intervention to compare the nature and areas of interests of the major three actors under consideration namely, the government, the church and other NGOs.

Table 3: Comparison of the strategies of major actors in Nigeria since independence (1960 till date)

Areas of intervention	Nature of intervention			Duration and current nature of intervention
	Government	Church	NGO	
Health	Provision of facilities	Management and provision of facilities	Sensitization, training	Still on-going but with much improvement in terms of quantity and personnel
Agriculture	Credit loans, mechanized farming	Small loans for farming	Extension services	Much attention was paid to this from the 1970sto early 1980s. With the oil boom of 1980s, little attention was paid to Agriculture. However attention is being drawn to agriculture now due to the fall in the price of oil at the international market
Environmental protection	Policy making	Encouragement	Information, sensitization and training	Still on–going, with more international coalitions sort, together with help from the United Nations.
Housing/human settlement	Housing loans, building low cost houses	Instigating housing charity	Providing technical assistance	Intervention is more at the state level now. The Church does little on this and the NGOs remain a technical partner. The federal level still has the National Housing Scheme though not fully at the reach of the poor man.
Food	Indirect intervention	Direct intervention	Direct and indirect intervention	Intervention is still on-going as Government now makes more policies that are favourable to food production and investment in agriculture. The Church still gives direct food aid as well as the NGOs.
Reconciliation and peace	Security intervention dialogue	Moral encouragement	Dialogue and professional assistance	This intervention was initiated after the civil war and is still on-going. The government is doing everything possible to combat terrorism. The Church and NGOs urge for dialogue towards resolving ethnic and religious conflicts.
Justice and Human rights	Legislature intervention	Judiciary usage	Judiciary usage	Government respects the independence of the judiciary. The Church and NGOs interventions lie in their defence of the common man and seeing that the basic human rights are respected.
Education	Provision of facilities	Management	Professional training and technical assistance	Government continues to build, renovate and equip more schools, while the Church and NGOs continue in the management and giving of technical assistance respectively.
Economy	Policy making	Advisory assistance	Professional assistance	Government intervenes by coming up with series of economic policies.
Empowerment	Centre establishment/ training	Vocational/Skill training	Vocational/Skill training	Government brings up strategies to empower the youth such as the Sure-P projects and others. The church and NGOs provide vocational/skill training through her charity organizations.
Job creation	Industrialization	Menial intervention	Minimal intervention	The Government continues to maximize its efforts in the creation of jobs through Industrial development and diversification of the economy. However, the church and NGOs continue to support the government through their minimal intervention in creating jobs and helping people to be independent.

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2014).

In the above table, the contributions of various major actors in poverty alleviation are considered. It is important to note that, to date, these interventions are still on-going in all sectors under consideration. The only change lies in the manner, speed, rate and level at which these interventions progress. In some sectors, the strategy as well as the quantity and quality of interventions by government, church and other NGOs have been improved.

The table above reveals that in some areas of interventions, such as farming and empowerment, the actors play the same role, but to different degrees. In other areas, the church and NGOs play roles of managing and monitoring some of the projects initiated by the government. For instance, in health and agriculture, government chiefly tries to provide facilities and farm inputs to the various communities, but it has been observed that at times the government does not pay much attention to monitoring how these facilities are utilized and made use of (Ibeto and Chinyeaka, 2013). Based on this, the church and NGOs strive to bridge this management and information gap as well as monitoring projects such as the distribution of fertilizers. They will sometimes offer professional advice to the beneficiaries (Ettim, 2013).

However, one cannot deny the fact that NGOs and the church also provide some well-organized facilities in agriculture and health. This is especially so in the area of health as many religious bodies, and NGOs have hospitals built and maintained by these bodies, irrespective of the huge expenses. This high cost, according to Ettim (2013), is attributed to lack of funding from the government. The church and NGOs have no option other than to keep the price level to enable them maintain the hospitals and pay their workers. However, there are still some health centres built and owned by the church and other NGOs which are affordable, and this is due to the financial support by some international charitable organizations like CAFOD and CARITAS international, amongst others (Ettim, 2013). The NGOs also support the government in areas of health through training and sensitization, especially in such health related issues as HIV and tuberculosis.

In the areas of environmental protection and human settlement, the government intervenes through policy-making in order to protect the environment and to establish housing structures for people (Ekpe, 2011). The church and NGOs encourage the efforts of the government through professional advice/assistance

and public sensitization (Ettim, 2013:9; Agba et al., 2014:6). In terms of food provision, the government reaches the poor indirectly through their various APOs. This indirect approach has been criticized as not being grassroots orientated, as some of these food interventions end up in the hands of the people in charge (Agba et al., 2014). In this sense, the targeted people such as the poor and especially the rural dwellers end up not receiving anything. On the other side, the church and NGOs directly extend their food intervention to the grassroots level but are limited in resources (Ettim, 2013).

In the areas of justice and peace development, the government tries to provide security in the country (Olorede and Olorede, 2015), while the church morally encourages peaceful co-habitation and NGOs use legal intervention to ensure them (Ettim, 2013). In economic development, education, empowerment and job creation, the government contributes more through policy-making, provision of facilities and industrialization (Ekpe, 2011). The church, on the other hand, makes a limited contribution to these areas due to lack of funding, while NGOs offer professional assistance and mass sensitization, though NGOs offer some structural assistance, especially through the community based organisations (Abegunde, 2009).

In the chapter that follows, this study presents the research methodologies adopted in this study and the details of the fieldwork.

6 Methodology

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a recap of the purpose of the thesis. It discusses the qualitative research methods adopted, which includes FGDs across four geo-political zones and interviews with individual persons, government, private and religious organisations in Nigeria. It also explores the research process in relation to how individual and organisational respondents were selected and information about the study areas and organisations.

6.2 Operationalizing the research theme

6.2.1 Overview

The overall purpose of this thesis is to explore the pluralism related to the understanding of poverty in the case of Nigeria. In other words, this study enquires into the different understandings of poverty, and the implications and challenges of this pluralism for poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria. We call this the Conceptual Pluralism Approach (CPA) to the understanding of poverty. By this approach, we mean that concepts have variety of structures and meanings. This is the central assumption behind every understanding of conceptual pluralism.

Poverty is a multi-faceted phenomenon, which carries various meanings and understandings (Gunter and Gottfried, 2013). This plurality of meanings and understandings in the conceptualisation of poverty, signals a comprehensive range of similarities and differences, conflicts, tensions and challenges for the ontology of poverty.

Therefore, this case study of the pluralism in the understanding of poverty in Nigeria is not pre-occupied *per se* with the reduction of poverty, but with discovering the different definitions and understandings of poverty from the poor and non-poor members of the communities, as well as actors from various anti-poverty organisations (APOs), and its implications for poverty reduction

strategies. Through the voices of the poor, non-poor and the actors of anti-poverty measures (APMs), in the form of interviews and FGDs, this study explores the different meanings and understandings of poverty. It also explores the changes in the conceptualisation of poverty and its underlying drivers across time; the socio-economic factors and institutional practices behind these conceptions of poverty; the linkages between poverty conceptualisations and strategies and policies for its reduction; and the implications and challenges associated with this pluralism in the understanding of poverty.

This study focuses mainly on the experiences of people who, in one way or another, have something to do with poverty either as actors of APMs or those who have experienced and encountered poverty. Contributions from people in different careers of life were explored as well as those in the academia who have researched poverty. The findings of this study seek to contribute to the current debates on the conceptualisation of poverty (World Bank, 2000/01; Ayoola et al, 2001; Sen, 2009; Alkire and Foster, 2011a and 2011b; Hulme, 2013).

6.2.2 The basis for this case study

This is a single-country case study on Nigeria. This choice was made because of the limited time and resources of a PhD thesis. Doing a single case study offered me an opportunity to do an exploratory in-depth study on the different understandings of poverty in Nigeria, from the viewpoints of diverse people and actors of APMs from across and within different APOs. My upbringing in Nigeria, and a good knowledge of the geo-political zones, offers me an opportunity for a better interpretation and explanation of conceptualizing poverty in Nigeria.

This study employs qualitative research methods in the forms of interviews and FGDs. The interviews and FGDs have their basis in the literature on poverty, which is drawn from several disciplines, such as sociology, economics, philosophy and development studies, amongst others. Interviews and discussions were held with the poor and the actors of APMs from various APOs to provide insights to the research questions. These are analysed and interpreted in the form of coding and triangulation. As regards the method used for the interviews and FGDs, this study undertook in-depth one-on-one

interviews and FGDs with actors of APMs from three kinds of APOs, and various groups of people from different communities, selected from among four out of the six geo-political zones. (These organisations, geo-political zones and communities will be explained below in the subsequent sub-sections.) The three kinds of APOs are the government, private and religious organisations. Two geo-political zones were excluded, due to the current religious and political crisis as at the time of the fieldwork.

6.3 Qualitative research methods: Theory

Qualitative research methods are described as inquiry methods that are often used in various fields of academic disciplines, such as social sciences, management sciences, market researches among others (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). They aim at gaining a deeper understanding of areas concerning human lives and behaviours, and as such asks the what, why and how questions. They are usually applied for theory building rather than theory testing, hence being appropriate for exploratory studies (Marshall and Rossman, 1998; Patton, 2001). They aim to synthesize findings collected and gathered from various sources, which in this case-study are the poor in particular, the people in general, as well as from the representatives of APOs, and academics who have done works on poverty.

Qualitative research uses different methods in the gathering of data and information. This exploratory study employs qualitative research methods in the form of FGDs and interviews.

6.3.1 Focus groups discussions

To identify what poverty is, this study uses the voices of poor people, as well as actors from various APOs through FGDs. It aims to reveal different understandings of poverty, and what implications these have on poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria.

Historically, the term FGD came into use after World War II. Prior to that, it has been called either focused interviews or group-depth interviews (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990:5). Using a focus group is “a method of group interviewing in which the interaction between the moderator and the group, as well as the

interaction between group members, serves to elicit information and insights on response to carefully designed questions" (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990 p. 8). Krueger (1998a); Krueger and Casey, (2000) explain focus groups as opportunities for people to involve themselves in a structured or semi-structured discussion of one or more topics, which are meant to elicit opinions, ideas, and attitudes of participants' belief about a particular issue, event, product or entity. Focus groups are structured to test the participant's motivation, and how far they are able to agree on an issue or topic of discussion. Using FGD, this study tries to find out the different ways of conceptualizing poverty from participants.

FGD like any other research methods has been criticized as not being suitable for all research projects and as such can be inappropriate for conducting some research. For example, Smithson, (2008:36) has contended that FGD might not be adequate in some research topics which are seen to be too personal such as living with HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, sharing personal experiences before fellow colleagues, etc. Also, FGD has been criticised because some personalities may tend to influence and dominate the group discussions.

Notwithstanding the above limitations, I have decided to adopt FGD for the purpose of this research. Morgan, (1997:17) has argued that the best way to decide if FGD is appropriate for a research or not, is to ask how actively the participants are willing and ready to discuss the topic of interest. In view of this, FGD is considered appropriate for this research topic because it is a topic that is currently and actively being debated, where a majority of people are willing to actively participate in the discussion. Equally, the author during the discussions guarded against particular individual or group dominating the discussion through monitoring and moderating of each group. (More of this will be discussed below in the sections that deal with selection of participants and conducting of the FGDs).

In addition, FGD is deemed a good tool employed to ascertain various experiences, feelings and perceptions of groups of people who share common characteristics. It tends to address a single topic in depth and through their comments participants stimulate reactions from other participants (Morgan and Krueger, 1998). The use of FGD in this work helps to obtain information on a

relatively new and exploratory topic from people who share a particular challenge like poverty.

Focus groups examine people's opinions through the use of open-ended questions, and thus provide in-depth understandings and perceptions on a particular topic. It helps to generate ideas, new concepts about one or several topics (Morgan and Krueger, 1998; Krueger and Casey, 2000). Appropriate use of focus groups can obtain high quality information that may help in decision making (Hawe et al., 1990; Denzin and Lincoln 2011). For my purposes, this study adopts FGDs, because it is helpful as a process of triangulation. This process provides an opportunity to listen to many participants, and to be able to analyse their opinions, rather than trusting and relying on the opinions of a single individual (Cicourel, 1974; Morgan, 1997, Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Moreover, it is easier and quicker to obtain information through FGD than individual interviews, which may cost more and take longer time.

6.3.2 Interviews

Qualitative research Interview is defined as "an attempt to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (Kvale, 1996, p. 9). Qualitative research interviews help participants to explain and describe things in their own words, rather than with restrictions. Every opportunity that would elicit information from the participants without putting them under pressure was explored during this research interviews.

This study employed a semi-structured interview approach, because it gives validity and credibility, especially when different people say the same thing about a particular issue or concept (Kvale, 1996; Turner, 2010). Furthermore, it gives researchers more opportunity to probe for more details on a given theme or topic, as well as helping to explore the ideas and themes generated by participants (Kvale, 1996; Warren and Karner, 2005). What matters is to understand the actors' point of view, perspective, worldview and subjective meanings and experiences attached to a particular situation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Based on this, qualitative research interviews employ the use of open-ended questions that allow for more probing, which is appropriate for

exploratory studies such as the present investigation into the pluralism in the understanding of poverty in Nigeria.

6.4 On reality and interpretation

To investigate people's perceptions and views on a phenomenon, one has to bear in mind that the 'views about reality' and 'reality' itself are quite different things (Creswell, 2003; Burke, 2007). Often times, the tendency to construct and interpret reality is dependent on subjective experiences. Hence, a particular reality may be viewed differently by various economic agents. These differences depend on age, gender, ethnicity, class, race, occupation or memory of the particular actor or individual (Archer, 2007).

Similarly, peoples' views on concepts, events, and history, are dependent on their subjective experiences within a specific socio-cultural milieu. These subjective views and perceptions are very relevant to understanding the objective norms and regulations of their social environment. Thus, an understanding of these subjective views is necessary to situate the changes and interactions in each society (Silverman, 2004). Hence, people's subjective views about poverty and its conceptualisation are used widely in this thesis. In the first instance, we use these subjective views in the analysis of pluralism related to the understanding of poverty. Importance is attached to what people identified as the various perceptions and conceptions of poverty.

Reflecting on the past helps people to contextualize the changes that have occurred in the conceptualisation of poverty in Nigeria, as well as the factors responsible for those changes. Discussions on the changes that have taken place in the conceptualisation of poverty from past to present becomes an analytical and a methodological necessity that offers an opportunity for the participants to delve deep into the topic during the FGDs and interviews. Furthermore, the participants' accounts of the changes in the conceptualisation of poverty are used analytically to understand the pluralism as related to poverty conceptualisation.

Secondly, respondents' accounts of the issues of poverty conceptualisation and its linkages with APMs are valuable information about how a particular concept of poverty is addressed over the years, and how APOs combat poverty.

However, data gathered from the participants were not taken at face-value, as the researcher used an analytical interpretation of the subject matter within the research context and information collected, to arrange, aggregate, analyse, compare, decode, summarize and deconstruct the interviews and FGDs accounts.

The main tools employed in order to arrive at a reliable and stable account of poverty and its conceptualisations (as well as its alleviation) were:

- To gather the views on the understanding of poverty from a reasonably large number of people across the different geo-political zones and APOs in Nigeria.
- To make reference to documents on policies concerning poverty.
- To formulate questions deemed fitting and appropriate to elicit information from the participants.

Again, the submissions of some of the participants, especially from the religious organisations, about the attitude of some APOs were not dismissed or neglected in such a way that it creates the impression that participants are not able to give account of what is happening in their own society. To understand people's views, it becomes crucial to take seriously what they say (Oliver de Sardan, 2005). Thus, credit was given to participants during the course of interviews and FGDs as their views and information are essential towards documentation, analysis and interpretation of their own world.

6.5 The practical research process

6.5.1 Criteria for the selection of the study areas, organisations and participants

6.5.1.1 Criteria for the selection of zones, states, communities and participants for FGDs

A total of eight FGDs were held; two in each of the four-geopolitical zones covered. The four-geopolitical zones are: South-East (SE), South-South (SS), South-West (SW), and North-Central (NC). It was supposed to be a total of 12 FGDs covering six-geopolitical zones, but the study excluded two zones, namely: North-East (NE) and North-West (NW), both afflicted by the "Boko Haram" crisis. "Boko Haram" is an Islamic movement in the northern part of

Nigeria purported to reject all forms of westernization, and holds that western education is forbidden thereby attacking schools, as well as government and Christians, who are deemed agents of westernization.

This present study selected two states, from within the four different geo-political zones. The states were selected based on convenience and accessibility, as well as to reflect geographical characteristics of each regions and zones, such as culture and economic activities, that might influence their perceptions of what poverty is. For instance, Ayoola et al, (2001) notes that perception and understanding of poverty may vary due to location. Therefore, having different types of geographical locations may bring novel perspectives and understandings to the discussion on poverty. Based on the above, the following states were then selected: Anambra and Imo states in the SE; Delta and Akwa-Ibom states in the SS; Ondo and Lagos states[10] in the SW; and Benue and Kogi states in the NC. These zones will be explained briefly in the next section.

A community and location were selected from each of these states. The criteria for selecting these communities were based on 'easy accessibility'[11] to the communities by the researcher. The selection is also based on whether the community is a rural, semi-urban or urban community. Some of these communities have some basic facilities while others have minimal facilities and others barely have basic facilities. The major occupations in these communities are farming, fishing, and petty trading, amongst others; though each had some civil servants and wealthy people. These criteria of selection are also important because people with different access to basic facilities and different occupations might perceive and define poverty differently.

In view of the above, the researcher selected the following communities: Ikare (Ondo state SW), Ajamgbadi (Lagos state SW), Otobi (Benue state NC), Anyigba (Kogi state NC), Umunede (Delta state SS), Afaha Eket (Akwa-Ibom

[10] Lagos State is one of the states in the South-West of Nigeria. The Yorubas are the main inhabitants, along with a mixture of people from various ethnic groups in Nigeria. The state was the former capital of Nigeria until 12th December 1991, when Abuja was chosen as the new capital under the military dictatorship of the late general Sani Abacha. It is a state known for its large economic activities and serves as centre for all forms of national and international trade. The dominant religions here are mainly Christianity and Islam.

[11] 'Easy accessibility' is understood here not in terms of good roads but in terms of having known the communities before and having someone that could help as volunteer.

state SS), Eziagulu (Anambra state SE) and Ulakwo (Imo state SE). These communities will be explained in the next section.

The criteria for the selection of the FGDs participants were based on voluntary acceptance as well as on challenges and backgrounds. Information bias was also another criterion for the selection of participants. On the selected dates and with the permission of the community leaders, whom the researcher had contacted previously, the researcher would always address those around and from among them, ask for volunteer participants. The selection of participants was done voluntarily and the researcher did not allow the community leaders to do the selection by themselves, lest they might select people that would speak on their sides. This was done by the researcher to prevent information bias (see appendix 9).

Equally, people with similar experiences, challenges or backgrounds were selected so as to make discussions easier and make people feel free to talk with each other. People facing similar challenges like poverty were mostly selected, so as to be able to discuss the topic of study in depth, though there were some non-poor as well. Selecting the poor was to some extent challenging, but further interactions with regard to their different occupations became helpful as most of those selected were peasant farmers and petty traders. As part of the tools used to get an authentic and reliable response from the discussions, the targeted audiences for FGDs therefore took into consideration issues of gender, age and the poor themselves located in the rural and sometimes semi or urban areas. The reasons for this are obvious: Frequently, most people, and more especially the rural poor, as well as the poor in semi or urban populations, are neglected and excluded from various policies and programmes mapped out by the government for poverty alleviation. At other times, their voices are not heard so as to better understand what their challenges are with regard to issues of poverty.

This present study selected 12 participants for each group so as to get a good group discussion as well as get a reasonable number of participants in case some people decide to opt out on the day of discussion. Morgan and Krueger (1998), deem this number ideal for FGD. Though 12 participants were selected to constitute each group, for one reason or the other some of them who

volunteered did not turn up. For example, on the day of the FGDs for Otobi in Benue state, NC Nigeria, one woman out of the 12 participants selected telephoned the researcher and said she did not have time as she needed to attend to another meeting. Other two participants who were absent did not send any apologies. In all, only 9 participants attended in that group. In another instance, one male participant out of 12 people who accepted to participate in Umunede, Delta state, SS Nigeria did not turn up but sent his son to inform the researcher that his wife had given birth the previous night and so he could not attend. Other absentees in that group did not send any apologies. Only 6 people attended the discussion from that group. A woman in Ulakwo, Imo state SE Nigeria, said she was attending to her sick child. The rest in all other groups who did not come did not send any apologies.

However, in one instance, one group at Eziagulu community in Anambra state SE Nigeria ended up with all women. The men who had volunteered failed to turn up. I later gathered that the reason why the men did not turn up was gender segregation norms. It is not always the practice to have men and women together for discussion in that community. No one told me this earlier, until after the discussion and that was why the men who volunteered did not come (see appendix 12 for details of participants and dates).

6.5.1.2 Criteria for selection of organisations and respondents interviewed

The study targeted three different kinds of organisations, namely: the government, private (NGOs), and religious organisations that have the official duty of combating poverty in Nigeria, as well as academics who have done works on poverty. The rationale for selecting these different groups of organisations and people is to seek broad understandings of poverty and how these differing perspectives have helped in the combating of poverty.

The researcher selected either the directors or deputy directors. There were occasions where other staff of some organisations were involved, especially where the director or deputy director is new. The rationale behind selecting these people is that they are deemed knowledgeable in the activities of the organisations and interactions with their own and with the poor and other agencies. The researcher first contacted the organisations through their contact

details, and informed them that they had been selected for an interview and requested for the contact details of the directors or the deputy directors (see appendix 10). The researcher wrote to either of the two for permission to research in their organisation, with the accompanying letter from the researcher's supervisors (see appendix 13). On invitation from either the directors or deputy directors, the researcher went and met with them in person, and verbally explained the purpose of the interview.

Five people were interviewed from five government organisations, eleven people from four religious organisations, four people from four private organisations, and two academics. The disparity in numbers was a result of availability from the original numbers of people scheduled to be interviewed. Some excused themselves that they were on official duties and as such would not be able to honour the invitation again. Some did not show up at all. In all, 15 interviews were done, which involved 22 people. There were some organisations where more than one person was interviewed and that brought the numbers of those interviewed to 22 (see appendix 11). Most of these interviews covered four of the six geo-political zones for reasons of security, as explained above. The states covered depend mainly on where the organisations were based. Interviews were then held in the following states: Abuja municipal, Lagos, Ondo, Anambra, Benue, Abia and Imo states. Most interviews were held in Lagos and Abuja municipal since most of these organisations have their headquarters in Lagos and the FCT, Abuja (see also appendix 11).

6.5.2 Background of the study areas and organisations

The background of the geo-political zones, states and communities where FGDs were conducted are given below as well as the organisations interviewed.

6.5.2.1 The geo-political zones

6.5.2.1.1 South- East

This region covers about 16,000 sq miles (i.e. 40,000km^2) in the South Eastern part of the country moving towards the sea. It is the original homeland of the Igbos with an estimated population of more than 40 million (Akaolisa, 2012:28). It has a population density of 1,000/sq ml (400/km^2). The region is made up of relatively level area with some notable areas of elevation especially going northwards. It has a highest elevation of 3300 ft (1,000m) and 0 ft (Om) as the

lowest (Isichei, 1976). It is situated in the ND region of West Africa, where it meets the Atlantic Ocean in the south towards the Bight of Bonny, located between 5-7 degrees north, and longitude 6-8 degrees east. It has land on both sides of the lower Niger River, though the chunk of the region is situated in the east of the river. It is a rainforest zone.

The South Eastern region became a British colony in 1902 and was amalgamated with the other regions in 1914 to create Nigeria. Its regional capital was Enugu. The major language spoken in this region is Igbo with different dialects. The Igbo's are predominantly Christian with a few traditional worshipers. Economically, they are well-known traders and farmers. They travel to different parts of the world to transact business. The region hosts major hubs for Nigeria's trade and commerce. A few people in the rural area are subsistence farmers. This zone is important to this present study from the perspective of gathering an understanding of poverty from the view point of traders and farmers. This region comprises five states Enugu, Ebonyi, Anambra, Imo and Abia.

6.5.2.1.2 South-West

The South Western region of Nigeria is the home of the Yoruba tribe. It consists of the area south of the River Niger extending towards the sea. The area covers a relatively large area of land with varied geographical features. It extends from the rainforest zone to the mangroves at the sea. The Yoruba people who occupy the SW are mainly farmers and fishermen, though about 35% of them are merchants, artists or craftsmen (Atanda, 1997:25). The various understandings of poverty from the perspective of these groups of people justify the inclusion of this zone in this present study. One of the features that make the Yoruba people unique is their tendency to form into large city groups instead of small village groups. They are one of the three main ethnic groups and they make up 21% of the total population of Nigeria (Atanda, 1997:25). The SW zone consists of Lagos, Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo States of Nigeria. Some major historical and commercial cities in this zone are in Lagos, Ile-ife, Ibadan, Abeokuta and Ado-Ekiti.

6.5.2.1.3 North-Central

This region is popularly known in Nigeria as the 'Middle Belt'. It describes the region of central Nigeria populated largely by the minority ethnic groups stretching across the country longitudinally. The area is located between the core Hausa people of the North and the Yoruba and Igbo people of the South. Due to the extensive landscape of the region, it lacks definite boarders and is characterized by a heterogeneity and diversity of peoples and cultures. The area has an estimated population of about 22 million (Orji, 2004:14).

Economically, the NC region is agricultural. The majority of the population are subsistence farmers. It offers the opportunity for production of a wide variety of crops such as cereals, yams, potatoes and other vegetables. The area has access to the rivers Niger and Benue and therefore many people in this area engage in fishing. The economic activities in this zone bring differing perspectives to the understanding of poverty and justify the inclusion of this zone into this present study.

The middle belt region consists of Kwara, Kogi, Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger and Taraba states. Major historical and commercial towns in the region include Ilorin, Jos, Lokoja, Bida, Otukpo and Lafia.

6.5.2.1.4 South-South

The SS is popularly known as the Niger Delta (ND) region. It officially extends to over 70,000km^2/sq ml and makes up 7.5% of Nigeria's land mass. The region is in the mangrove swamp of the River Niger and the mouth of the Atlantic Ocean. It is an area of heavy rainfall with heavy vegetation (Oluwatoyin, 2010:12).

The ND is made up of a huge diversity of cultures and languages, as well as many tribes and ethnic groups, such as the Ijaws, Orons, Urhobos, Ukwuanis, Ibibios, Efik, Isoko etc. The area features about 200 different dialects (Oluwatoyin, 2010:13). Economically, the region is predominantly dominated by fishing activities being in the river-line area. It is however the oasis of crude oil resources in Nigeria. States that are included in the region are Delta, Rivers, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Edo. Major commercial areas include Warri, Uyo, Calabar and Port-Harcourt.

This diversity of cultures, as well as being the centre of Nigerian oil production, warrant including this zone in this present study in order to bring yet other perspective into the understanding of poverty.

6.5.2.2 Research communities

6.5.2.2.1 Ikare-Akoko (Ondo state, SW)

Ikare-Akoko is a town in the Ondo state of South-Western Nigeria. Ikare is about 100km from Akure the Ondo state capital. The villages in Ikare include Okela, Okorun, Eshe, Odo, Ilepa, Okoja, Iku, Odeyara, Odoruwa, Okeruwa and Ekan. The population of the community according to the traditional ruler is estimated at above 20,000.

Economically, Ikare is a commercial city and may be regarded as a semi-urban area. It is specially a trading point for regional cocoa production. Ikare- Akoko is also known for its decorative pottery. Most people in Ikare are petty traders and civil servants with a low level of income. The town is also characterized by lack of basic amenities despite its nearness to the capital city. The researcher witnessed this during his visit.

This study had 12 participants from this community, of which 8 were males and 4 were females. Most participants were petty traders and farmers with two participants who were civil servants with low income. The mixture of participants in this group, as in the rest of the other groups, aims at bringing out the different perspectives in the understanding of poverty

6.5.2.2.2 Ajamgbadi (Lagos state, SW)

This is a rural community in Badagry local government area of Lagos state, SW Nigeria. It is situated at a distance of approximately 36km North of Lagos and has a population of more than 30,000 people according to the representative of the community chief (Oba). The town is bordered in the south by the lagoon, in the north by Ogun state and shares a common boundary in the West with Agbowa-ikosi, a town in Epe Division of Lagos state. There are six local villages in Ajamgbadi and the paramount ruler is the Oba.

The major occupations of Ajamgbadi people are trading, hunting and farming. Only a few individuals who work outside the area can be considered as civil servants, with low earnings.

This study had 12 participants from this community, of which 5 are males and 7 are females. These participants, who have low earnings, are 2 kindergarten school teachers, 3 petty traders, 4 farmers and 3 fishermen.

6.5.2.2.3 Otobi (Benue state, NC)

Otobi is a rural town in Otukpo local government area of Benue state, Nigeria. It is located in the middle belt region of the country. The general language of the people is Idoma. The population, according to the community leader, is close to 25,000 across the five villages in the community. The town features a government technical school for boys and girls, which is in a deplorable condition. Most people still have their children in the school as they cannot afford to send them to mission schools in the neighbouring towns or cities.

Economically, the area is known for agriculture. They are good producers of local cereals and yams. There are also those whose main occupation is petty trading. Fishing is another major occupation in the town due to the presence of the river Benue, though this is still done in a local way. The poverty profile of the area is relatively high as most people in the town are low-income earners from petty trading, farming and fishing. Roads are in a bad condition with general lack of basic amenities like electricity, pipe borne water, etc. Two local public maternity hospitals are in a very bad condition and efforts to get them renovated have yielded no fruit at the time of this research.

This study had 9 participants from this community, of which 6 are males and 3 are females. These participants are low-income earners: 3 fishermen, 1 petty trader, and the remaining are farmers.

6.5.2.2.4 Anyigba (Kogi state, NC)

Anyigba is a town in Lokoja local government area in Kogi state within the NC geo-political region of the country. The town has a population of about 25,000. It is a rural area sharing a border with Idah.

Economically, the Anyigba people are mainly employed in farming, fishing, petty trading and craft works. The town's road is in such poor condition that I needed a bicycle to gain access to the community. The town has a broken bridge for almost ten years now and many commute by small canoe. There is a high mortality rate due to lack of an adequate hospital.

This study had 6 participants from this community, of which 3 are males and 3 are females. These participants, who are low-income earners, include 3 farmers, 1 petty trader and 2 fishermen.

6.5.2.2.5 Umunede (Delta state, SS)

Umunede is a semi-urban town in Delta state, which is in the SS. The local population speak the Ika language and they are about 35,000, according to the community leader. Umunede is a town situated along the Asaba-Benin expressway, thereby attracting numerous travellers who stop to buy food and have a little relaxation. It serves as a meeting point for people travelling to the SS, NC, Mid-West and SE. Therefore, it creates trading opportunities for food sellers, especially those who sell fruits and other perishables.

The Umunede people are farmers and traders, with a few civil servants. Traditionally, they relied mainly on farming and fishing for their food. The town still lacks basic amenities such as good water, hospitals and school, amongst others. In the meeting I had with the traditional ruler, he lamented the high mortality rate among their pregnant women as a result of the lack of a good maternity unit and hospital.

This study had 6 participants from this community, of which 3 are men and 3 are women. These participants, who are low income earners, include 3 farmers and 3 petty traders.

6.5.2.2.6 Afaha Eket (Akwa-Ibom state, SS)

Afaha Eket is a town in Eket local government area of Akwa-ibom state. It is located in the SS region of the country. The name also refers to both the indigenous ethnic group of the area and their language. The town has over 30,000 people, according to their traditional ruler. They are a sub-group of the Ibibio people.

Afaha Eket neighbours an oil rich town called Eket. The people's main occupations are farming, blacksmithing and fishing. These serve as their major sources of income. There are only a few civil servants. The inhabitants are mainly low-income earners and they often are affected by the oil spillage caused by oil companies in the neighbouring towns.

The town is characterized by lack of basic amenities. Even the major hospital built by government in 1983 is no longer functioning well. I went to the hospital and discovered that there were barely any medical facilities. There are no good schools apart from one built by the Anglican Communion. The roads in this town are in a very poor condition.

This study had 5 participants from this community, of which 3 are men and 2 are women. These participants, who are low income earners, are all farmers.

6.5.2.2.7 Eziagulu (Anambra state, SE)

Eziagulu is a small rural town in Anambra North local government region, within South-Eastern Nigeria. It has a population of about 12,000. The town is divided into two main parts known as Eziagulu uno and Eziagulu otu. The town is located on the lower part of the Omambala river from which the state drew its name, Anambra state. The town is bounded in the north by Igbariam, Nando town to the South, Anaku and Omor towns to the east, with Umuleri and Nsugbe towns to the west.

Eziagulu's soil is very fertile and farmers can cultivate different kinds of crops both for commercial and subsistence purposes. It is among the towns known as the food baskets of Anambra state. With the presence of the Omambala River, fishing is also a major occupation of the people. Access to the town is hard due to lack of good roads. The town is still using the bridge built across the river with wood before national independence in 1960.

There is a serious lack of basic amenities. People still live in mud houses, without electricity and adequate sewerage. Produce from farming and fishing is frequently spoilt due to the farmers' and fishermen's lack of adequate storage facilities.

This study had 6 participants from this community, all of them women. (Reasons for this have been explained above in the criteria for selection of participants for FGDs). These participants, who are low-income earners, are 5 farmers and 1 petty trader.

6.5.2.2.8 Ulakwo (Imo state, SE)

Ulakwo is a small rural community located in Owerri North local government area of Imo state in South-Eastern Nigeria. It is an Igbo-speaking community

consisting of a growing population of about 23,000. It lies at the junction between the Nworie River and the Otamiri River, and it is almost split into two by the Otamiri River.

The main occupation of the community is agriculture. Being a rural area, most people engage in subsistence farming, producing crops like cassava, yam, maize and vegetables, as well as engaging in petty trading. Rearing of domestic animals like goats, sheep and birds is also common in the community.

This study had 6 participants from this community, 3 men and 3 women. These participants, who are low-income earners, are 4 farmers and 2 petty traders.

6.5.2.3 Organisations

6.5.2.3.1 Government organisations

6.5.2.3.1.1 National Orientation agency (NOA)

This is a government agency established by the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida in 1993. It is a large parastatal, originating from the federal level and spreading to the lowest level of government. It has offices in all the 774 local government areas in the country. It therefore covers the whole country in its activities.

The activities focus on enlightening the general public on government policies, poverty alleviation programmes and activities. This is why the NOA work at the grassroots level through their local government orientation and mobilization officers. These local government officers are trained on current national issues and events, and pass down the knowledge to the general public at the grassroots. They also collect feedback from the people and monitor their development, response and continuity of programmes and improvements through questionnaires.

Their activities towards poverty alleviation are done through the creation of awareness of existing government poverty alleviation programmes, and then working directly on improving people’s situations, especially in emergencies such as in conflict situations that result in internally displaced persons. The NOA is funded by the federal government.

6.5.2.3.1.2 Imo Rescue Mission (IRM)

This is a transformation agenda from the Imo State government established by Governor Rochas Okorocha in 2010. IRM is a state-funded government programme aimed at improving the lives of Imo state citizens and residents at the grassroots through the provision of basic amenities like water, rural electrification, etc. It covers the 27 local governments in Imo state, Nigeria. Some projects are funded in cooperation with international and national donors.

In the spirit of this rescue mission, Rochas embarked on projects that will affect the lives of the people directly. Such projects include free education with free reading and writing materials for the indigenes of the state, construction of general hospitals in the 27 local government areas and renovation of the existing ones, road construction, creation of jobs, disbursement of cash to local farmers, etc. The IRM has instituted a community government council to curb the embezzlement of funds by local government chairmen. This project is making efforts to develop local government areas in capital projects.

6.5.2.3.1.3 Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Agency

The reduction of the fuel subsidy by the federal government in January, 2012, as a deliberate policy aimed at conserving and maximizing the oil wealth of Nigeria, generated discontent, fear and worry amongst Nigerians. In response, the then president Goodluck Jonathan set up an agency known as Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Agency, which was inaugurated in February, 2012. This agency was tasked with the work of re-investing the federal government's share of the savings arising from the reduction of subsides on petroleum products into programmes and initiatives that were expected to go a long way to ease the pains of subsidy removal and create better life for Nigerians.

This agency therefore formed a poverty alleviation programme known as Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P). According to its brochure, SURE-P is claimed to be a large poverty alleviation project that is meant to cover many sectors of the economy and all the regions of the country. It covers all the states and local governments of the country with life span spreading from 2012 – 2022.

There is a fiscal formula for sharing the savings from subsidy removal by the three levels of government. These government levels reinvest their own share in projects that are aimed at alleviating poverty. They invest in transportation, health, education, job creation and human capacity development. SURE-P projects are funded by the federal government through the ministry of finance.

6.5.2.3.1.4 National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC)

NAPEC is a national council established by the Nigerian government in January 2001 by the president Olusegun Obasanjo civilian administration. NAPEC is a government agency which coordinates and oversees the activities of various other institutions involved in the fight against poverty. This council was established to harmonize and restructure the previous poverty alleviation programmes into National Poverty Eradication Programmes (NAPEP).

The objectives of NAPEP according to its brochure were designed to broaden the opportunity available to the poor and ensure that every Nigeria has access to basic needs of life: food, potable water, clothing, shelter, basic health service, basic education and communications as well as guaranteed respect for fundamental human rights.

NAPEP covers every geo political zone, state and local governments of the country. It is funded by the federal government. Its major activities in poverty alleviation are implemented in the following schemes:

(a.) Youth empowerment scheme (YES) mainly concerned with skill acquisition, employment and wealth creation for the youth.

(b.) Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme (RIDS) which focuses on the provision and development of water, energy, transport, communication and other infrastructural needs of the rural areas.

(c.) Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS) which develops and promotes agriculture, water, solid mineral and environmental resources.

6.5.2.3.1.5 The National Directorate of Employment (NDE)

This is a national poverty eradication agency created in 1986 by the Babangida regime to deal with the rising unemployment in the country. By its mandate, NDE was initiated to design and implement programmes to combat mass unemployment and articulate policies aimed at developing work programmes

with labour intensive potentials. The need for the creation of NDE is also traced to the drastic reduction in oil prices and the resultant economic policies as at the time of its establishment.

The NDE has no permanent poverty alleviation programme but rather works with whatever the government at the time proposes on employment. It has lasted from inception till date, but is now chiefly controlled by the ministry of labour and employment and funded by the federal government. According to its brochure, this agency claims that hundreds of thousands of youths have benefitted from NDE scheme through its four-pronged approach that includes: vocational acquisition training, entrepreneurial or business training for rural employment and training for labour based work programme. The activities of the agency cover the whole country.

Currently, it has an empowerment and employment programme known as N-POWER, which was a project added by the present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. N-Power is a programme designed to assist many Nigerian youth acquire, develop and sustain skills that will position them become independent. It is also an initiative which the president claimed is aimed at providing employment to more than 300 000 Nigerians annually.

6.5.2.3.2 Religious organisations

6.5.2.3.2.1 The Caritas Foundation of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria

This is a more secular aspect of the work of the church in Nigeria. It was created by the Bishop's Conference under a unit known as "the Church and the society department" in 2010. It is popularly known as 'Caritas Nigeria' which is the official development agency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference. The scope of Caritas Nigeria operations covers the whole Catholic Church in Nigeria and extends to other non-Catholic Churches as well. It has three major operations offices, two in Abuja and one in Benue state. The headquarters are in Abuja. Caritas Nigeria has about 75 staff members. Its activities and nature are divided into four main units:

- The education unit deals with Catholic policy on education, school establishment, management and monitoring.

- The health unit is concerned with Catholic health policies, and supervision and management of the Catholic health facilities.
- The Justice and Peace unit deals with human rights, social development programmes in communities, the legal system, and prison apostolate.
- The society interaction unit: it controls the church contribution to the general policy making in society, direct interaction with the government, and contribution to what happens in the society.

Caritas Nigeria is mainly funded by foreign aid. In addition, the Bishops' conference raises funds from national charity organizations. The funding partners include Caritas Internationalis, USAID and CAFOD, which are based in UK, as well as other individual and corporate donors.

Its poverty alleviation activities are implemented through the four units by dioceses and parishes, and are monitored by the Caritas secretariat. It controls 20 health facilities across 19 states of the federation, funds agricultural projects at the grassroots, especially in Benue and Sokoto states, provides direct aid to poor persons through cash transfers in Bayelsa and Delta states, and emergency management in Lagos, Kogi, Ebonyi and Cross River states.

6.5.2.3.2.2 The Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC)

The second Vatican council called for the creation of a religious organisation to be entrusted with the task of promoting social justice and attending to the needs of those in want (John Paul II, 1995). This led to the creation of the Catholic welfare committee in the 1960s, which later became the JDPC.

JDPC is a department of the Catholic Church registered as a non-governmental organisation. It is controlled and established by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN). It consists of a national network covering the 55 Catholic dioceses in the country, coordinated by the National Catholic secretariat in Abuja. The network is broken down into provincial, diocesan and parish levels. JDPC is funded by donor organisations, both local and international.

Its objective is to proclaim the demands of the gospel with respect to social, political and economic situations. It is inspired by the teaching of the scriptures offering precepts of justice, peace, non-violence and compassion towards the

poor and the hungry. Over the years, the Nigerian Church has adopted JDPC as a channel of intervention for overcoming poverty in the country.

JDPC makes the welfare of the poor a priority. It offers direct help to the poor in several ways. It defends them in terms of human rights abuses, gives self-empowerment and human basic capacity training to the poor, and reduces the plight of the poor by giving immediate aid to them. JDPC intervenes in the interests of maintaining peace and harmony in society.

6.5.2.3.2.3 Niger Welfare Association (NWA)

Formerly called Niger Divine Helpers Association, the NWA is a religious welfare organisation of the Anglican Church for the Archdiocese on the Niger. They are active at the Diocesan level and down to the parish level. Each parish has its own branch of the NWA. The association at the parish level is headed by the parish priest as the indirect president. There is always an association president, usually a lay person appointed by the church council. Each parish association has members who are mostly volunteers. At the diocesan level, the bishop is the head. It has members who are selected from the different branches of the association at the parish level. The Niger Diocese welfare Association has a working president who reports to the Bishop or his representative. The name given to the association is changeable depending on the inclination and choice of the bishop at the time.

Geographically, NWA covers the Niger diocese and could extend on special request and need. The organisation is funded by the general members of the church at parish level. The parishes raise funds through welfare offerings collected at Sunday services. They can raise funds as donation or at fund-raising ceremonies for particular events. In situations of emergency, both general fundraising and personal donations are done. Each parish has a separate bank account. At the diocesan level, they conduct what is called home aid which is a yearly programme. The Bishop is saddled with the responsibilities of carrying out all the welfare services. Each Arch-deaconry in the Niger diocese presents their gift to the diocese. They raise money through the sharing of quota to each parish in accordance with its financial capacity.

The NWA activities are mainly directed towards poverty alleviation. They go straight to the grassroots to assist the poor directly, sharing relief materials like

food items, drugs, clothing, amongst other resources. They also offer constant help in the form of emergency management, especially in disaster situations. They have a youth empowerment programmes at the parish level as well as micro credit facilities, free interest loans, vocational training etc.

6.5.2.3.2.4 The Emmanuel Charity

This is a poverty-alleviation outreach of the Synagogue Church of all Nations (SCOAN) headed by T. Balogun Joshua. The Emmanuel charity outreach is a section of the church activities under the auspices of Emmanuel television. It is a Lagos-based charity organisation with a scope of working within and outside Lagos State, especially within the Western part of the country and other places of their influence. The charity organisation is not based internationally, though it gets support from international bodies and sometimes it assists international bodies and other countries in poverty alleviation, especially in emergency situations. The Emmanuel charity organisation is majorly funded by SCOAN through the General overseer T.B Joshua. It also gets its funds from many well-meaning individuals and group within and outside Nigeria.

The Emmanuel charity activities range from direct relief distribution, empowerment programmes, to the provision of some basic facilities in communities. Youth empowerment is a major strength of the organization. Specifically, Emmanuel TV charity identifies latent and apparent talents in the young in sports, education, craft, technology and other areas. Emmanuel charity program does not discriminate in terms of ethnic tribe or state of origin when it comes to youth empowerment. Being a private religious organisation, the Emmanuel Television charity has a restricted scope due to its limited income sources.

6.5.2.3.3 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

6.5.2.3.3.1 Adaife Nnewi

ADAIFE is a non-governmental organisation based in Nnewi, Anambra state of Nigeria. It is an NGO founded by Lady Uche Emeka. It is a women's initiative, run by women and predominantly for the welfare of women, especially rural women around Nnewi and Anambra state as a whole. ADAIFE is a relatively small organisation with a limited area of coverage and little funding. This organisation gets its funds mainly by personal donations. Occasionally, it

receives donations from the government and some religious bodies within the country to run its projects and programmes.

As a women-oriented organisation, ADAIFE aims at improving the life of poor rural women and those in the relatively developed areas. It gives direct and indirect aid to these women to help them overcome poverty. This NGO does its work through microcredit loans, agricultural aid and entrepreneur empowerment which are directly monitored by its founder. ADAIFE also teaches women skills, how to develop such acquired skills, and to use the skills to generate income.

6.5.2.3.3.2 Youth Reformation and Awareness Centre (YRAC)

YRAC is a non-governmental organisation based in Abuja, North zone of Nigeria. It has a development centre in the FCT. The scope of its awareness seminars covers the whole country. The organisation is funded by donations from international and local charity organisations and individuals.

The YRAC is a literacy and development organisation. In its effort to eradicate poverty, it aims at developing the young holistically. It looks into the academic, social, psychological and other aspects of human development. It believes that only a properly brought up individual can stand firm and fight against poverty.

To achieve the above, the centre works with parents, teachers and any other groups who are involved in child upbringing by organizing training on administrative, management and parenting practices.

6.5.2.3.3.3 Total Health Organization (THO)

This is another non-governmental organisation which started as an indigenous group caring for street children. Since 1987, the organisation has extended its activities to helping the elderly, widows, orphans, and other poor people. Its objective is the promotion of good health for the poor and the needy through the provision of health care centres, homes for the handicapped, rehabilitation centres for the destitute, the establishment of vocational training and family planning centres, the provision of food and clothing, amongst others.

In 1991, the organisation had established a 100-bed, non-profit hospital complex at Ogbo hill in Aba, Abia state of Nigeria. It also established free community health care through rural mobile clinics reaching communities in

Abia state. It has also participated in the rehabilitation of some ex-youth offenders into their communities

The organisation is mainly funded by national and international donors as it has branches not only in Nigeria but also in Ghana, Togo and Australia.

6.5.2.3.3.4 Outreach Foundation (OF).

OF has its headquarters in Lagos and covers most of the states in the SW of Nigeria. Founded in 1981, its vision is to encourage and foster the development of Nigerian women and youth through education and empowerment on quality of life. Its mission is to mobilize, organize and empower the disadvantaged poor, particularly women and youths both politically, socially and economically through the provision of micro credit, information sharing, education and training. The activities of this organisation include a savings and credit scheme, training, business advisory services, seminars and workshops. According to the brochure of the organisation, the OF has extended credit facilities to 100 members under its economic empowerment programme. It has also successfully organized training programmes for its officers on group management, micro-enterprise management, financial and credit management, and several other activities that can alleviate poverty in the country. OF is mainly funded by members from within and outside the Lagos state of Nigeria.

6.5.2.4 Academics interviewed

The researcher also interviewed two academics who have done work on poverty. One is currently working with institutions for poverty alleviation. Their selection was based on the fact that the researcher knows them personally as one of them works for JDPC which is a Catholic religious organisation. These academics are:

6.5.2.4.1 Uzi, Uzom

A retired lecturer from Anambra state college of education who has devoted all her life to teaching and working on development issues, especially issues of poverty in rural areas. At her retirement, she was employed by the JDPC in one of the dioceses in Anambra state, where she works as a consultant as well as an adviser to the commission.

6.5.2.4.2 Aku, Anthony

He is a senior lecturer at Imo State University. His research areas are on poverty, society and Church. He wrote a book in 2012 on poverty. He served the Imo state government on the committee for poverty alleviation between 2000 and 2006.

6.5.3 How the research was carried out

This study was carried out in full conformity with the ethical rules and guidelines on qualitative fieldwork research at the University of Leeds, and approved by this institute. The ethical approval letter, as well as the study's themes and contents used in the interviews and FGDs are all contained in the appendices 1-13.

At the operational level, the following key general features of how the research was carried out can be noted: The selection process for locations as well as participants for FGD and interviews; the selection of both date and time for the focus groups and interviews; the mode of invitation; the purpose and importance of the FGDs; the numbers of FGDs and interviews conducted; how the researcher gained access to both the community leaders, government and other private organisations; setting out standardized questions for both the focus groups and interviews; the use of some technical equipment like audio tape, reports and analysis for each focus groups and interviews; brief introduction on the day of FGDs; as well as issues of confidentiality and right of withdrawal. Most of these are contained in appendices while others are explained below.

The data collection started in June 2013 and was concluded in November 2013. After the whole process, the FGD and interviews transcriptions came to 96,039 words or approximately 318 pages. With the fieldwork completed, a formal data analysis and thesis write-up began, following the researcher's return to United Kingdom.

6.5.3.1 Focus Groups Discussions

The researcher employed the help of a volunteer from some of the zones, to help gain access to both the community leaders and participants. The researcher brought together groups who use a common language (native or

vernacular), to describe their challenges and experiences. To this, the researcher made use of "Pidgin English"[12], which almost everyone speaks and understands, whether in the rural or urban areas. Examples of Pidgin English are: "hawu yu dey" meaning "how you are?" "wetin de hapin?" meaning "what is happening?", "Dem dey go dia chop rais" meaning "they are going there to eat rice" etc. This was used by the researcher in an effort to give all participants an opportunity to contribute without having to compete or struggle to talk. In all, the study had about 62 participants for the FGDs (see appendix 9 and 12).

Most of the meetings were held during the weekends and evenings, because many people have to go to their businesses or attend to their farms. At every meeting, the researcher, who arrived typically one hour before the start time, kept the place tidy and welcomed participants on arrival. Thereafter, the researcher explained the purpose of the meeting to them by way of a brief introduction (see appendix 4),[13] and had them signed the consent form (see appendix 5),[14], and those who could not sign, gave their consent through voice recording, though there were a few others who resisted both, due to religious reasons. The issue of confidentiality[15] was also explained to them. Participants were given tags and made to sit in a rounded square for easy flow of discussion, based on the research themes and questions (see appendix 2).

The environment and the atmosphere for the meeting were generally free from all forms of tensions, as the researcher tried as much as possible to hold back

[12] 'Pidgin English' in Nigeria is a common lingua franca spoken across the entire nation. Sometimes it is called 'Brokin English'. In his report, Ihemere, (2006) noted that it is a native language which approximately 160 million of Nigerians speak. Pidgin English is mainly used during informal conversations and in mixed gatherings where elites and non-elites are present. Additionally, there are other dialects spoken among the 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria.

[13] Krueger, (1998b) opines that introduction in every FGDs is very important as it will produce a friendly environment for the discussion to arise - the success of the focus group depends critically on the introduction. A typical focus group introduction should include the following points: a welcome, a brief explanation of the topic to be discussed, the guidelines to be followed in the discussion and the first opening question.

[14] The need for the consent form is to adhere to ethical rules that advocate treating the participants with respect. This is done by using language that is well worded, informing the participants of the nature, time, and methods of the research, as well as how the research findings will be used (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990). Consent can also be obtained verbally for people who may wish not to put down anything as a result of religious purpose or not being able to write. In the case of not being able to write or sign, use of tape recorder may help to get their consent. One has to be sure that there are one or two witnesses who are able to write and sign the consent form on their behalf. In the case of refusing to sign for religious reasons, consent should be taken using a tape recorder and making sure that there are one or two witnesses as well.

[15] The issue of confidentiality was made known to all the participants at the initial stage of the selection, for both FGDs discussions and interviews. Participants were advised that any information given will be treated with anonymity and without making it available for any other persons or purposes. Hence, all names of organizations, participants and communities for the FGDs discussion were anonymized. This is stated in the consent form, participant form and letter of invitations.

his opinions. The researcher at times paused or probed to obtain more information (Krueger, 1998b). The researcher controlled all forms of verbal and non-verbal reactions towards participants, to provide an environment to express their views. Failure to do this would hamper their willingness to express themselves.

At the end of every meeting, which lasted not more than an hour, the researcher took an initiative of offering some refreshment to participants during the FGDs, but never gave out money to anyone. Thereafter, the researcher showed appreciation to participants, and when they were all gone, conducted a check, to see that the recorder did actually work during the session of the meeting, and then at home, set to transcribe the reports for proper analysis.

6.5.3.2 Interviews

The respondents from the organisations whether directors, deputy directors or staff members, were notified through a letter or invitation. The letter had the same content as was used in the case of FGDs, including the contact details of the researcher, the date, time and place of the interview, which were entirely at the discretion of the participants, because of their office schedules (see appendix 7 for the contents of the invitation letter). In other words, the researcher allowed them to determine the most convenient time and place for the interview. Nevertheless, the researcher persuaded participants to allow the meeting point to be at their offices, as this would be helpful, should there be need to make reference to any documents. About 2-3 days were given to respondents to decide whether they wanted to participate. Thereafter, the researcher, a day before the actual day of interview, reminded participants again and confirmed the time and place. The contacts were done mainly through phone calls.

During the actual interviews, the researcher travelled either by bus or taxi, always setting out on time due to bad roads. Before the beginning of interviews, the researcher explained, as in the case of FGDs, the purpose of the study and the confidential nature of the whole processes. Consent forms (see appendix 5) were signed, and thus began the interviews with introductory questions and main questions based on the theme of the research (see appendix 3). During the interviews, there were always probing questions that helped obtain more

information on particular issues. Verbal and non-verbal reactions that might be detrimental to the respondents were avoided, in order to give them freedom of expression. Each interviews lasted between 40-60 minutes. The researcher later, during free periods especially in the evening, embarked on the transcription of the interview material for subsequent analysis.

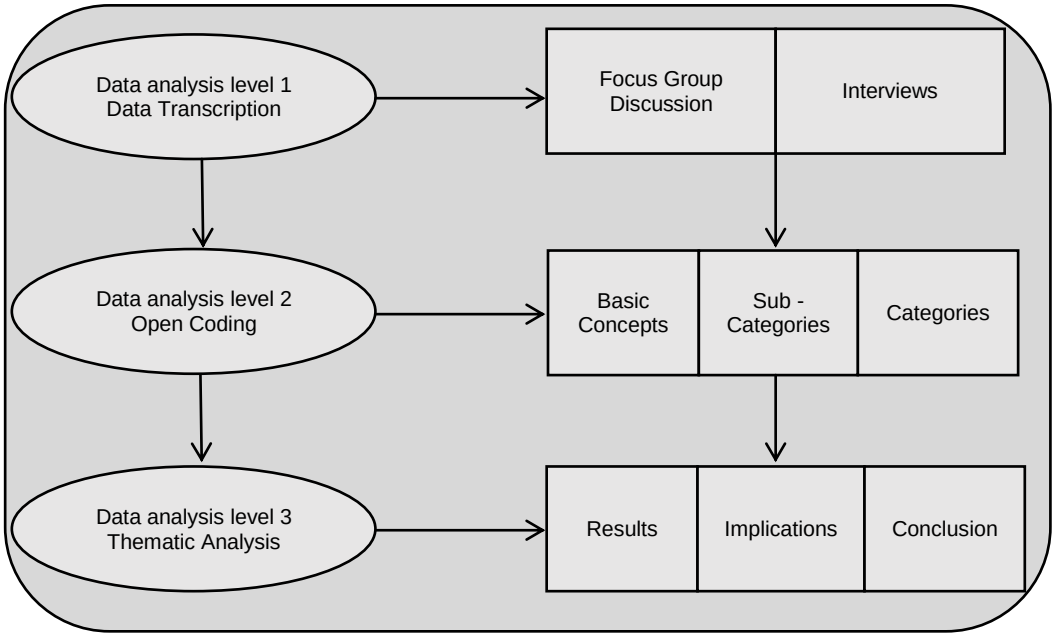
Interviews conducted for the academics were mainly done either at the person's home or in a park following invitation from the researcher, considering the insecurity issues in Nigeria especially from kidnappers and 'Boko Haram'.

6.6 Data analysis

Data analysis and thesis write-up started simultaneously following the researcher's return from fieldwork. Prior to this, there was a meeting between the researcher and the supervisors to brief them on the outcomes and experiences of the fieldwork. Data analysis was done using Nvivo 2010, a software used in qualitative data analysis. This software helps in the process of coding, retrieving and searching texts. It helps also in the storage and organization of data for proper management. Data was transferred into a file for the purpose of making electronic reference and retrieval. The Nvivo was helpful, not only in storing data, but also in editing and annotating of information.

With access to electronic data, it was easier to organize information into codes and themes for better thematic analysis (Creswell, 1998, 2002). In line with Creswell (2002), this study employed three levels of data analysis as is shown in figure 2, and reveals what is referred to as the first or initial level of analysis, which consists of transcribed data from interviews and FGDs. There is also the second level of data analysis that consists of open coding, which involves categories, sub-categories and basic concepts. Finally, the third level involves the thematic data analysis, which makes use of axial coding of themes (Creswell, 1998, 2002).

Figure 2: The three data analysis levels

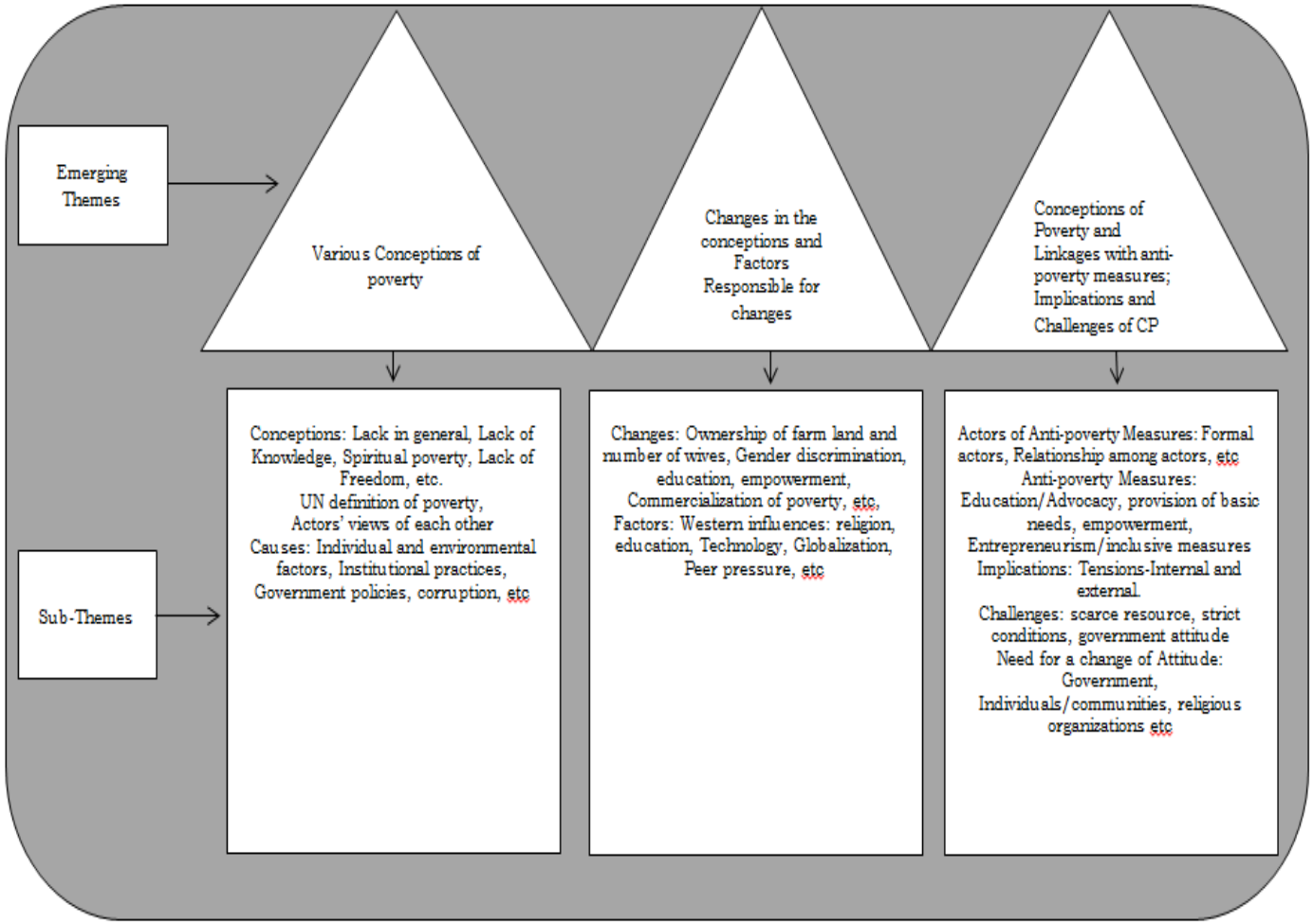


Source: Creswell, (1998)

6.6.1 Open coding

This started immediately after the completion of data transcription and storage. Open coding involved using the basic concepts that first appeared in the literature review. These concepts were mainly on the definitions and conceptualisations of poverty by the people and the actors of APMs from various APOs. Sub-categories or sub-themes were evolved from these basic concepts to establish a continuum. The sub-categories further leads to segmentation of information about the major themes of the study (Creswell, 1998, 2002). The study analysed every response from both respondents and participants and coded them accordingly. The coded themes used from the literature review are as shown in figure 3.

Figure 3: Coded themes (adapted from Creswell, 1998)



In the course of coding, more sub themes were discovered and recoded, and themes that overlapped were grouped together.

6.6.2 Thematic analysis

The conclusive part of the analysis was done through linking the conceptualisation of poverty with the implications in the last chapter of the work. This linking process enabled and helped in the generation of findings. This is in line with Creswell (1998): “Once an initial set of categories is developed, the researcher identifies a single category as the central phenomenon of interest and begins exploring the interrelationships of categories called axial coding-causal conditions, which influence the central phenomenon, the strategies for addressing the phenomenon, the context and the intervening conditions that shape the strategies, and the consequences of understating the strategies” (p. 151). Hence, all the information was linked up with implications and suggestions for future research.

6.6.3 The reliability of data

Trustworthiness of data signals a framework for making decisions as to how qualitative information is shared and applied to other contexts (Pretty, 2004). In view of this, the study has adopted some criteria to argue for the reliability of data.

In the first instance, this study involved several respondents from various walks of life (social, academic, religious, private and individuals). This indeed, was judged as meeting the objectives of the researcher. This study built its findings on the varied opinions of the poor and actors of APMs from various APOs. Data has been presented as being adequate, as respondents had expressed their views which represent their own realities (Pretty, 2004). Involving the people, especially the poor and actors from various APOs, gave a sense of belonging to participants, and widen the horizon of their own realities.

It is strongly believed that, based on the reliability of this data, other researchers in some developing countries, where VoP has not been used, might employ the same or some of the principles in this research, and adopt and contextualize them as it concerns their situations. This study meets the criteria set down by Strauss and

Corbin (2005) on acceptable standard and research process verifications. Hence, this study took into account the issues of sample, gender, status, amongst others.

Creswell (2002:24) advanced a number of criteria that justify the trustworthiness of data. Some of these criteria are: Did the study generate concepts, and how systematically were the concepts related? Were there signs that the concepts and its linkages were developed well? Were there signs that the theory varied? Is it possible to notice from the analysis, an account of change? In other words, did the study take into account the issue of change (Creswell, 2002)? To the best knowledge of the researcher, this study complied with these criteria.

In the chapters that follow, this study presents its findings on the pluralism in the understanding of poverty in Nigeria, from the poor, non-poor and actors of APMs from various APOs. Attention is focused on the different conceptions, causes and factors contributing to poverty. There is also discussion of the changes in poverty conceptualisations and the underlying drivers. The roles of APOs are discussed in line with APMs used in the fight against poverty, as well as the implications of this pluralism for poverty reduction efforts.

7 Conceptions of poverty, causes and factors contributing to poverty

7.1 Introduction

This chapter and the following chapters give an account of the findings concerning the pluralism in the understanding of poverty in Nigeria, from participants in FGDs and interviews. The emerging themes from these findings are:

- Varying conceptions of poverty
- Causes and factors contributing to poverty
- How poverty conceptualisations change
- Basic factors necessitating these changes
- Anti-poverty measures
- The implications of pluralism
- Need for a change of attitude concerning manner of practices and implementations of anti-poverty measures

The key purpose of this chapter is to discuss the different conceptions of poverty from the viewpoint of the poor, and actors from different anti-poverty organisations (APOs) in Nigeria. It equally highlights the differences and similarities in the conceptualisations of poverty, as well as the characteristics of a poor and non-poor person based on the data from participants. Further, it analyses and discusses the causes, socio-economic factors and institutional practices contributing to pluralism in the understanding of poverty.

7.2 Varying conceptions of poverty

Poverty is a major social problem that has defied universally acceptable definitions. It constitutes a major issue and constraint towards the development of both human societies and human beings (Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, 2003; Akindola, 2010; Aderonmu, 2010; Onagunisiaka, et al., 2014). The conception of this phenomenon ranges, and is usually related to the experiences of people, in terms of those who have experienced poverty and those who work to alleviate poverty. It may be

argued that, because people belong to different social groups or classes, ideas and definitions of social conditions are bound to differ (Tade, 2013). Perhaps, this accounted for the pluralism in the conceptions of poverty among our research participants. It is important to note that the variety of responses received indicated differences between participants' perceptions and experiences. There are those who, due to lack of basic needs of life, have experienced poverty; and those who, as agents of APOs have not experienced poverty, but have perceived it through their association with the poor. This then, can give rise to the understanding of this social condition from different perspectives.

Though Foster, et al. (1984) and Gunter and Gottfried (2013) argued on the traditional single income conceptualisation of poverty and multi-dimensional conceptualisation of poverty respectively, findings from this present study have revealed different and additional perceptions and conceptions of poverty. For instance, the evidence from this thesis shows varied definitions of poverty from among the poor, APOs' staff and in some cases similarities. Furthermore, the findings of this study show that some APOs' staff members have various ideas about how other staff within their own, and across other APOs, understand poverty. Hence, this study's findings reveal the following conceptions of poverty, namely: poverty as generally a 'lack', material poverty, intellectual poverty, spiritual poverty, locational poverty, gender/child rights abuses, lack of information, lack of respect amongst others. These are explained below.

7.2.1 Poverty as generally a "lack"

Poverty is viewed as a condition of 'lack'. Participants from Ikare-Akoko, Otobi, Ajamgbadi, Eziagulu and Umunede communities were of the opinion that this 'lack' may include lack of basic needs, lack of social amenities, lack of respect, lack of knowledge, lack of freedom, etc. This lack may be at the individual level (personalized lack of basic social amenities) and communal levels (when community lacks the basic infrastructural facilities). The unanimous conceptions in relation to a situation of 'lack' simply indicate that Nigeria and its people suffer from

unmet needs. For instance, an interviewee, Daniel Obi, a PhD holder with directorship status from a religious organisation opined that anyone in lack is poor:

> *"For me, poverty is a lack. Every person who lacks one thing or the other in any area of life is a poor person".*

This submission shows that poverty is also associated with the lack of specific needs of a person as it relates to his/her phase of life. Obi cited the example of a widow, describing her as someone lacking a husband. According to him,

> *"…when we are talking of widow or widowhood, that woman that is a widow is poor in terms of living without a husband. She has no husband again, and therefore a lack of husband makes her poor, as far as things relating to husband and wife are concerned. She is poor in this direction".*

Although marriage is contracted to last until death or divorce, the above interviewee conceives widowhood as a situation and status of lack. This is understandable in the Nigerian context, where the man is the breadwinner with little incursion of women into the labour market. The limited opportunity given to poor women to work has implications. Whether at the emotional or financial levels, the demise of a loved one depicts a reduction in the collective possessions. Further analyses of responses from this interviewee show that a widow lacks emotional bonding and companionship, while the status may redefine who she relates to within the community and who has relationships with her. This may further compound her problem in relation to what she can access and own in the community.

This perspective holds that nobody has everything that they desire. Insofar as people do not have all that they want at any point in time, they lack that thing. Bradshaw (2007) in his assessment of community poverty explains poverty to be a lack in any of the basic necessities of life. Such basic needs may include food, medical resources or shelter. In all, this present study argues that what is seen as a necessity to one person may not necessarily be same for the other. For example,

one may have money, but lack good health. There abound situations where one is rich materially, one has 'everything' in material terms but doesn't have good health. Furthermore, one might be rich materially but does not have knowledge. In this case, one views oneself as poor and will be judged to be poor intellectually as far as knowledge and intellectual acquisition are concerned. In other words, no person is free from deficiency of some kind, and hence, this conception of poverty sees "everyone as being poor", once there is a lack of something. Hence, it becomes hard to differentiate between a poor and non-poor person. This may however be problematic and may have impact on policy making, partly because if everyone is poor, how do we decide who to help? That everyone is poor by virtue of lack of one thing or the other, may not indicate being absolutely poor in the real sense. It means if one lacks basic things for daily or life sustenance, the person may be regarded as poor. For instance, a couple who are very rich but were unable to reproduce may see themselves as poor, but may not be viewed by the public as such. This finding stands clear from the findings of some of the literature, which categorize and distinguish people as poor and non-poor (see for example Hope, 2004; Spicker, 2007; Unwin, 2008; Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, 2003).

Again, there may be poverty as lack of amenities, including not having the requisite social amenities. This view is supported by a participant from Anyigba community in Kogi state, NC Nigeria, who said:

> *"…look at our community from the beginning to the end, no basic amenities, no clean water, no good roads, no electricity; we have nothing in this community. This is poverty".*

Social amenities, which most Nigerians lack, include a power supply, good roads, potable water, qualitative health care delivery centres, and quality educational facilities amongst others (CBN, 2013). At the household level, a woman who earns money daily by grinding pepper through regular power supply ultimately becomes disempowered with poor and irregular electricity. At the educational level, the problematic situation in Nigerian educational institutions has prompted several others with resources to seek alternative education abroad. Those who desire the

same, but lack the requisite financial power, lack access to such resources. Hence, they are conceived as having poverty of amenities.

This same understanding of poverty as a lack of basic necessities was extended to include the necessities with which to care for others. For example, a female participant from Eziagulu community, SE Nigeria submitted that:

> "…*somebody is poor when the person lacks the basic necessities of life to take care of oneself and the people around him; and to me that is the definition of poverty".*

According to this participant, taking care of oneself entails being able to meet the necessary requirements of life such as shelter, medicines, food, and clothing, amongst others. Accordingly, this author opines that these requirements are important as they are based on the values of human dignity. Lack of any of these creates challenges in a person's life, and even more so, for the people around him. *"Taking care of oneself and the people around one"* contributes to the notable differences among the groups in the understanding of poverty, which may be attributed to the prevailing cultural norms and values of the ethnic group in the SE, where the above woman comes from. This may explain the understanding of poverty as having a connection with one's extended family.

The Igbos in the SE are known for their prevailing extended family system, which could affect how some of them understand poverty. To take care of the extended family is seen as the responsibility of the family. This could be a pointer to why this participant from Eziagulu community, in the SE, described poverty as a situation where one lacks the basic necessities with which to take care of one's family and those around one. Uchendu (2006) notes that the use of the term family in Igbo land is not limited to the immediate nuclear family, but, it encompasses relatives across the extended family. According to this view, it is expected that whoever is blessed in terms of wealth in the family, should take care of the people around them, and by extension the extended family. This generosity could sometimes even extend to the person's neighbours.

Further, there is also lack of access to facilities. For instance, an interviewee, Evaristus Odam, a PhD holder with Directorship status from a religious organisation based in Abuja, the FCT, responded that:

> *"…sometimes people have no access to facilities in the community; you are sick, even if, may be, you have the money to take care of yourself but no facilities, so when there is no such access and opportunities; you are also in 'lack'".*

Odam expressed the view that a person may have the money to purchase quality healthcare even when it is not available. He thus argued that, possession of money is immaterial, except when there is access to what is 'wanted' and 'needed'. This present study opines that this 'lack' in terms of access to facilities may be termed collective poverty as the whole community is affected. This is the absence of something that is valued by many. People might value education, and would love to give their children the opportunity to be educated but there is no access to such resources, Similarly, they might value marriage but are sometimes excluded and denied access to it as a result of one cultural inhibition or the other, such as the 'Osu caste system'[16] in Igbo land (to be explained later under the perceived causes of poverty).

This conception of poverty as generally a 'lack' is also viewed as relative. From the viewpoint of Vincent Eke, a respondent and secretary from a religious organisation, *"poverty is relative, because nobody is absolutely rich".* From this point of view, Eke seems to view poverty as a relative phenomenon and might not accept the idea that poverty could also be defined in absolute terms. This then contrasts the thought of Sen (2009) who argues that needs might be relative or absolute, depending on the social definition, as well as past experiences of the individual or community. This immediately brings to light the distinction between relative and absolute poverty. According to Alters (2009), absolute poverty signifies a situation where the basic needs of an individual are not met whilst relative poverty signifies

[16] 'Osu' system is a practice prevalent among the Igbos of the SE Nigeria. An 'Osu' person is a person who ran to the gods for protection during slavery or during wars. Such a person is regarded by society as a property of the gods and for that reason does not associate with other members of the community who are free born. An 'Osu''s child automatically become 'Osu'. It is still being practiced by all the Christian denominations in the SE, despite the efforts of Christianity to counter it.

a situation where these basic needs are not met when compared with the level at which other members of the society possess these basic needs. However, some studies who view poverty as a relative phenomenon have widely criticized the absolute definition of poverty (see Desai and Shah, 1988; O'Boyle, 1999; Madden, 2000). In particular, O'Boyle (1999) has argued that those in favour of an absolute definition of poverty are mostly economists who do so in order to relate it to economic issues such as the distribution of wealth and the means of supplying the material needs of mankind.

In summary, the evidence in this section indicates that poverty could be defined as lack of whatever an individual desires or values during a particular period. The above mentioned participants from FGDs and interviewees, in understanding poverty to be a 'lack', expressed the view that a 'lack' could take various dimensions. It is also evident from the views of the above respondents that poverty is lack of access to anything that is considered basic or vital to one's general life condition. The conception here is not that poverty is based on lack of everything, but lack of anything or a particular thing considered by an individual as personally important. These participants therefore see what it means to 'lack' something in a comprehensive manner, which creates a broader and richer understanding of poverty. Based on this fact that every individual lacks one thing or the other, it might then be difficult to classify anybody as being poor or not. This therefore explains the relative nature of poverty and the belief that no individual is totally rich or free from wants.

7.2.2 Lack of money

Narayan et al, (2000:267) argued that the lack of basic infrastructure (particularly roads, transportation, and water) is seen as a defining characteristic of poverty. However, the understanding of poverty by participants from Ulakwo, Ikare-Akoko, Ajamgbadi, Anyigba, Umunede, Oboti, Afaha-Eket, and Eziagulu communities, as well as respondents from private and religious non-governmental organisations, goes beyond this to include lack of money. This is described as material or economic poverty, and this leads to a failure to meet the basic needs of life. For

instance, a male participant from Ajamgbadi community in Lagos state, SW Nigeria, asserts that:

> *"…poverty is lack of money. If you don't have money to buy food, drink, build house, buy clothes for yourself and your household, then you are poor".*

This participant's position is in line with the findings of Oyeranti and Olayiwola (2005) who state that the 'basic needs' approach conceptualizes poverty as a severe deprivation of some basic human needs both at the individual and household level. It designates poverty as deprivation in terms of material requirements needed to minimally fulfil basic human needs. This seems to bear a common resemblance to the way most participants mentioned above understand poverty. One factor that is consistent in the understanding of poverty by the people and the APOs interviewed by this author is that poverty means the unavailability of money to provide the basic necessities of life as discussed in the literature. These are food, shelter, clothing, education and health.

Besides the lack of money emphasized by the participants from the communities and organisations mentioned above, provision of basic necessities of life kept recurring in all their views. By this is meant that, when one lacks these things, one is seen as being poor. Of the basic needs of life mentioned, much emphasis was placed on an inability to eat due to a lack of money, which often leads to death. A female participant from Eziagulu community in Anambra state, SE Nigeria said:

> *"…when you don't have money to buy food for your children, they suffer hunger and catch any disease that comes their way and suffer malnutrition and die. This is poverty".*

Poverty of this kind makes oneself and ones' families more vulnerable to external shocks like disease, stress, suffering, malnutrition and death. Vulnerability, as discussed in the literature, is a source of growing concern for the poor as those who experience it lack the buffers to prevent shocks, thereby limiting the ways that these households will respond to insecurities and risk (Best, 2013). Vulnerability becomes an important aspect of participatory poverty assessment which is not captured in conventional surveys of poverty. Hence, Kanbur and Squire (1999)

argue that, with vulnerability, one understands that poverty is not just lacking something but also of being vulnerable to losing the little one has.

Almost all the above named participants in FGDs did not make mention of the quality of basic necessities of life. Their major concern is just to find something they will eat daily, and not necessarily the quality of what they are eating. For instance, even though all of them mentioned food as one of the most important of all the basic needs, most of them did not mention or emphasized the quality of food as paramount in discussing food as a basic necessity of life. This may possibly be due to the degree of poverty among them that force the poor not to have alternatives, as many of them are of the view that a beggar has no choice. Besides, they might also lack the education required to assess the quality of food they consume.

Some of the poor seem to live day by day, and are not certain that they will even have food to eat the next day. Many of them rely heavily on bush food and meat. A female participant from Eziagulu community in Anambra state, SE Nigeria said:

> *"…I am not even sure of what my family will eat this night and even tomorrow. Most times we rely on bush food and meat from our husband and when these are not available, our children go to school on empty stomach".*

The reason for the above opinion might be adduced to a lack of money as they cannot spend money to get food and meat from the market. How healthy the bush food and meat are, remains another puzzle to be answered. Many of these participants narrated how they have been hungry for days without having food to eat, and how their children often go to school on an empty stomach. Going to school on an empty stomach may not be associated with Nigerians alone. Cooper (2013), in her report on the scandal of food poverty in Britain, narrates how one out every four school children comes to school without having eaten any food. The report notes that limited access to food indicates how the socio-economic inequalities have broadened, leaving a huge number of people victims of unhealthy diet. This situation, the report maintains, is sometimes ameliorated by the United

Kingdom food emergency agency, as opposed to the situation in Nigeria, where there is no such agency.

Characterizing a poor and non-poor person seems to depend largely on whether one is able to feed oneself or not. Based on this, once one has food to eat, as a means to survive, one is regarded as not poor and vice versa. The inability to feed oneself, and not being sure where the next meal will come from, were the dominant basic needs that indicate a poor person according to participants. This is not surprising because of the multiple effects of hunger, which could lead to other compounding health problems that might destabilize and distract one from focusing on other things that could help change one's situation. This view is captured in the popular saying among the people that, "a hungry man is an angry man". By extension, an angry man is not in the right frame of mind for any economically productive activity, which further entrenches one into poverty. However, there were notable differences in the emphasis of the basic needs. Some emphasized food, while majority of the participants emphasized shelter, clothing, education, health, amongst others. This inability to have food might indicate what respondents might be lacking most and could be what made them think they are poor.

There is also the understanding of poverty as related to enjoyment of one's money. Having money to enjoy is an indication that a person is not poor. In other words, you are poor when you don't have money to enjoy. When asked what "enjoyment" connotes, the following response came up from a female participant at Ikare-Akoko community in Ondo state, SW Nigeria:

> *"Enjoyment connotes being able to afford money for drinks and other social activities that make life worth living. In my area, we cherish social activities and enjoyment very well, but this is only possible for the rich, and not for the poor. Chei!*[17]*, when will I be able to have money for enjoyment"*

Social activities include traditional festivals and age grade celebrations. It is understood from the above participant that only people who are wealthy, people who have money, can participate and carry out such social activities. Nevertheless,

[17] This is an exclamation mainly used in some tribes of Nigeria to show a state of regret with regard to what one is supposed to have, but not able to have for one reason or the other.

some poor can participate but with no financial involvement. Hence, it could be easily deduced that mostly the rich are the ones that could afford to enjoy themselves anytime they want. The poor, though they desire it, cannot afford to do so because of their economic status and as such, make do with drinking what the above participant referred to as "ogogoro"[18], which they do not like, but there is little choice. However, this situation might not be permanent, as poverty has been seen to be dynamic, in terms of people moving in and out poverty (Best, 2013).

In the same vein, another group of participants from Ajamgbadi community in Lagos state, SW Nigeria, understand poverty to mean not being able to organize "Owambe" (an extravagant party), for one's child-naming ceremony and related matters. A female participant from this community said:

"*…poverty is when I don't have money to organize 'owambe' for my child".*

'Owambe' connotes an extravagant party associated with the Yorubas of Nigeria. This involves lots of dancing, music, food and throwing money on the body of a person dancing. People who come for the party normally dress in 'aso-ebi' or 'aso-oke'[19] and are in groups. This type of party normally takes many weeks or even months to prepare and is expensive. It can lead to blocking of roads and streets on the 'owambe' day. All this has to do with money. Therefore, organizing a good "owambe" is an indication that somebody is not poor and vice versa. The poor sometimes borrow money to organize grandiose parties, so as to feel accepted and to have a sense of belonging in the society. This is a challenge of societal status, consumption and classism, (Eastman, et al. 1999), which is prevalent in many contemporary capitalist societies. People go beyond their means in order to feel accepted by the higher classes. This has the consequences of pushing them into borrowing and not being able to pay later, as there is no steady source of income. However, it was discovered from these participants from Ajamgbadi community that lack of money does not necessarily mean not having money for the

[18] This is a highly concentrated local gin or whisky that is affordable for the poor, unlike the refined gin, whisky and other spirits.
[19] 'Aso-ebi' or 'Ashoke' are clothes worn by friends of the person throwing the 'owambe'.

basic needs, but rather not having money to enjoy a richer social life, to throw and spread around, as in the case of ‘owambe’.

Many actors from APOs also see poverty as lack of money for the provision of basic needs, but used the word ‘deprivation’ to denote it. One of the respondents, Peter Johnson, a staff and respondent from a government organisation aptly said this:

> “…*poverty is fundamentally a deprivation; it is deprivation of money which makes for “commodious existence”,* and when probed further as regards what is “commodious existence”? He said: “*When we are talking about “commodious existence”, we are talking about money to provide food, shelter, good health ….”*

These submissions confirm that poverty is seen in monetary terms, and as such falls in line with the earlier findings of some researchers, who understand poverty in a uni-dimensional way, basing their conception of poverty on income or wealth alone (Foster, et al., 1984). Nevertheless, several studies have reinforced the fact that a purely uni-dimensional approach to the understanding of poverty is no longer tenable. Hence poverty conceptualisations should involve explanatory factors like income, deprivation issues, human capital, basic functioning and capability, powerlessness, voicelessness, empowerment, security (see for example World Bank, 2000/01; Narayan et al., 1999; Gerster and Zimmermann, 2003; Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, 2003; Gunter and Gottfried, 2013). Nevertheless, it is still worth highlighting the apparent centrality of “poverty as lack of money” according to many of the participants in this thesis. Understanding poverty to mean lack of money was presented in diverse ways that clearly show its centrality to the participants’ knowledge of poverty. Lack of money therefore becomes one among the many factors that qualifies a person as being poor, i.e. unable to have money to meet up with daily provisions of basic needs.

In summary, the evidence in this section reveals that the definition of poverty is conceived specifically as lack of money. Lack of money according to these participants could bring up multiple problems in the life of an individual like frustration, diseases and death. It is believed that if one has abundant money, one will be in a better condition to have access to basic things of life such as shelter,

health facilities, good nutrition, and general enjoyment. The views in this section also connote that if someone is not suffering from lack of money, that person can have the financial ability to cater for his family members and help them to escape from poverty in contrast to one who lacks money.

7.2.3 Poverty as exclusion of one's opinion from public policy-making

Forno (2008:56) affirmed the importance of representation as it helps make the words of the poor meaningful, for an audience that does not share their same conceptual maps, as well as shape the way the voices are included within the debates they aim to influence. But the findings of this study reveal the importance of the poor's opinions and ideas in relation to feelings of inequality, various forms of social exclusion specifically opinion exclusion and the making and implementation of public policy. Participants from Umunede, Ikare-Akoko, and Ajamgbadi communities were of the view that, if individuals are excluded from issues that mostly concern them, then they can be categorized and described as poor. For instance, one of the participants from Ikare-Akoko community in a proverbial manner, said:

> *"An adage says, if a rich man is talking, a poor man cannot claim to have a better idea. That is, the opinion of a poor man in the face of a rich or powerful man is useless. This defines the nature of poverty on the part of the poor in Nigeria*".

Though opinion exclusion can be seen as a specific case of social exclusion, the issue of exclusion from public policy-making in relation to the understanding of poverty in Nigerian society is different from the issue of social exclusion as a consequence of poverty. According to Narayan (1999), social exclusion includes all the institutional and societal processes that prevent certain groups of people from engaging fully in the social, cultural, economic and political life of the society in question. The UN (2010) explains that social exclusion and poverty "stem from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, inequality, unbalanced rural/urban development, unequal distribution of assets or unequal access to services, persistent conflicts and instability, often resulting from long-term exclusion" (p. 67). The main focal issue of social exclusion everywhere is the powerlessness of those who are being excluded.

In this present study, poverty is understood as the failure of government and policy-making actors or experts to recognize and consider the opinions of the poor in the course of making and implementing important policies. Fatima Husseni, a female respondent and staff from a government organisation said:

> *"I see Nigeria as a country where the poor's feelings or opinions do not count when designing policy, and our government does not seem to reckon with the opinions of ordinary man on the street*".

The above opinions were summarized by Marg Uda, a female interviewee and founder/director of a private NGO when she said that:

> *"Anybody whose opinion is not recognized is a poor man or woman, and I believe this is the condition of the poor in Nigeria*".

Though not too distinct, the above expressions are likely to be different from the representation and social exclusion arguments, especially the argument of the UN (2010) which holds that "the ability of a person living in poverty to improve his or her material and non-material well-being depends on the socio-political structure of the society the person lives in" (p. 68). That is, the institutional structures and practices such as culture, religion, amongst others, play a role in the social exclusion presents in a given community. In other words, not only is it possible to be poor and excluded because of discrimination based on other factors, poverty itself can attract its own exclusion. By this is meant that people can also discriminate against the poor just because they are poor even if they belong to the same ethnic group as the discriminator.

The evidence in this section have shown to some extent that poverty could be understood as lack of recognition of an individual's or group of individuals' opinions. These individuals are often the poor who in most cases constitute the greatest number of people within a society and whose voices are not reckoned with, especially in the course of designing and implementing public policies.

7.2.4 Poverty as marginalisation

The findings of this thesis are interesting because they reveal that marginalisation is a category of poverty in Nigerian society. In the context of Nigerian environment, it means a situation whereby a geographical region (despite its huge natural resources) is denied adequate infrastructural development, key political positions or appointments, adequate political representatives, and important role in national decision making. A denial of these factors can render such a region or community poor. It is different from exclusion because the people in a geographical region that is not poor in terms of huge mineral resources may be marginalized. The issue of marginalisation is a protracted concern in Nigeria where some societies, especially minorities, feel they are being neglected in terms of infrastructural and human capital developments. It is worth noting that this is also a problem in other countries and around the world such as in Ethiopia (see for example, Dercon, 2006). In Nigeria, conditions of marginal people have been discussed through other narratives, such as the desktop review of written material gathered from various sources by Oxfam, that did not include the poor and some marginalised communities (see Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke 2003:v). Also there are instances of local authorities ignoring the requests of the villagers and national government representatives who provide little or no information to the remote villages. Based on the above, government's insensitivity to the yearnings and agitations of the marginalized poor communities, according to the participants from Afaha-Eket, *"keeps on rising",* despite the resources or inputs being generated from some of these villages and communities.

Most of the participants from Afaha-Eket, Umunede, Ajamgbadi and Anyigba communities made reference to the issue of marginalisation as a defining factor of poverty. For instance, one of the participants from Umunede community remarked that:

> *"It is only the poor people that are neglected in the society; nobody will do without the rich. If you are neglected, it means you are marginalised. And if you are marginalised, it means you are very poor*".

The issue of ethnicity is seemingly involved here. What the above participant attempts to support is the idea that if one is poor, it can "attract" neglect and by extension results in further poverty. In other words, this then creates a vicious cycle of poverty. Another interviewee, Jude Uchem, a PhD holder respondent and branch director from a government organisation argued that:

> *"For me, the feeling of being marginalised is nothing but poverty*".

Similarly, one of the participants from Anyigba community in Kogi state, NC Nigeria remarked:

> *"If you are perceived as belonging to the lowest class in a society, you will be marginalised. And who is the person with less quality or value in any society if not the poor*?"

The above view brings in the issue of classism as is found in a subaltern which according to Biswass (2009) refers to a group of people who are politically, socially and geographically excluded from some structures of the society. As such, they are denied means of a voice in their own society. No doubt, marginalisation has become a household name in Nigeria, especially in some of the towns and villages from which abundant mineral resources are generated and being regularly explored by the federal government for national income, but without corresponding infrastructural developments in those communities. Ayoola et al (2001:1) argued that characteristics such as isolation and alienation, occurring at both the personal and community level, are expressions of poverty, and have significance for how poverty is experienced differently by men and women. But the issue of marginalisation, as revealed by this study, is becoming a prominent factor in the literature on poverty conceptualisation.

The opinions of participants in this section indicate that poverty is defined in terms of neglect in the society. In this case, it is either, an individual puts himself in this position of marginalisation by virtue of self-feelings or the society relegates him to this level based on his status as poor. Therefore, poverty in this case means that it is only the poor who are regarded as possessing limited values in the society and as such could be neglected.

7.2.5 Poverty as brain drain

This is also another area of particular interest in the findings of this study, because 'brain drain' has not yet been really situated within an exploration of poverty in the literature. This present study shows that the phenomenon of brain drain has become an explanatory factor of poverty in Nigeria. According to 'Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 1999' as published by National Population Commission (Nigeria) (2000), the poor economic base and political instability of the country have driven out many skilled professionals. Participants from Ajamgbadi, Ulakwo, Otobi, Anyigba, Umunede communities and respondents from government and private organisations were of the view that many people, especially professionals and experts, migrate to other countries because of poverty. One of the interviewees, Jude Uchem, opined that,

> "…*brain drain cannot be separated from poverty in Nigeria as a huge number of scholars and professionals continuously leave for advanced and developed nations claiming to be searching for better living condition".*

Anthony Aku, a PhD holder and academic, also attested to this in his remark:

> *"…brain drain is poverty because bad economy and poor remuneration are cited by the victims of brain drain as reasons".*

Further, many participants from Ajamgbadi, Ikare-Akoko, Umunede and Ulakwo communities expressed the views that many left the country in search of better and fruitful environment. For instance, one male participant from Ajamgbadi community in Lagos state, SW Nigeria said:

> "…*if I had a relation in America, London or Canada, I would not be suffering like this, because those countries among others, are rich with good economy".*

These expressions from participants as regards brain drain showed that, to them, the issue has a relationship with poverty. Though there may be counter arguments that brain drain is a measure for addressing domestic poverty, the impact on the economy and human capital development of Nigeria could be significantly negative

(Agaptus, 2011; Muhammad et al. 2012; see also Dodani and La Porte (2005) on the impact of brain drain on the developing countries).

In summary, the respondents' views in this section show that poverty could be conceptualized as brain drain. This connotes a situation of continuous migration of Nigerians to other developed countries because of poor economy and living conditions, and with the notion of making financial remittance to poor family members at home in order to help them escape from poverty.

7.2.6 Lack of knowledge and information

It was discovered that poverty could be perceived as lack of knowledge, which is termed educational poverty or intellectual poverty. This is the opinion of Anthony Aku, an academic, and Marg Uda, a private NGO founder. According to them, lack of information has a relationship with lack of knowledge. Being intellectually poor may indicate lack of knowledge and information. Specifically, Uda added:

> *"...I see a person who lacks essential information as very poor, and that is why we established an 'awareness centre' to propagate the importance of information in every area of somebody's life".*

Britz (2007) defines a lack of information as a "situation in which individuals and communities, within a given context, do not have the requisite skills, abilities or material means to obtain efficient access to information, interpret it and apply it appropriately. This is further characterized by a lack of essential information and a poorly developed information infrastructure" (P. 194). The word *'essential'* appears both in Britz and in the respondent's submission. By '*essential information'*, Britz (2007) meant information that is needed for survival and development with regard to the basic needs of an individual or a community. This '*essential information'* is seen as a public good, which from an economic perspective is a good that is non-exclusionary and open to all without payment (Parkin et al., 2012). Lack of information is seen as one of the greatest challenges facing the world today, especially in Third World countries, which, if not given attention, might have a negative effect on the cultural, economic and socio-political development of a nation (Britz, 2007).

A leading type of poverty as conceptualized among the above mentioned respondents was intellectual poverty, which basically is a lack of knowledge. This also relates to lack of information that people need, in order to perform in society. According to Uzi Uzom:

> *"…when you don't have information, you don't know where your rights start and end…the only way the person can be liberated is by getting enough information about his environment".*

When people lack the needed information, they are powerless and are regarded as poor (Harande, 2009). This justifies the inclusion of powerlessness in poverty conceptualisation by the WDR (World Bank, 2000/01). This present study argues that knowledge and information are important in every society. A graduate, who is unemployed, may continue to be out of job owing to a poverty of information.

The amount of information at the disposal of an individual may be a function of a person's social network and location. When one needs a job and does not have job-market information due to geographical factors and lack of social networks, one may suffer from poverty of information. Moreover, one is powerless in terms of not being able to access information in a globalized information-driven world, where information and communications technologies play an important role. This may not necessarily be one's fault but a result of one's residential environment. In view of this, Lievrouw and Farb (2003) argue that there are information-rich (information haves) and information-poor (information have-nots) nations. They call this the 'digital-divide', which, according to OECD (2001), is a gap demarcating those who have access to modern information communications technologies (ICT) from those who do not. Poverty as lack of information, and as conceptualized in the context of Nigeria, may be a result of poor access to information, especially in the rural and semi-urban areas.

Interestingly, Floridi (2001) explains that the causes of a lack of information should not just be narrowed to a deficiency in ICT, but also to cultural and linguistic diversity, low levels of education, unaffordability, unavailability and inability to apply and benefit from the information. This may apply to Nigeria, where there is cultural

and linguistic diversity, and where the level of literacy is still staggering. People are not able to afford social, political or legal information, as well as not being able to derive the necessary benefit from information.

Educational attainment is a key distinguishing feature in this dimension of poverty. Through education, intellect, skills and experiences are developed. Hence Guttman (2003) argues that it is preferable to promote knowledge societies instead of information societies, as this shows how important education is to information. When people have low educational qualification, they are regarded as being poor, because they might not be able to articulate their ideas and thoughts on certain issues, especially those that pertain to their rights. Based on this, even if a person has money, the above respondent and founder of a private organisation, Uda, sees the person as being poor. This presents study however argues that sometimes, many people in this category of intellectual poverty exhibit unrefined manners probably as a result of not being educated. This then affects how people address them in society.

On the other hand, a respondent, Cyril Onukoba, a PhD holder with the status of director/manager from a religious organisation explained:

> *"The government does not provide good schools. Children are being denied of the opportunity of going to good school. At the end of the day, they wouldn't have anything doing. All these skill acquisition centres just started recently, so students as well as youths don't have anything to earn a living".*

The above respondent argues that people who could not afford to send their children to school emphasized the importance of education over other things. According to him, many of them cannot even pay school fees for their children. As a result, they have had their children sent out of school or forced to withdraw from school, due to the inability to pay school fees. In this case, these children are denied access to knowledge. Therefore, this present study argues that this situation tells a lot about the issue of human capital, as economic prosperity and functioning of a nation depends on increasing physical and human capital stock, of which education is one form.

Most government schools, the above participant revealed, are no longer functioning well due to lack of both maintenance and good qualified teaching personnel. This present study confirms this, as the researcher saw some of these dilapidating government schools during the course of data collection. Parents who cannot afford private schools end up having their children denied the opportunity of attending good schools. Most of these children affected, according to Cyril, end up going to skill acquisition centres, where they are not empowered. He remarked that the quality of education received by some children in some of these government schools dwindles in terms of facility, quality of teachers/lecturers, amongst other factors and these might impact negatively on the knowledge gained and the success of such children in the future.

In this section, the opinions given by participants concern an emphasis on poverty as lack of knowledge and information. It is believed that without adequate information for instance, it could be difficult for a poor individual to have an idea of how to be freed from poverty.

7.2.7 Moral/spiritual poverty

There is a spiritual dimension, which adds flavour to the pluralism in the understanding of poverty among research participants. The moral/spiritual issues became important in this study because they represent spontaneous reflections from participants. In other words, just like other definitions of poverty from participants, this author did not ask them specifically to talk about spiritual dimensions. Participants from Ulakwo, Eziagulu, Umunede and Otobi communities explained that poverty can also be described as a spiritual deficiency, a “lack of faith in God”, “lack of God’s knowledge”. For instance, a male participant from Ulakwo community in Imo state, SE Nigeria asserts:

> *“Poverty is when you don’t know God and when you lack good morals”.*

This participant, as well as others from the different communities mentioned above who shared this line of thought, seemingly holds a religious perspective.

Equally, the opinion of Daniel Obi underscores the point:

"…there is also the spiritual dimension of poverty in Nigeria. Lack of God's knowledge is lack of spirituality. Spiritual poverty is when we don't talk of God, when we fail to include God in whatever we are doing or saying or wherever we are going. The lack of God's knowledge brings a lot of problem to the society including material poverty, health poverty, etc".

From this perspective, it might be argued that poverty is not only a complex, socio-economic phenomenon, but also has a spiritual and moral dimension. This understanding of poverty as noted by the above participants is associated with lack of conscience and lack of morals. People are seen as poor in this direction when they display a lack of a sense of right and wrong in their living conduct. Also, this could mean when someone's actions are not godly, i.e. devoid of love for fellow human beings. This could apply to people who, for one reason or another, engage in some immoral actions like murder, robbery, raping among others. The above participants view these examples as ungodly and claim that they could be used to depict someone who is spiritually poor. Though these opinions on spiritual poverty were expressed mostly by religiously-committed people, as would be expected; people in the villages (all religious) where this author conducted FGDs also expressed similar opinions.

Following this line of thought from the above participants, this study argues that spiritual poverty denotes a situation where someone indulges in behaviour that is seen as irresponsible, such as taking illegal drugs, engaging in promiscuous attitudes, gambling and getting drunk on a regular basis. On this basis then, one can argue that this aspect of poverty is not only present in Nigeria, but also in our present-day society worldwide, though with varying degrees. For instance, Goetsch[20] (2012) argues that the real poverty in America is not economic poverty, but moral and spiritual poverty. According to him, moral poverty might be regarded as the major source of economic poverty and every other form of social problems. Citing the increase of incidents of gun-shooting in America, Goetsch (2012) argues that it is a result of lack of moral foundations, and this he called moral and spiritual poverty. In addition, Osalor (2012) believes that people experience spiritual poverty

[20] Goetsch David, though a specialist in occupational health and safety hazards, is politically a conservative, and as such holds a highly politically conservative view which might have influenced his opinion about the moral problems in America.

probably due to their own negligence of basic wisdom and morality, or as a result of the negligence of values within the culture they are part of. On the contrary, some people believe that someone can be poor as a result of misfortune coming from the unknown spirit; or the other way round, that idolatry brings or creates poverty (this will be discussed more on the perceived causes of poverty).

In identifying moral poverty and its importance for them, participants from Ulakwo and Eziagulu communities depict the state of morals among the youth in the society. Specifically, some of the participants from Ulakwo community in Imo state, SE Nigeria, opined:

> *"Moral decadents are very rampant here especially amongst the youth, and this is associated with poverty. This is a very great level of poverty because all those young boys and girls pose as problems to the society; if they were to be rich spiritually and intellectually, they will not become menace to the community".*

According to Durkheim (1995), this moral anomie as implicated in the opinion of the above participant is related to the globalization of culture and development of modern capitalist society, which most of the youths have been exposed to. It leads to social problems. Decency in dressing, ethical conduct, honest attitude, and principle guiding communal conduct is waning, leading to problems of crime and deviant among the youth. Indecent dressing in schools has seen the introduction of 'dress codes', to check excesses and 'moralize' dressing to reflect ethical standards. It is further argued that the spiritual is the foundation of the physical and social (Riwajanti, 2013). The adherents of this thought, according to Riwajanti (2013), argue that physical lack may not be unconnected with spiritual lack. In other words, whatever is missing in the physical can be fixed in the spiritual. In essence, a person that has fear of God will rule and will formulate policies that will impact positively on the socio-economic life of the citizenry. Such a person is conceived as 'God-sent'. This further suggests in the opinion of this present study that, one is considered rich when one lives a moral life, i.e obedience to the word of God and living in accordance with Bible principles and standards, and to the laws and codes of the nation.

Another female participant from Umunede, SS Nigeria described a morally poor person as someone who would not be able to make any meaningful progress. According to her:

> *"…if a person is morally or spiritually poor, no matter how much economic or monetary assistant he is given,… he will be unable to take advantage of those material supports".*

The above view corroborates the findings of Chapra (2007), who argues that there might not be any material development without moral development. On this view, material development requires an equitable management of resources. It suggests that material development might not be achieved unless a moral dimension is employed. Riwajanti (2013) claims that most development studies on poverty, as well as economic debates on poverty, have not attached much importance to the conceptualisation of poverty from the moral and spiritual point of view. For him therefore, poverty from the religious point of view is to be viewed not just from the material aspect but also from the moral as well as spiritual aspects.

The views of the respondents in this section show that without having an adequate knowledge and fear of God, an individual may continue to suffer from all forms of poverty. It is also believed that lack of spiritual understanding of God may bring about poor morality and by extension limiting the extent at which an individual could progress materially and be satisfied. The major point in this section therefore is that there is a significant relationship between poverty and morality/spirituality.

7.2.8 Poverty as lack of respect

In addition to the above conceptions, poverty is also perceived by participants from Ikare-Akoko, Otobi, Umunede, and Eziagulu communities as deprivation of self-esteem and self-respect and respect from others. For example, in Eziagulu community in Anambra state, SE Nigeria, a female participant said:

> "*…poverty is when you lack respect and dignity and are treated as nobody".*

According to the above participant, the poor lack self-respect, self-esteem, and may be easily distinguished by physical appearance. The following conception

from Joseph Kedi, a respondent and staff member of one religious organisation further validates this view:

> *"The concept of poverty is an embracing concept because a human being is not just a person we see physically but a person who is made up of body and soul. Though poverty is often associated with and limited to lack of social amenities, it encompasses more than that. It includes lack of dignity and respect".*

Obviously, poverty as a multi-dimensional phenomenon is also conceptualised as lack of respect and dignity, which is typically not as easily captured as material forms of poverty. Recently, the UN has extended its development goal agenda for 2030 to include the dignity and respect of the human person. If one believes in the mind-body relationship, as opposed to Cartesian dualism, where the two exist as distinct substances and are independent of the other, then there is the need to accord dignity and respect to the integral person, who is made up of body and soul (mind) (see Spenard, (2011). In this sense, it is fundamental that every person be accorded respect and dignity, whether materially poor or not. The belief in the integral component of a person as a composite of body and soul according to Mkabela (2005), eschews the humiliation being suffered by the poor, and might reverse the scenario, where some people are treated with the least dignity which at times dehumanizes them.

Participants from Eziagulu community cited some cultural practices that sometimes strip persons of their dignity, like the 'Osu' caste system and 'igba ajadu'[21] or things that great-grandparents of the person did centuries ago. For instance, a female participant from this community said:

> *"In this community, I and my family are treated without respect and dignity just like second class citizens simply because our great grandfather ran to the shrine for protection during the war which was forbidden and from then on we were classified as 'osu'".*

[21] 'Igba ajadu' is a wanning traditional practice predominant among the Igbos of the South-East of Nigeria. When a woman is bereaved of her husband, she is taken to a river at night where she is stripped naked and bathed in the river after which she goes home naked. It is believed that this process has purified her, and also proves that she is not responsible for the death of her husband.

In most of these situations, one ends up being excluded from the clan or the community and is treated without respect and dignity. In comparing African culture and the Western World, the author of this thesis laments the situation where animals like dogs are treated with every respect and dignity in the Western World, as opposed to how people are being treated in some African countries because they are poor. In Nigeria, participants from Anyigba, Otobi and Eziagulu communities, uniformly agree that most of this disrespectful treatment comes from army and police officers and some security agents. If one is a non-poor person, one is mostly treated with respect, both from the community as well as from the security officers. Other such treatment is inherent or rooted in cultures and traditions.

These participants from the above mentioned communities were of the view that a poor person has no respect shown to them by others, whereas a non-poor person has respect (including of state officials). Hence, conceptualizing poverty as lack of respect may be due to these participants' background. The issue of respect is notable, as many of these participants thought that if one does not have money, then nobody respects you. The person is denied respect from the young, children and family members that should ordinarily respect such a person, owing to that person's age. The more money you have, the more respect people have for you, and the more you are celebrated. Following from this, almost all poor people do experience disrespect in the society. This, often, comes from individuals or social groups and sometimes from family members.

Related to respect is appearance, i.e how somebody looks. This includes what one wears, where one lives and the material things one uses. A good number of participants from Ikare-Akoko, Otobi and Eziagulu communities were of the view that when one dresses and looks shabbily; it shows that one is poor. For instance, a male participant from Otobi in Kogi state, NC Nigeria opined:

"…if you wear 'okirika[22]' or dress in less expensive clothes, people will not regard you and will not respect you as well".

However, the responses of some of these participants show that people who lack good clothes, or who always appear with less expensive clothes, such as 'Okirika' (used clothes) are categorized as poor. Those people who can afford attractive and more expensive good outfits, are regarded as rich. The poor often go for the cheaper clothes that are affordable to them. They usually prefer to use the money they would have used to buy more expensive clothes to solve some of their family problems. Thus, these groups of participants associated poverty with looks or appearance. Some of them pointed out that since the appearance of wealthy people is quite different from that of the poor, people always look down on the poor. This further results in the debate as to whether clothing makes it easy to identify the poor (in this case, people disvalue the poor), or whether dressing badly is itself a source of disrespect or not.

On the contrary, experiences have shown that there are people who might still want to appear in a used outfit, even though they are rich. This lifestyle poses a challenge in classifying who is poor or non-poor based on appearances and outfits. However, it is interesting to note that, according to Hamilton and Catterall (2006), some people might like to disguise or mask poverty, so as to show they are not poor, and thus be respected. In their study of Northern Ireland on 'keeping up appearances aimed at disguising poverty', they maintain that some people who are poor might try to minimize the visibility of poverty to outsiders or even shield their children from the visibility of poverty (Hamilton and Catterall, 2006). Such people devote much effort towards combating the stereotypical negative image associated with poverty. This could apply to Nigeria, as some of the poor people in Nigeria behave similarly, especially when it comes to dressing. This is to avoid the trauma and pain that comes with the disrespect toward those dressed in 'okirika'.

[22] 'Okirika' is a name given to used items, such as clothes, shoes, bags, etc. They are mainly imported from the Western world and are mainly purchased by the poor who cannot afford relatively expensive new ones. It is used interchangeably with 'Tokunbo', which is another name given to used cars in Nigeria. So, used clothes are sometimes referred to as 'Tokunbo clothes' just as used cars are also sometimes called 'Okrika cars'.

In summary, poverty is defined in relation to lack of respect, dignity and value. It is often said that the appearance of an individual will determine the nature of respect that will be accorded such an individual. Respondents opined that when people are poor as indicated by their mode of dressing, shelter and housing, they are not being respected by friends and society members. What this means is that people are not ready to identify with the poor and may not value or give respect to them.

7.2.9 Poverty as lack of peace and security

Poverty is a problem that has gone beyond economics to include social, cultural, psychological and political issues. This belief might be the reason behind the views expressed by participants from Ulakwo, Anyigba, Otobi, and Afaha-Eket communities that, *"poverty may also be conceived as lack of peace".* Specifically, in Otobi community, where the Fulani herdsmen are disturbing and killing innocent people, a female participant said:

> *"Look at our community, tribal war everyday and people are being killed. There is no peace and everyone is afraid".*

When people are denied the satisfaction of psychological needs that could help propel growth and development, there is lack of peace and this is what these participants call poverty. At the societal level, most studies have argued that conflicts such as civil war, violence among others, also reverse economic and human development of a nation (see for example Battman and Miguel, 2010; Stewart and Fitzgerald, 2000).

Faleti (2012), reasons that once there are entrenched conflicts, the available scarce resources, which ordinarily should be channelled towards social and human development, are diverted for other purposes. This can affect development and further deepen poverty and deprivations. Since the days of independence, Nigeria has experienced many forms of conflict, leading to a severe lack of peace. This might explain why these participants adduced lack of peace as one of the ways to conceptualize poverty.

Several regions lack peace due to insecurity arising from the 'Boko Haram' insurgency in the NE of Nigeria, the militants in the ND of the SS, and some other minor ethnic and community clashes. Insecurity affects socio-economic activities and all social institutions. This occurrence has made life short, nasty and brutish, almost like Hobbes' "state of nature" (Murray, 2003). Due to these incessant attacks, houses are burnt, people live in fear and stay without shelter, their economic tools are destroyed (creating material poverty), and schools are destroyed denying hundreds of students quality education, as teachers migrate from troubled regions in search of jobs. This institutional anomie caused by lack of peace, affects quality of health and access to health facilities as hospitals are destroyed in the face of riots and attacks, thereby impoverishing the people further. In the face of all these, the likely option is for government to allocate more resources to security, whereas those resources could have been used in building and providing more schools, hospitals and other social amenities.

Furthermore, a participant from Afaha-Eket community in Akwa-Ibom state, SS Nigeria asserts that:

> *"A person who lacks peace is a poor person and a non-poor person is a happy person. To me, if you have peace, you are not poor".*

When people are living without peace, they are living in fear. Fear can deny one experience of happiness. A person living in fear is not likely to be psychologically happy as well as productively efficient. In Nigeria, just as in many parts of the world today, people live in fear as a result of terrorism in the form of bomb attacks, suicidal bombings, shooting and killing, political power tussles, religious intolerance, amongst others. One needs to be in a good frame of mind to be efficiently productive either in business, school, or the workplace. Thus, Benedict XVI (2009) reflects that poverty of peace "destroys human potentials, breeds despair and violence and undermines human security" (p. 2). Moreover, he said that without peace there is no development (see also Collier, 2004; Blattman and Miguel, 2010). Apparently, lack of peace inhibits development, in form of human and national development. Families, communities, societies and nations where

there are wars and conflicts are seen to be backward as far as human and national development are concerned.

In a different view from the one above, which states that those who live without peace are by definition poor, participants from Ulakwo, Ajamgbadi, Anyigba, Otobi, Eziagulu and Afaha-Eket communities identify poverty with insecurity. For these participants, poor people are usually at the receiving ends of insecurity in Nigeria. For instance, a male participant from Anyigba community in Kogi state, NC Nigeria stated:

> *"…the rich people have the financial capacity to provide security for themselves while the poor individuals are on their own when there is pervasive insecurity*".

Narayan et al (2000:2) argued that security is simply lacking in the sense of both protection and peace of mind. This present study establishes a relationship between poverty and insecurity in the sense of lacking financial capability and power to achieve personal security in the face of general insecurity within Nigeria. Narayan et al (2000:152) argued that one of the poor's major concerns is insecurity which implies instability, lack of continuity, and vulnerability. According to them, this insecurity and vulnerability results in pervasive anxiety and fear.

Illustratively, one of the participants from Ajamgbadi community in Lagos state, SW Nigeria expressed the view that:

> *"…a poor man is not difficult to be identified in Nigeria. For example, a rich man will build a very tall wall around his residence with a huge gate, acquire the service of private security agents, purchase expensive security dogs, install residential CCT with constant electricity supply, but a poor man will find it extremely difficult and will be unable to reach this level*".

Though there are many dimensions of insecurity such as food and financial insecurity. Poverty according to the above respondent is also conceived as insecurity in relation to the inability of an individual to provide him or herself with physical security because of his or her financial capability. This is a particular

problem when the government is not to be forthcoming in the provision of adequate security, as is the case in Nigeria at the moment.

The above respondents opine that poor people do not have access to life sustainable factors of peace and security. Unlike the rich people who are capable of providing these for themselves without necessarily depending on the government, the poor are left at the mercy of government. The difficulty of having peace, getting adequate security, feeling happy and living without fear seems to make the respondents conclude that poverty is definitively lack of peace and security.

7.2.10 Poverty as lack of freedom

The notion of poverty has been refined, developed and perceived as capability and experiences of freedom (Sen, 1999; Levine, 2004; McKinley, 2006). Sen (2008) later summarises his perceptions of poverty thus: "…ultimately we have to see poverty as unfreedoms of various sorts: the lack of freedom to achieve even minimally satisfactory living conditions." (P. xiii). The findings of this present study identify lack of freedom as part of how poverty is conceptualized by some participants in the group discussions. These participants were majorly from Ikare-Akoko, Ajamgbadi, Otobi, and Eziagulu communities. For instance, the submission of one of the participants from Ikare-Akoko community captured the idea of poverty as lack of freedom:

> *"…poverty is when you have no choice to express yourself, to decide where you want to live, what you want to do and what you want to eat".*

When people are not free to express themselves as they would like to, it is regarded as poverty. In other words, it is lack of choice or freedom to choose. Sen (2009) describes this as: when individuals do not have the opportunity to choose; when one is not given the opportunity to be what one wants to be or do what one wants to do or even develop ones' initiatives and potentials. This is Sen's conceptualisation of poverty as lack of capabilities and functioning; giving people the freedom to be what they want to be and do what they want to do; the freedom to be and do. Sen (2009) gives two reasons why freedom is very valuable: "more

freedom gives us more opportunity to pursue our objectives…, it helps us to decide to live as we would like and to promote the ends that we want to advance. It is concerned with our ability to achieve what we value. Freedom leads us to the process of choice itself, in that we are not being forced into some state because of constraints imposed by others" (p. 228). Therefore, poverty should be viewed, not only from the point of view of lowness of income but also, as an obstacle to an individual in the exercise of his capabilities (Sen, 2009, 2006b). This conceptualisation of poverty from the capability point of view follows the Aristotelian idea of life impoverishment which denies one the freedom to engage in intrinsic activities (Sen, 2000).

Equally, in explaining poverty as lack of freedom, a participant from Ajamgbadi community was of the view that:

> *"Poverty is when you find yourself doing the work you don't want to do or even working in an environment that you don't want to work in. It is in fact receiving peanut as salary and working for individuals, people or family you don't want to work for".*

Poverty has driven many people to live a life of no choice, thereby reluctantly doing work that ordinarily one would not want to do. It is argued that some people who are involved in armed robbery, kidnapping, etc., in Nigeria and even elsewhere in the world, are sometimes not happy with the situation, but were driven into it by poverty (Faleti, 2012). In Nigeria, some people in the ND are involved in militancy because of their needs and the needs of their families. For them, it is the Machiavelli's principle of the ends justifies the means. Some people, according to participants, are prepared to work on the farms of their enemies because they don't have choice, as staying idle exposes them to hunger. Instead of dying of hunger, such people are pushed into working in an environment or place or even for someone they would not ordinarily work for. Where one cannot choose what one wants as a result of poverty; this present study argues the case of poverty leading to a modern form of slavery (neo-slavery).

It was also gathered from participants from Otobi community that there is no freedom of association of the poor and non-poor. The poor are sometimes not

allowed to participate in the political, and sometimes even in the civic life, of the non-poor. This is seen as political poverty, buried not only in lack of choice, but also in denial of power to participate in political activities. One of the participants from Otobi community made the following submission:

> *"There is a political poverty where the poor are not allowed to mingle with the rich. We are constrained. We don't participate in their networks. They see us as not contributing anything to the network. They only come out to offer us some bags of rice and ask for our votes. When they win, they forget us".*

These findings indicate the social exclusion of individuals from social networks, and therefore highlight what Sen (2009) describes as the roots of capability deprivation, where individuals and groups of people are excluded from taking part in the political and social life of the community. Political freedom and social freedom are two out of the five types of freedom enumerated by Sen (1999a:86). Despite the lack of political freedom the poor are subjected to, they still suffer from lack of basic amenities.

This lack of political and social freedom brings to limelight the issue of social capital formation, which is a relevant strategy for poverty reduction. According to Oyen, (2002), social capital is based on the formation of informal and formal network structures around certain kinds of human needs. These network structures according to him could be heterogeneous in terms of being open to a wide range of individuals or be homogenous in terms of accepting only people of the same kind. In this sense, the questions worth asking here are: Do the poor have the same kind of networks as the non-poor? Are the poor allowed to join the networks of the non-poor? The answer to these questions is negative, and this non-participation in both political and civic life has been termed political poverty which is also closely connected to other forms of poverty (Oyen, 2002). The basic reason behind this according to Oyen, (2002) is that poverty does create a time constraint which reduces participations that are organized around non-profit activities. As a result of this, the networks of the poor are mostly found to be connected to strategies for survival.

Geoffrey (1997) reiterates the opinion of Adam Smith, that it is unreasonable that the poor should be excluded from the networks of the non-poor. This is indicative of a society imbued with status as indicated by consumption patterns, class stratifications and power structures (Eastman, et al. 1999), which are all forms of social exclusions (Sen, 2009; Best, 2013). The poor, even though large in population, are often seen as a minority. In this way, some groups of people, especially the poor are kept from the social, cultural, economic and political life and activities of the community (Sen, 2009; Narayan et al., 1999). This implies that, the concept transcends mere focus on income deprivation as the cause for marginalisation of some groups in the society (Gore and Figueiredo, 1997). It is this marginalisation, deprivation and exclusion rooted in lack of freedom and choice that the above mentioned participants viewed as one of the way to conceptualize poverty, and thus, it adds to the pluralism in the understanding of poverty in Nigeria.

Generally, the views of the above respondents indicate that poverty means doing what is against one's wish. This is made manifest when people have no choice but submit to labour or financial control of others, especially the rich. Poverty is also seen in this section as a gap between the poor and the rich, especially in terms of the inability of the poor to identify with the rich in the society.

7.2.11 Location poverty

In most developing countries in the world, such as Nigeria, lack of good shelter or accommodation is a major social problem. Many people in these countries cannot afford to live in a comfortable environment. Participants from Otobi, Ajamgbadi and Afaha-Eket communities were of the view that some people in Nigeria do not have access to lodgings or housing. For example, a female participant from Ajamgbadi in Lagos state, stated:

> *"I was coming back to Ajamgbadi very late few days ago and at Mile 12, I saw so many people sleeping under the bridges at Ojuelegba Barracks. What is government doing about these people? Are they not human beings like us? Why should they be sleeping under the bridge and government is doing nothing about it".*

This participant argues that some people sleep under bridges, inside abandoned vehicles, inside containers, as well as churches. For her, shelter is one of the most important necessities of life that one needs in order to survive, but due to high level of poverty in the country, many people suffer from a housing problem. This is not only peculiar to Nigeria as some people are homeless too in most of the capitalist and developed countries. Some of the participants talked much about accommodation, stressing that most poor people live in houses that the rich would not even keep their dogs in. Recounting their ordeal, it was obvious that many of the poor participants do not live in houses that have water and toilet facilities. Very few live in dwellings with pit toilets. Some poor people live in houses with leaking roofs surrounded by debris and refuse. Some live in slums or ghetto area. This makes them weak and sick. People in this category of poverty emphasized good lodgings as a basic need and one that indicates who is a poor person or not. Shelter, location and the nature of environment, thus become an important factor for those in this category.

Participants from Ikare-Akoko, Otobi, Eziagulu, Afaha-Eket and Ajamgbadi communities also linked the issue of natural disasters with the conceptualisation of poverty as being geographical and locational. For example, in Afaha-Eket in Akwa-Ibom state, SS Nigeria, a male participant said:

> *"…for two years now we have been cut off from our neighbouring village because of erosion. We can't even sell our farm produce and the rate of mortality is increasing because it takes ages to get to hospital".*

These participants complained about the occurrence of natural disasters, to which the government seems to frequently turn a deaf ear. These natural disasters are mostly erosion and flooding. Affected communities are kept impoverished as their lands and farms are destroyed; they are cut off from other communities through no means of transportation, and as such, it becomes difficult for them to move out of the community. High mortality rates are recorded in these communities and most of these communities are cut off from other development social projects coming from the government. This type of occurrence, this present study argues, is not only peculiar to Nigeria. There are other countries in the world where natural disasters

are more prevalent, but the response of the emergency control agencies is more adequate. For example, Shephered et al. (2013) note that, if not properly targeted and monitored, extreme weather conditions and natural disasters might lead to the impoverishment of many countries by the year 2030, and that this might also limit efforts towards poverty reduction.

Furthermore, participants from the above communities gave the impression that locational or geographical poverty means living in remote areas that are far from development facilities and other social services. A female participant from Otobi community captured it thus:

> *"For one year now, I have not been to a good hospital; we manage with the traditional medicine we have here because there is no access to a good hospital. All we have here is healthcare centre with untrained nurses".*

In Nigeria, as in many countries, communities and societies differ from one another with regards to infrastructural or resources availability, presence of public goods, nature of the density of economic activities, as well as the impact of government policies and programs. Ulimwengu and Kraybill (2004), note that these disparities are a result of geographical locations. Based on this, some communities in remote areas are left without hospitals with access only to health centres that are neither modern nor fully functional, in the sense that there are no resident doctors, no qualified trained nurses, and no laboratory testing materials, amongst others. As a result, most pregnant women lose their lives in the process of delivery, and the rate of child mortality is also very high (see for instance Onwumere, 2010; Ogunjimi et al. 2012).

In this situation, many prefer traditional medicine with its numerous negative side effects. This is contrary to what a healthcare centre should be, that is, a place for the prevention and treatment of illness, as well as preserving the physical and mental wellbeing of individual via services rendered by well-trained doctors, nurses and paramedics. The WHO (2000) declares that healthcare comprises all the goods and services put in place for the promotion of good health. In Public Health economics, Shoal and Omozuawo (2007) argue that, since healthcare is a public

good, it ought to be available for every citizen irrespective of one's income and ability to pay. However, this is not the case in Nigeria, as one of the most worrying developmental problems is the inadequate provision of health facilities in the different parts of the country, especially in the rural and remote areas (see also Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, 2003; Akpomuvie, 2010).

On the issue of social services and locational poverty, a female participant from Anyigba community in Kogi state noted:

> *"We hear about phone but we cannot use it here. No network service. We don't use television; where do you see light. We use battery for radio but for how long will you keep on buying battery? Where is the money?"*

It is interesting to know that some communities in Nigeria still do not have network services for television, radio and phones. People living in these areas are denied access to information, thus confirming the earlier statements from participants that poverty is also seen as lack of access to information. Electricity supply also eludes them. Those that can afford a power supply mostly depend on a generator. The above female participant performed a sketch whilst offering her comment, narrating how she would climb a tree to get signal in order to make a call.

From every indication, this present study gathered that the poor are alienated from growth and development processes that are associated with new technology. They also experience a lack of access to information and other development and social services. This group of people will continue to be more powerless and alienated if nothing is done. Looking at these situations, participants from the above mentioned communities understood poverty in relation to geographical location, and this adds to the pluralism in the understanding of poverty.

In conclusion, the evidence from these respondents indicates that conception of poverty in relation to location is understood as the inability of the poor to have access to a better environment, where they can enjoy adequate good housing and road networks, modern forms of transportation and means of communication, as well as standard health facilities and experienced medical personnel. These respondents attribute all these lack of amenities to government insensitivity.

7.2.12 Gender poverty and child abuse

Participants, mostly women, from Ikare-Akuko, Otobi, Umunede, Afaha-Eket, and Eziagulu communities; remarked that poverty could be defined as an experience embedded in the social isolation of women and insensitivity to children. In Eziagulu community in Anambra state, where the participants were all women, they unanimously agreed that women are marginalized, isolated and sometimes are just reduced to objects meant for procreation. Some of these participants from the communities mentioned above also lamented the unfair treatment given to women in their societies, and how children's rights are also abused. They consider these to be a poverty of gender and insensitivity on the part of children. This point is aptly captured by one of the interviewees, Uda, a private NGO founder as follows:

> *"Women in our country are excluded from being in the government despite their academic qualifications and capabilities. Women are segregated against and are often denied political opportunities. Allow them into the government, and you discover that people will not be denied of these basic necessities".*

The above represents a form of social exclusion based on gender inequality and children's rights abuse. Gender inequality is viewed to be prevalent among various societies and is usually characterized as male dominance. Women, it has been argued, suffer from disrespect and are subjected to treatment that leaves them with low self-esteem as well as lack of confidence (Holmes and Jones, 2010). Setting different standards or roles for men and women in the society, which influences how each sex is treated by their parents, is seen as a dimension of poverty that requires much re-orientation and sensitization. According to the above mentioned participants, there are some jobs or social activities unavailable to these women, such as, participation in government and leadership in the town or community union. It is very rare to see women holding the top positions in the government. This is not only peculiar to Nigeria but pervasive in many countries. This, Allanana (2013) argues, might be as a result of cultural, religious and socio-political reasons. In some societies, women are forbidden from participating in certain economic, social and political activities.

This present study argues that, even though women's participation in government is good and should be encouraged; this often times does not always guarantee that these women if they are given the opportunities will make these basic needs available for everyone as opined by respondent Uda. For example, (though this example might be taken to be as a result of the widespread culture of corruption within Nigeria), there have been cases which were reported by several newspapers (see, Daily Times, Wednesday 12th November 1999, This Day News, Monday October 10th, 2002) where some women who were appointed to top government positions have been accused of serious embezzlement of government funds in the ministries of health and women affairs. Records also have it that the funds mapped out for the BLP for women, youths and children were also mismanaged in 1986 by some of these women who were in top government positions (CBN, 1999).

With regard to cultural practices that inhibit the rights of women, a female participant from Eziagulu community in Anambra state, SE Nigeria said:

> *"Mr researcher, do you know that in this community, in fact in the whole of this south-east, that women are denied the right of inheritance of property from their parents.*"

This has been seen in most parts of Nigeria as some cultural practices restrict women from inheriting their parents' properties. Fayomi, (2012) calls this discrimination, intimidation, exclusion, marginalization and stigmatization of women by their men counterparts (see also Ayoola, 2001; Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, 2003). Interestingly, there are also some forms of discrimination against women coming from religious institutions. It is observed in some northern parts of Nigeria, where Islamic religion is practiced, most women are not permitted to come out and engage in trade like their counterparts from other parts of the country. This situation worsens the plight of women in those areas and keeps them in perpetual impoverishment (see Ajani, 2008; Onagunisiaka et al., 2014).

This issue of discrimination against women, witnessed not only in Nigeria but in most countries, might have been one of the reasons that gave rise to the 'feminization of poverty'. By this is meant that women have become one of the most important variables in the explanation of poverty, even more than men. The

concept, as discussed in the literature, started as far back as the 1980s when a group of women from developing countries began to analyse and view poverty from a gender perspective. They concluded that women are more affected by poverty than men (Chant, 2006). This may be the result of fewer opportunities for women to gain access to both social and material resources, as well less freedom to participate in decision making in the areas of politics and socio-economic policies. This is held to account for the differences noticed in the distributions of resources, social roles and responsibilities among men and women, which favour men (see Holmes and Jones, 2010).

Participants from Ikare-Akoko, Otobi, Umunede, Afaha-Eket and Eziagulu communities unanimously commented on child poverty, which is rooted in the abuse of children. In one community at Afaha-Eket in Akwa-Ibom state, a female participant said:

> *"…look at how are our children are abused left and right because of poverty. Parents send their children to hawk in the street so as to get money with which the family is fed. In doing this, they abandon education."*

Child abuse is a deprivation which most children undergo globally. As discussed in the literature, the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' (CRC) in 1980 met and defined the basic rights of children. These included the right to survival; the right to protection from harmful influences and practices, abuse and exploitation; the right to develop to the fullest; and the right to participate fully in family, social and cultural life (UN 1989). In Nigeria, the above mentioned participants expressed the view that most of these rights are not given to children. They cited examples of how children are used by their parents to make money by sending them out to the streets to hawk and beg, thereby denying them the opportunity of going to school. According to these participants, some of these children end up becoming criminals or victims of rape, kidnapping or trafficking (also see Ajani, 2008; Ikejiaku, 2009). Some become fatally unprotected and malnourished (UNICEF, 2007; UNDP, 2009; Cimpric, 2010).

In sum, poverty is defined by respondents in this section as obvious discrimination against women in terms of political opportunities, marital responsibilities, family inheritance, and basic necessities of life. A situation whereby parents expose their children to hawking thereby sacrificing their education is also conceived as poverty.

7.3 Causes and factors contributing to poverty

In this section, this study discusses and presents evidence from interviewees and participants in FGDs on the perceived causes and factors contributing to poverty and its conceptualisations in Nigeria. These are individual and environmental factors, institutional practices, governmental policies and other socio-economic factors. Participants in FGDs and interviews identified the following perceived causes and factors responsible for poverty in Nigeria:

7.3.1 Individual and environmental factors

The perceived causes of poverty, according to participants from Ikare-Akoko, Otobi, Eziagulu, Ulakwo and Umunede communities, as well as some interviewees from religious, private and government organisations have social origins. Most of the statements of these participants located poverty outside the control of the individual concerned, while others located it within the individual. These classifications fall into two theories known as conservative theory of individual deficiencies and the liberal theory of broader environmental/social phenomenon, (though liberal theory sometimes blames the individual as well) (see Bradshaw, 2007). One such position is that one may be born into poverty, i.e into a poor family, which is outside the person's control. In other words, it may be linked to destiny (Williams, 2012), or to what the economists call 'intergenerational transmission of poverty', which suggests a culture of poverty being created by families due to low incomes, family sizes and structures (Gottschalk and Danziger, 1993). This position relates poverty level to the socio-economic background of an individual. The society is structured and social positions are occupied relative to socio-economic status. Being born into poverty has a way of confining and limiting successful upward mobility, from the dungeon of 'lack' to 'endow'. However, some Participants from Otobi, Ajamgbadi and Ulakwo communities believed that being

born into a poor family does not mean that one will remain poor throughout life. According to these participants, those who are hard-working and focused are more likely to break out of poverty through their own determination and effort. For instance, there might be opportunities which, if seized, could change one's fortune, and thus lift such a person out of poverty. Such opportunities may include a situation where one is brilliant in school and ends up winning a scholarship, which enables such person to attain further education, and thus develop one's potential.

Gore (2002) argued that pervasive poverty leads to environmental degradation. This is because people eat into the environmental capital stock to survive. This, in turn, undermines the productivity of key assets on which the livelihood depends. Though Gore (2002) views poverty as affecting the environment negatively, this study reveals that environment is a perceived explanatory factor of poverty. It has been argued that the immediate environment in which an individual lives is more likely than the external environment to have positive or negative influence on life aspirations. If the family is not able to care for a child properly through good advice and good monitoring, then this might lead to poverty. The submission of an interviewee, Daniel Obi from a religious organisation captured this point:

> *"Though a lot of factors result in poverty, I will say poverty can come due to family background; it can come to a person as a result of poor family and parental upbringing."*

Lack of good parental upbringing in sound morals and values could make an individual end up in poverty. This happens, usually, when values of hard work and honesty are not inculcated into an individual from childhood. This participant argued that some people are poor today because of a lack of proper upbringing in their past. For example, studies have shown that the issues of kidnapping, stealing, killing, ritualism as well as the insurgence of 'Boko Haram', witnessed in Nigeria, and other related issues seen in most nations of the world today, are arguably linked in part to poor parental upbringing and loss of moral values in the family (Fagbadebo, 2007; Faleti, 2012).

Equally, children living in the rural and urban areas may be used to further the above points. As Anyanwu (2013) notes, the majority of Nigerians who live in rural areas are poor, and as such, lack the basic necessities and amenities that support life. A rural child does not have access to good schools and is limited to the success of a farmer in the community. Since the parents are poor, the urge to pursue education in the city is limited, except if the situation changes by having access to adequate fund. If there is any access to fund, such funds are used to train a son. The cultural argument that a son sustains the family name (a conception which has recently changed), necessitates that the family give educational training to a son rather than a daughter. This may result in a long-term gender inequality. Within this cultural practice, the family money is used to train the son in school, while the daughter learns a vocation (Ogege, 2011; Abara, 2012). This creates inequality and limits opportunity for social mobility among daughters.

Individuals also tend to link their conception of poverty to some spiritual forces (supernatural powers) beyond their comprehension. A female participant from Ulakwo community in Imo state, SE Nigeria said:

> *"There is a family I know around my village (I will not mention name). This family has been poor for ages and story has it that the gods of this village cursed this family because of what their great-great grandfather did".*

In Nigerian society, people believe that certain spiritual forces are behind every individual's or family's misfortune. Therefore, poor people view poverty as a misfortune emanating from the gods (supernatural powers) as a punishment and they believe that they cannot understand this except through the help of a supernatural being who will unravel the mystery behind their poverty and probably proffer a solution. Interestingly, this has become an aspect of poverty that has not been given much attention hitherto in the current debate on the causes of poverty. Though not empirically verifiable, there is a spiritual dimension attached to events and occurrences among some Nigerians. Most of the things that happen to either an individual or a community are attributed to forces beyond humans, such as evil or unknown spirits, especially when it is a bad event or occurrence. Poverty according to these participants is assumed to be a bad occurrence or curse to

humans, and it is believed in Nigerian society that one cannot be poor except if an unknown god or an evil spirit conditions it. Many Nigerians reason this way, even the educated.

Therefore, social conditions, such as evil, good, surplus, lack, amongst others, are defined as having the 'knowledge of the gods'. For example, economically well-to-do people are seen as being blessed by the gods and vice versa. The assumption that a rich person is favoured by the gods remains debatable in Nigeria, considering the belief that some people indulge in ritualism in order to make money. If one becomes rich through this ritualism, could such wealth be argued to have had its origin from the gods? Nevertheless, this author argues that since such a social condition is considered given by the gods, it may have implications for how people take action to change their situation through a consultation with the gods. This leads to the argument that the gods are aware of one's situation in the case of someone who is poor, and as such, there is nothing that could change this situation. In this way, the spiritual conception of poverty in relation to the social and financial condition of a poor individual is understandable from the perspective of spiritualism (Achunonu, 2012).

The majority of Nigerians, as well as people in other African countries, and some countries in Latin America, believe in the link between poverty and spiritual forces (Ojua et al., 2013). For example, the public opinion poll conducted in Brazil recently, showed the link between poverty and supernatural powers, where poverty is seen as the will of the Supreme Being (God), or as a result of fate. Poverty is therefore considered to be outside the control of the individual (Spencer, 2014). Hence, most people who are poor today and have made several efforts to escape poverty without success have come to believe that there are some spiritual forces behind their predicament.

In African Traditional Religion[23] (ATR), there is the belief that most people are poor as a result of their immoral behaviour, and as such, are being punished by either

[23] African Traditional Religion refers to the religious beliefs and practices indigenous to the Africa. It is being practiced in almost all African countries, even by some people who claim either a Christian or Muslim background (Uwah, 2011).

an avenging or ancestral spirit (Nkomo, 2012; Mtapuri and Mazengwa, 2013). The Igbos in the SE Nigeria, for example, believes in the spirit of 'chi omumu'. Literarily, 'chi omumu' is the spirit responsible for fruit of the womb. It is believed in this part of the country, and probably in other parts of Nigeria, and more so in other African countries, that if a woman exhibits wickedness to little children around her, or involves herself in a wilful abortion, that 'chi omumu' will make her poor in the sense of infertile when she eventually marries (see for example Okonjo, 1987; Amadiume, 1988; Bernard and Beverly, 2000; Olupona, 2000; Olajubu, 2003). Therefore, when these and related things occur, people tend to link them with supernatural powers.

Participants from Ikare-Akoko, Eziagulu and Ulakwo communities, including Ann Orazulike, an interviewee and staff from a religious organisation, said that poverty could be viewed as caused by the personal attitude of some individuals. In this way, the source of poverty is then located within the individual. Ann observed that:

> *"Carelessness as well as laziness on the side of an individual can lead to poverty; you can be doing everything to help the person to come out of a problem but the person refuses to listen; this can cause poverty. So carelessness of an individual can also contribute to poverty".*

The above participant argues that poverty may come about as the result of a choice to resist change, where all efforts to rehabilitate the person fail. Interestingly, some neo-classical economists have expanded this understanding of poverty as caused by individual deficiencies. They are of the view that an individual who is given the necessary information needed to maximize well-being but still decides to choose short-term and low-payoff returns, such as abandoning education or training that could better one's future, should be held responsible for the choices made (Bradshaw, 2007). The point here is that one may have several financial, informational, job and empowerment opportunities to escape poverty, but out of carelessness and other behavioural issues (Mayer and Lopoo, 2005) one may allow those opportunities to pass by. This is what the above participants referred to as carelessness, and they were of the view that a section of the poor are poor today due to this carelessness, and not necessarily because they are

destined to be poor. However, it might be argued here that, in some cases, these opportunities are not available or restricted for the individual to utilize. In this sense, it becomes a failure either on the part of government, the family, the society in general or 'the economy', which are supposed to provide these opportunities, especially the government

In Nigeria, for example, the government empowers people slowly, such that most individuals who are talented are left unaided despite the availability of some opportunities that help one to be financially independent. For example, sometime in the early 1970s, Ikeanyibe (2009) notes that one or two individuals manufactured a car that could work without fuel, but were not supported by the government and so the idea was forgotten. Likewise, some talented students have at times come up with innovative medical research, but the government did not assist and this idea perished too. Recently, some engineering students from the University of Benin (Edo State of Nigeria) produced a car known as "Tuke-Tuke", which, it was claimed, had passed an international technical evaluation performed in Rotterdam, Netherlands (Vanguard, Newspaper, Wednesday, July 10, 2014). What the government may do with regard to this is yet unknown. Equally, it might be interesting to note that a public opinion poll conducted in Brazil recently on the causes of poverty, suggested lack of opportunities as one of the major causes of poverty in Brazil (Spencer, 2014). If opportunities are not there then it becomes difficult to assume that carelessness and laziness could cause and contribute to poverty on the side of the individuals in the way suggested by the above participants.

Besides carelessness, participants from Ulakwo community submitted that laziness is also a factor that could lead an individual into poverty. They believed that,

> "…*poverty is a result of lack of hardwork, and when someone is not hardworking it can cause poverty and that is laziness*".

According to these participants, these are people who no matter what help or empowerment they are given will still not make any positive outcome from it. It is not surprising that there are individuals who come from a rich family and end up becoming poor due to laziness. By contrast, being born into a poor family, these

participants argued, does not mean that one will end up remaining poor. It only takes hard work, determination and motivation to lift oneself out of poverty.

However, a distinction has to be made between laziness and mentally disabled (Leonard and Wen, 2002), or low cognitive ability (Herrnstein and Murray, 1994; Feldstein, 1998). Mental disability has been explained by Leonard and Wen (2002) as a learning difficulty that makes the sufferer relatively ineffective or unable to apply what one has learnt into solving the problems of ordinary life. In this sense, one is unable to carry out some activities due to ill health. Studies have shown that depression, mental disability or genetic abnormality might lead to misunderstanding an individual as being lazy and therefore poor (Fogel, 1994; Elwan, 2001; Asen, 2002; Leonard and Wen, 2002). Hence, it might be difficult, for example, to regard someone as being poor due to laziness if they suffer from a mental illness or other forms of depression due to drugs or alcohol. This condition might lead them to not be able to hold onto a job or even manage their financial resources well (Winkel, 2011). This situation should best be looked at as mental disability or low cognitive ability, instead of laziness, and as such, families and government should do all within their ability to see that such individuals are helped with medical support, special training and monitoring, in order to make the most use of their capabilities.

Equally, one could argue that poverty in this sense is a social problem. This problem exists not only in Nigeria but also in other capitalist countries, where most people have abandoned their jobs due to depression resulting from drugs and alcohol (Boys et al; 2001). For example, in his study of the effects of drugs, alcohol and poverty in Scotland, Room (2005) argues that drugs and alcoholism have impacted negatively on people and have caused many to quit jobs, thereby ending up in a poverty trap. In the same line of thought, Fogel, (1992), Spur, (1990) and Dasgupta, (1995) argue that a combination of some factors, such as undernourishment, difficult behavioural adaptations, low-calorie intake, might result into lethargy, and thus be misunderstood as laziness. During the industrial revolution in England and France, the poorest 20 percent of the populace were on

low energy intake, and this led to their exclusion from labour market (Fogel, 1992, 1994).

The above suggests that some of these people referred to as being lazy in the Nigerian context might not actually be lazy but might be suffering from either of the above mentioned effects. They are therefore wrongly thought to be lazy. It might also be due to the lack of medical and other facilities, with which to detect people who were mentally or genetically deprived. In the absence of these medical facilities, people who were mentally or genetically deprived or who suffer from depression and malnourishment were seen as being lazy and as such, classified as poor in the Nigerian context.

Furthermore, on the subject of individual deficiencies, participants from the above mentioned community remarked that some may decide not to struggle for wealth out of religious belief, because the love of money, they believe, is the root of all evil as the Holy Bible stated.[24] In this way, these participants explained that a particular mentality/mind-set can lead to poverty. Mentality /mind-set here could apply to one's own individual interpretation or perceptions of wealth and poverty. Based on one's mentality, whether one is poor or not does not really matter. What matters, for such person, is good will, righteousness, and clean heart, which will be rewarded in the afterlife. This is a belief, mostly seen among Christians and Muslims, who believe not only in life after death, but also that a good righteous life will be rewarded (Stenger, 2011).

In sum, these FGDs participants and interviewees maintained that the cause of poverty could either be located within or outside the control of individual. This leads us to the next section discussing institutional practices as contributing to poverty in Nigeria.

7.3.2 Institutional practices

Here we refer to the perceived causes of poverty in relation to practices from religious, cultural and traditional institutions prevalent in the Nigerian society.

[24]The love money as the root of all evil is found in 1 Timothy chapter 6 vs 10 of the Christian Holy Bible.

7.3.2.1 Religious institutions

Data from religious organisations showed that religious preaching also influences the definition of poverty, and may even contribute to the perpetuation of this social condition based on the interpretation of the Holy Book. For instance, one of the interviewees, Daniel Obi avers that a negative interpretation of the "Sermon on the Mount"[25], if not well understood, can lead to poverty. He noted:

> *"On the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" Some people misinterpreted this and take it as blessed are the poor without putting the spirit. Some people because of this see being poor or poverty as a blessing and for this may decide not to work".*

The Sermon on the Mount is the teaching of Jesus Christ on the poor. One such teaching is: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:3). While this verse talks about being 'poor in the spirit', it is misinterpreted as a blessing to be poor, with the benefit of inheriting the kingdom of heaven. Roach (2010), for example explains that the word 'poor', as used here, is from the Greek word 'ptokas', which means poor in the sense of being dependent, but in this case, it means being dependent on God for spiritual resources. To be poor here means that one is poor in spiritual resources and therefore totally dependent on God for their fulfilment. In this case, one might be in possession of earthly wealth but still be poor in spiritual resources, and thus dependent on God for the fullness of these spiritual resources, in order to be able to enter the kingdom of God. The misinterpretation of this might lead the poor holding onto this portion of the Bible and on this basis, justifying taking no steps to improving their socio-economic standards (Roach, 2010). This is a misconception of religious teachings. Religion doesn't make one poor; rather it teaches the dignity in human labour and encourages working hard and being independent (John Paul II, 1981). As Karl Marx argues, religion is the opium of the masses, (Luchte, 2009), meaning when you give men religion you can rule them. This present study argues that, due to the stiffening economic reality, many Nigerians depend on the religious organisation to

[25] The Sermon on the Mount is considered by all Christians as the longest teaching of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. It has been widely used and quoted and it appears in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of the Gospel of Mathew. It contains most of the best instructions and teachings of Christ on the Beatitude and the Lord's Prayer, which are the tenets of all the Christian discipleship (Stassen, 2006).

interpret and organize their lives. In this way, the poor take solace in the promise of happiness in the afterlife. This can maintain the status quo of poverty and inaction toward a better future.

7.3.2.2 Cultural institutions

Participants from Eziagulu, Ulakwo and Afaha-Eket communities, as well as Marg Uda espoused that harmful cultural practices can contribute to poverty. These participants stressed the widowhood practices in some parts of the country which have plunged many widows into poverty. For example, all female participants from Eziagulu community in Anambra state, SE of Nigeria stated that:

> *"…most widows are deprived and denied access to inheritance of their husbands' properties at the demise of the husbands."*

Based on the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society, it is a popular belief that the role of women should end in the kitchen (Abara, 2012; Allanana, 2013). Hence, women depend on their husbands for everything they need, making widowhood a period of painful adjustment. Their properties are taken over and their children are more likely to be left uncared for. For example, Izugbara (2004), notes that, this situation increases the vulnerability of women and children, particularly girls, who are more likely to get pregnant. This is, especially prevalent in the northern part of Nigeria.

In the northern part of Nigeria, the young girl is forced into early marriage for financial security and this leads to another social problem for girls as captured by Marg Uda:

> *"…Child or under-aged marriage perpetuates and contributes to poverty as the girl child without education will be totally dependent on the husband, who throws them out after sometimes because these girls are messed up…."*

Most female children who are under the age of consent (13 or 14 years old) are being given away today in marriage and without education. This thesis opines that a child without education may have no brighter future. It is a popular belief in Nigeria that the proposed bill on female child marriage was mostly sponsored by

the northerners[26] (Daily Times, 2013). The resultant effect is that these girls give birth at an early age, with serious implication for their health. Often, this leads to a disease known as Vesico-Vaginal Fistulae (hereafter VVF) as the above participant explained. It is a disease caused by prolonged labour, which mostly affects young women around the ages of 12-15, who give birth at the early stage of their lives (see also Osakinle and Olufunmilayo, 2012). In Nigeria, especially in the northern part of the country, where this disease is rampant, most women who are victims are believed to be affected psychologically and their well–being hampered, leaving them in mental distress (Fasakin, 2007). The above mentioned participant agreed that these women are thrown out by their husbands at the onset of this disease. This might be what the participant meant by saying that these girls are "*messed up*". In this situation, these women are trapped in poverty.

Most FGDs participants from Eziagulu, Ulakwo and Afaha-Eket communities held the same opinion as respondent Marg, i.e. that women are denied the right to inheritance and education, and are then subjected to various dehumanizing practices like early marriages, which perpetually keep them in poverty. In Eziagulu community for instance, a female participant expressed the opinion that:

> *"…if women are left on their own, they can struggle and make a living, but these institutional practices rooted on culture are not helpful. Even, when it is obvious that these women have the financial resources to own land, it is still denied them."*

These FGDs participants also complained that, as a result of these institutional practices, most women are forbidden from going into politics and holding certain positions like their men counterparts. This makes women vulnerable to poverty, especially at the death of their partner or spouse. According to these participants, most of these cultural practices, such as 'igba ajadu', early marriage and denial of the rights of inheritance, have given rise to the social exclusion of people from communal activities, which in their opinion might lead to poverty. One of the participants from Eziagulu community captured this in the following words:

[26] The proposed bill sponsored by some northern senators wanted a revision of the section in the constitution on the age of marriage, so that girls are allowed to marry before the age of 18, in contrast to marrying at the age of 18 years and above, as decreed in the constitution of 1979.

"Yes, social exclusion leads to poverty because if you exclude somebody from a particular activity, the person's role will be denied him/her and whatever benefit that would have come to the person either through employment is also denied. If the person is denied of all these; definitely he/she is not accepted in the society any longer and this might lead the person into poverty."

Some people, especially women, are likely to be excluded, due to social status, religion and culture. This claim is justified by the report of the UN (2010) on the situation of women in developing countries, where women are perceived as inferior and subsequently subordinated to men. One may equally refer to this as marginalisation or discrimination. Women are usually ostracized and excluded from participating in any of the societal and communal activities. Therefore, this social dimension of poverty suggests that some are poor as a result of marginalisation and discrimination meted out to them from members of their community (see also Abara, 2012; Ogege, 2011; Allanana, 2013).

For instance, in Igbo land, there is the outcast system known as 'OSU'. These outcasts are not allowed to interact with the free-born persons[27] in the society. They are discriminated against, as well as marginalised in society. They are not allowed to trade with the free-born people. They cannot buy nor sell anything in the market place. They cannot dance together with the free-born. Marriages between them and the free-born are prohibited. This condition is passed from generation to generation (see also Dike, 2002; Emeghara, 2003; Uchenna, 2010; Igwe and Akolokwu, 2014).

This discriminatory caste system is not only peculiar to Igbos of Nigeria but is also seen in other part of North and East Africa, and also prevalent in the Indian culture (Chaudhary, 2005; Waldman, 2005; Kar, 2007; Rao, 2010; Bhati and Rajinder, 2011). For instance, in Burundi, Rwanda and some part of the Eastern Congo, Paxton (2012) argues that the caste system prevalent in these areas has contributed to discrimination based on classes, to an extent that some are seen to be of the class of rulers while others belong to the lower class. The end-product of this treatment is poverty reproduced.

[27] A 'free born' on the other hand is a person who is not 'osu' and has the freedom to do and associate with other members of the society who are free born as well, but not with an 'osu'.

To explain the effects of these cultural and religious practices further, a respondent, Peter Johnson, a masters-degree holder and staff from a government organisation gave a rundown of the statistical regional distribution of poverty according to the various geo-political zones in Nigeria. To substantiate his claim on regional distribution of poverty, the respondent gave these statistics on table 4 on the 'incidence of poverty' from the recent poverty profile, published by the CBN (2013):

Table 4: Headcount poverty incidence among the six geo-political zones in Nigeria

GEO-POLITICAL ZONES	North-East	North-West	North-Central	South-West	South-South	South-East
POVERTY INCIDENCE IN %	77.2	70.1	64.3	60.9	58.2	53.6

Sources: CBN (2013)

The six geo-political zones in Nigeria have different cultures, economic backgrounds, traditions, as well as religious leanings that can affect and shape their understanding of poverty. Table 4 above suggests that the least incidence of poverty in Nigeria is in the SE. This is the zone mostly occupied by the Igbos. Despite the fact that the Igbos were defeated during the Nigerian/Biafra[28] war, which lasted for nearly three years, they still have the lowest incidence of poverty.

This might be, as Akaolisa (2012) argues, due to the Igbo culture having institutions promoting empowerment of the individual to fight for himself and survive. He further explained that individuals have limited cultural inhibitions towards realization of their potential when compared to other cultures in Nigeria. The reason behind this is that "Igbo egalitarianism and pragmatism with accompanying upward social mobility; which make parents pray for their children to be greater than they, and make masters pray for their apprentices for

[28] The Nigerian/Biafra civil war started on July 6th 1967 due to the attempted secession of the South-Eastern protectorate of Nigeria to become the Republic of Biafra, and it ended on January 15th 1970. It was a war that broke up as a result of some political, cultural, religious, economic and ethnic conflicts that erupted between the North and the SE of Nigeria. More than 1 million civilians died during the war either as a result of famine, malnutrition or war itself (Achebe, 2012).

achievements, combined with cultural traits or attributes, including achievement orientation, fast acculturation, persistence, aggressive application of hard work, competitiveness and confidence, etc.; make the Igbos hugely successful anywhere they go" (Akaolisa, 2012 p. 8). For instance, owing to the experiences of civil war and preparations for secession during the 1967-1970 civil wars, the Igbo people, as Achebe (2012) observes, had internal mechanisms put in place to ensuring that they were self-sufficient. The Igbos in particular, have no cultural inhibitions that limit economic participation by any gender. This enables an individual from this part of the country to be independent and self-sustaining compared to other cultures in Nigeria (Achebe, 2012).

The zones with the highest rate of poverty, as shown in table 4 are the three zones in the North geopolitical zone, and this can be attributed to cultural, traditional and sometimes religious inhibitions. Most of the cultural practices in the Northern part of the country either encourage early marriages or see western education as a 'haram' (sinful) (Walker, 2012). These beliefs pass from one generation to another. This calls to mind the 'culture of poverty" model of Oscar Lewis (1969) which argues that people are poor as a result of their inability to make a change in their behaviour as well as their inability to effect upward mobility by taking control of their lives. This inability has resulted in practices, beliefs and values that are seen to be helpful in coping with hardship associated with poverty, and this in turn perpetuates poverty within the groups concerned (Lewis, 1969). Based on this, Lewis (1969) argues that the poor develop a self-defeatism and an inferiority complex, as well as helplessness. Since this is passed on from one generation to another, there is then the possibility that the poor will lose hope in their future and not bother to try to progress. Instead, the poor rely on apathy and what will satisfy their immediate needs, not considering how morally right the action may be (Lamont and Small, 2008).

In light of the above, this culture of poverty might be part of the reason why most of these practices are still going on in the northern part of the country, despite the government efforts. For example, admission to universities in Nigeria shows that the standard of admission, i.e. the cut-off mark used by the Joint Admission and

Matriculation Board (JAMB), to admit students to universities is lower in the Northern part of the country when compared to that of the South and East. And yet, many are not willing to take the exams and be admitted, because of cultural inhibitions that see education as 'sinful' (Walker, 2012).

The Yoruba women of SW Nigeria, unlike their counterparts in the northern part of Nigeria, do not have such cultural inhibitions, as they possess entrepreneurial capabilities, which have contributed to their stake in decision-making processes at the household level (Muoghalu and Abrifor, 2012). It may therefore be hypothesized that repressive cultural institutions and other factors contribute to and sustain poverty, as in the case of the northern part of Nigeria, where statistics show poverty to be on the increase (see CBN, 2013). But indolence may compound the problem of a person and plunge them into poverty. The rich background becomes immaterial if the person is unable to work and earn enough to sustain the status. However, a poor person may use the little available to him or her through serious enterprising efforts and achieve upward mobility.

7.3.2.3 Traditional institutions

Traditional institutionalism is a belief system. Adherence of this traditional institution holds that casting a spell may cause eternal poverty and derail the destiny of a people. Participants from Ikare-Akoko, Eziagulu, Ulakwo and Afaha-Eket communities were of the opinion that poverty may emanate from ancestral curses based on the traditional belief system. These participants held that it is within the belief system of Nigerian people that casting a spell may cause eternal poverty and derail the destiny of a people. According to them, this can happen to an individual, as was discussed above in the individual factors contributing to poverty, as well as to a community. One female participant from Eziagulu community identified ancestral curses as being responsible for some types of communal or individual poverty:

> *"Most of this poverty is caused by mainly our forefathers from the curses they laid or pronounced on their families, clans or villages. For example, where I married from, I heard that there was one old man who was also a very poor man. Because of the shame he experienced from the few rich during a festival, he cursed the village and*

said that hence forth, this village must remain poor and that curse still remained up till today."

This is an interesting aspect of the perceived causes of poverty based on the traditional beliefs of people. Traditionally, people believe in the existence of good and evil, and that ancestral causes can lead to poverty, as in the case of the man narrated above. Evil becomes any type of calamity, which can take the form of poverty for an individual or community. It is believed that when an ancestor brings evil (in this case poverty) upon an individual or a community, it is usually seen as a corrective, punitive or disciplinary measure (Adamo, 2011; Mtapuri and Mazengwa, 2013). In the case of the story narrated above, one may argue that it might be seen as a corrective measure, so that such things would not happen in the future.

Aside from ancestral causes, there are deities, shrines and spirits in Nigeria who might be responsible for individual or community poverty. This is common to many parts of Africa. For instance, a female participant from Ulakwo community related how a spirit of a particular woman caused poverty on the entire community because the woman was not given a proper burial when she died. As such, her spirit kept wandering and causing havoc on the members of the community. One is not given a proper burial if, for instance, one committed something that was forbidden by either the community or the gods. One's body is thrown into an evil forest. According to this participant, this woman was misjudged for an offence she did not commit and on her death, was thrown into an evil forest. When the source of the calamity befalling the community was discovered through the traditional chief priest, a proper burial was then organized for the spirit of the woman, though her body was no longer seen. The moment the proper burial was completed, the community started experiencing upward mobility, both from their sons and daughters living in the urban and rural areas.

Studies have shown the relevance of spirituality in the social life of Nigerians. Such things as witchcraft, juju[29] and sorcery, though not empirically verifiable, are still believed to exercise influence by most Nigerians, (see for example, Ekeopara and

[29] 'Juju' is a word that originated from West Africa and was initially used to describe the traditional West African religions. However, today juju is used for objects such as spells and amulets that are used as a form of witchcraft (Ekeopara and Ekeke, 2010).

Ekeke, 2010). As Tade (2013) opines; “things within the spiritual constitute an important aspect of social reality which must be engaged for a holistic understanding of social phenomena. Although it can be said to be unscientific, the fact that people hold on to it as a basis for the interpretation of social events, makes it a necessary component of African societies” (P.191). Similarly, Akiwowo (1983) observes that the worldview of the Yoruba is similar to many African people and includes physical and spiritual phenomena as a means to understanding social events. Nwolise (2012) contends that: “although science has become a religion in the world, the fact that the microscope of science cannot as of today capture the spiritual force or element in witchcraft, juju, curses, familial spirits, ghosts and others, does not mean that these things do not exist” (p. 2). He asserts that science and technology are concerned with physical things and thus, present a partial truth of social reality, especially as is seen within countries in West Africa, especially, Nigeria.

In sum, this sub-section has highlighted the perceived impact of institutions and its practices, such as traditional, religious and cultural practices on poverty. These factors are perceived causes of poverty, which we have explored in an effort to understand the pluralism concerning poverty conceptions in Nigeria. Having looked at the individual and environmental factors as well as institutional practices that are perceived to contribute to poverty, the next sub-section discusses other socio-economic factors perceived to contribute to poverty in Nigeria.

7.3.3 Government policies, structures and resources

Government policies and political factors are stated by participants as part of the causes of poverty. For instance, Cyril Onukoba, a PhD holder and director from a religious organisation expressed that:

> *“The inability to make and implement anti-poverty policies contributes to poverty. If Nigeria is serious about poverty alleviation, then, there will be efforts to release resources from (ebeekechiriya)*[30]*. The comment from Sanusi Lamido Sanusi*[31] *that,*

[30] ‘ebeekechiriya’ is an Igbo statement that means that resources must be untied or released from where they are being kept or hoarded. Several government officers and politicians have the habits of hoarding resources and keeping them away from those who are meant to be beneficiaries. For example, it was alleged sometimes

> *one-quarter of the national resources goes to national assembly is not a good story. So, if we are serious as a country, then constitutionally, the political post should be made financially less attractive to reflect what America does. The president of America, how much does he earn, and that's why you don't find criminals killing themselves over who becomes the president of America."*

In line with the submission of this participant, this present study therefore argues that policy-making and implementation are two key sides of government practices. It shows how a government operates by capably carrying out its function. Therefore, policy implementation is judged to be critical, (Maduabum, 2008) and in order to execute a policy well, there ought to be a combination of sufficient material and human resources (Ijaduola, 2008). In other words, policy making and implementation involve a clear identification of the policy plans, activities, programmes, projects, and well-thought out roles of the organizations that are responsible for these outcomes (Sambo, 2008; Maduabum, 2008).

In the opinion of respondent Cyril, in order to tackle poverty resources should be released by those who hoard them to allow effective policy implementation through proper resource rationalization and mobilization. If this is not done, then, there might be what Randel (2011) describes as an 'implementation gap', understood as "the difference between well-stated and articulated policy objectives or expected outcomes and the actual outcome, which is a consequence of inefficient or poor policy implementation" (p. 129).

To underscore this point further, an interviewee, Grace Olaye from a private NGO, expressed the view that:

> "...*sometimes Nigerian government make seemingly good policies, but the implementation is often poor coupled with corrupt and selfish actors and organisations responsible for policy implementation. Besides, problems of the poor are not given due consideration in the making and implementation of policies".*

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in the past, that a government officer, who was given money meant for pension kept the money in his own bank account for over a period of one year, which resulted in the death of many of these pensioners.

[31] Sanusi Lamido was the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria until February 2014. He was suspended as a result of an alleged scandal involving missing money from the oil revenue to the tune of $20 billion USD and other alleged misconducts. The matter is still being investigated.

There have been serious constraints regarding the design and implementation of policies in Nigeria. According to Ajulor, (2013), many factors have been adduced to this, such as unrealistic goal setting, lack of participation from the beneficiaries, power imbalance, corruption and inadequate distribution of resources. For example, balancing power in Nigeria would entail a balanced distribution of resources and power among the various ethnic groups. Yet the reverse is the case, as power has been manipulated by the Hausa-Fulani hegemony since national independence. This group perpetuated their power at the expense of other ethnic groups through use of the military (see also Okon, 2013). Hence, the above interviewees, Cyril and Grace, noted that power and resources should be well distributed, rationalized and mobilized in order to better the lives of the people.

Respondent Cyril was taken back to his earlier statement and asked if he viewed the allocation of one quarter (25%) of the nation's resources/budget to the national assembly as contributory to poverty in Nigeria, the respondent opined that it does. The respondent went on to say:

> *"This is another form of colonialism, where people succeed themselves in office, amassing wealth at the expense of the development of the nation and individuals, thereby deepening poverty in Nigeria."*

The reason for this, he argued, is that the political office holders in the country make elitist policies that protect their earnings and allowances, thus, giving them the opportunity to receive bogus incomes. Statistically, the members of the National Assembly are not more than 1000 individuals against a total population of about 170 million Nigerians. By implication (and as confirmed by Cyril), about 1000 individuals are sharing one quarter of the federal budget and leaving over 169 million people struggling by with the rest. This thesis is stating that this situation, where a few individuals by virtue of political appointments or political elective positions are made much richer than the rest of the millions of citizens in Nigeria, is grossly unfair. It results in negative envy, which has plunged many into killing, ritualism and occultism, in order to gain access to politics, where it is hoped they will be better off.

No doubt, Nigeria keeps borrowing from the international communities. CBN (2013), notes that Nigeria spends large amounts of money in debt servicing. In fact, the above respondent explained that the resources spent in debt servicing are part of what is causing poverty in Nigeria today. In his words,

> *"…look at the huge amount of money spent on servicing of debts internationally. They borrow this money for the intention of fighting poverty and developing our nation, but end up sharing this money among themselves."*

The above respondent is not alone in this observation as Osuji and Ozurumba (2013) have observed that the amount of money spent on debt servicing in Nigeria has left the economy almost at a stagnant position. Consequently, the nation ends up with insufficient resources for education, health services, basic infrastructures and food, amongst other deprivations. The implication of the lack of these basic necessities is the reproduction of poverty, notwithstanding the fact that some small number of individuals might get rich from this arrangement.

Furthermore, the unequal distribution of resources in the nation has also given rise to the marginalisation, exploitation and suppression of the majority of the population by just a few politicians and their powerful supporters, who control the resources. Respondents Tina Arigo and Grace Olaye from private organisations were of the view that monthly allocation of funds usually given to the state and local government areas that are meant for development of states and communities are also mismanaged, leaving many Nigerians lacking basic resources such as food, shelter, and clothes. According to them, there are a large number of hungry beggars in the street and this is rising on a daily basis. In view of this, this thesis assumes the need for access to information. Sometimes, people are not aware of such allocations from the government and as such, it creates opportunity for these government officials entrusted with these funds to misappropriate the funds. Study on the importance of access to information in Uganda revealed a remarkable reduction in the embezzlement of funds by government officials (see for instance Reinikka and Svensson (2011:1)

Respondents from private and religious organisations unanimously expressed the view that the rate of unemployment in the country is on the increase. This is attributed to government insensitive to job creation, which has made the youth to live without work. This point was vividly explained by one of the interviewee, Grace Olaye:

> *"…because of the attitude and neglect of the Nigerian government, so many youths today are without work and some communities neglected and left without electricity. Most people as a result of this have lost confidence in the government…."*

The opportunity structure of the Nigerian society favours the elite at the expense of the poor. There is a rotation of the political leadership and the amassing of wealth at the expense of national development. This point becomes clearer when one considers the number of unemployed and underemployed in Nigeria. Employment is an important social and economic concern of any nation as it contributes immensely to the nation's economic growth. Statistical records available show that the youth constitute more than half of the approximately 170 million Nigerians today and are therefore most affected by unemployment (Doreo, 2013:23).

This rise in youth unemployment, together with frustration with governance, are arguably responsible for the incessant increase in the rate of crime and social unrest, such as 'Boko Haram', ND militancy, kidnapping and rape (Salami, 2013). In some societies, the youth is seen as one of the important stakeholders (Ogbeidi, 2012; Ajulor, 2013), as opposed to countries like America, where to some extent, the youth are seen as a threat by elites (Giroux, 2003). Therefore, the above participants argued that if the problem of youth unemployment is not addressed through effective creation of jobs and empowerment, then the future of this youth remains uncertain. This is so, as this youth might end up being confronted with difficult financial burdens in the future, since they will grow up to become adults and parents entrusted with household responsibilities.

The focus of the views of the above participants is that most Nigerians have now lost hope in the government. This is aptly seen in the low enthusiasm with which people turn out to vote. The researcher was a witness to this, as the gubernatorial election in Anambra State, SE Nigeria, took place during the course of this

research, and the researcher observed that only very few people came out to vote. This might be a confirmation of the views of Agu et al. (2013:13), who observe that voters' apathy has kept on rising in Nigeria from an 84% turnout in 1999, when the first democratically government was elected, to a 25% in 2007, when the next election was conducted. This diminishing trend, according to them, is observed in all the three levels of government, showing a lack of enthusiasm from the electorate.

On the systems of the Nigerian government, Daniel Obi and Cyril Onukoba, both from religious organisations, expressed the view that, the introduction of a federal character principle (quota system) by the Nigerian government to create equal employment and appointment opportunities for all geo-political zones has indirectly substituted merit for mediocrity. Federal character principles emphasises the sharing of political appointments into public office, among others. Section 14(3) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution provides that: "the composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few State or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in Government or in any of its agencies". The federal character principle is designed to result in provision and evenly distribution of social services among the various geo-political zones in the country, and no unit is expected to be unnecessarily discriminated against in the establishment of social services. However, this system seems not to have lived up to its expectation as it is viewed to have given preference to the less qualified candidates over the most qualified candidates under the guise of equal representation. Specifically, Daniel noted:

> *"In Nigeria, due to authority structures, people are no longer given opportunity because they are qualified, but because of where they come from and in this case, mediocre are used to fill political posts where they are not fitted in. "*

The appointment of mediocre candidates may not help in the implementation of government policies, especially anti-poverty policies. This implies poverty

perpetuation as caused by authority structures, which Jordan (2004) referred to as structural causes of poverty. According to Jordan (2004), structural causes of poverty refer to those structures that either in the form of economic, institutional or authority structure, tend to favour some groups of people over others, based on class, gender or race. In other words, the political and social networks determine what one gets rather than one's identity (Putnam, 1995; Adler and Kwon, 2002). Invariably, the lowly placed and less connected are more likely to be out of favour, and hence, may remain unemployed irrespective of the qualities they possess. This present study argues that while many people may aspire to have the fundamentals of life, they are excluded from the distributive chains of favour, because of cultural factors, corruption, nepotism and tribalism or gender considerations. In this sense, unequal access to empowerment opportunities may plunge people further into poverty. Hence, the system of government in Nigeria retains the unconnected in low-quality or low-income employment, and ultimately keeps them poor.

Interestingly, Evaristus Odam and Maria Opa, both respondents from religious organisations as well as Rita Igwe from a private organisation, drew significant relationships between the state of the Nigerian economy, the rate of unemployment, and the incidence of poverty. For instance, Maria Opa, a staff member from a religious organisation based in Abuja noted:

> *"If our refineries are not working, how can we fight unemployment and poverty in this country?"*

The Nigerian economy is centred on oil exploration and marketing. Due to non-functioning refineries in Nigeria, the economic life of people, which relies on fuel, continues to dwindle. It is believed that the three major refineries located in the North and South zones of Nigeria are not in good working order. Nigeria is said to export its crude oil to other Western countries to be refined and then be imported back into the country. A non-functioning refinery, the above participants explained, prevents employment generation.

Faleti (2012) and Elesin (2013) observe that there is a growing incidence of pipeline vandalism in most places where refineries are located, causing seasonal scarcity of fuel supplies, affecting the lives of many Nigerians. Again, oil exploration by multinational companies[32] in the ND region of the country, has plunged many fish farmers into poverty due to oil spillages, which harms aquatic stocks. According to Faleti (2012:7), these negative environmental effects of oil exploration has led to massive reactions from the region. It has also led to two major demands from the government and multinational companies namely: the agitation by the people of the region for special funds for compensation and scholarships, and infrastructural development of their region. It may be argued that most of these consequences, especially the deprivation of their economic activities are the result of poverty inflicted on the people living in villages in ND region of the country.

In sum, the above-mentioned interviewees maintained strongly that systems of government, unemployment and inadequate management of resources, contribute to the incidence of poverty in Nigeria. The next sub-section discusses corruption as one of the perceived causes of poverty.

7.3.4 Corruption

One of the major problems confronting Nigerians, which came up during the fieldwork on conceptualisations of poverty, is political leadership and a culture of impunity. Participants from all the communities as well as interviewees from all the organisations referred to this as corruption, and stated that this has been the major factor responsible for the poor growth of the Nigerian economy as well as socio-economic stagnation. For instance, Anthony Aku, a senior lecturer opined that:

[32] Some Multinational Companies like Shell Nigeria Plc, Mobil, and Chevron among others in the Niger-Delta areas are seen as contributing factors to the poverty condition of people in this area. The oil spillage in those areas caused by these multinational companies affect the lives of these people who are left with contaminated water resulting in a lack of good drinking water. Their crops in the farms are affected and destroyed, thus leading to a shortage of food. There is also the issue of fire outbreak leading to loss of innocent lives and properties as a result of this oil spillage. Government officials are not perturbed that these multinational companies are not performing their social responsibilities to the host communities as long as the officials get their share from the companies. This has led to the formation of youth militant groups culminating in killing and kidnapping of staff members of these multinational companies and even some government officials (Oluwatoyin, 2010).

> *"…entrepreneurship which should have made millions of Nigerians to escape from poverty has been handicapped by the culture of corruption. What this means is that corruption has become the bane of entrepreneurship growth in Nigeria, and the implication of this is that the rate of poverty will keep growing in the country."*

This submission is simply understood as the failure of prospective and potential entrepreneurs to thrive due to a lack of adequate capital and encouragement from the government. Arguably, entrepreneurship can reduce poverty to a large extent and lead to economic growth. But in a situation where a few individuals embezzle or divert public money meant for the majority, poverty will continue to grow.

The World Bank, in conjunction with the anti-corruption organisation known as Transparency International (TI), views corruption as an abuse of public power, especially public office, for the private benefits of the person holding office or for a third party (TI, 2003). Public offices can be abused through accepting, soliciting or extorting bribes, as well as through nepotism and patronage. Also private agents may use bribes to circumvent policies for private profit and competitive advantage (TI, 2003). But from the findings of this present study, participants from Ikare-Akoko, Ajamgbadi, Afaha-Eket and Umunede communities opine that corruption is not limited to an abuse of public office and public power alone. For instance, one of the participants from Umunede community expressed the opinion:

> *"Corruption gives birth to extreme poverty if not controlled and makes the poor to remain poorer and the richer to become richer. This is the case in Nigeria*."

Viewed from the preceding arguments, corruption is then deemed unethical (Heidenheimer and Johnston, 1993), and is believed to affect sustainable development, good governance, democratic process, moral integrity, fair business practice and more (Ogbeidi, 2012). This stands in contrast to Sardan's (1999) moral economy of corruption in Africa, where he argues that corruption in Africa might not be corruption in the strict sense, but rather corruption in a wider complex sense, which is based on the logics of negotiation, gift-giving, solidarity among others. However, though not expected, the correspondents of this study did not raise this logical notion of corruption. Perhaps, this could be due to a narrow understanding of the concept of corruption. Corruption is viewed by respondents as

an act of material and financial injustice against the poor in particular and the public at large.

Explaining further, a respondent Jude Uchem, from a government organisation agreed that there is corruption in Nigeria and that the culture of corruption has effects on poverty. According to this respondent:

> *"The nature of corruption in Nigeria is called prebendals. Nigerian people divert resources into their pockets and call it personal share. In their view, there is nothing wrong with it. People steal money meant for the public and convert it to their own personal use. The money is for the master on the seat and for his clients. Clientelism is also there as one of the causes of poverty in Nigeria."*

The respondent who gave the above statement referred to corruption as 'prebendalism'. Joseph (1991) defines prebendalism as "an unremitting and unconstrained struggle for possession and access to state offices, with the chief aim of procuring direct material benefits to oneself and one's acknowledged communal or other sectional groups" (p. 75). The concept of 'prebendalism' was derived from Max Weber who used the word to describe the compensations paid by the feudal lords to individuals for their duties. In this sense, 'prebendalism' is seen to be attitudinal and a behaviour. This is then used by Jude Uchem from a government organisation to describe the nature of corruption in Nigeria, where most people, especially those in authority, utilize the power given to them as an opportunity to get rich or offer all manner of rewards to those loyal to them at the detriment of taxpayers. This is rather than use the power for the governance of the common good. The respondent calls these loyal parties the 'clients', and thus said that, 'clientilism' also contributes to poverty and undermines governance in Nigeria. Clientilism is explained as the kind of relationship existing between a person, who actually prebendalizes and the community or groups attached to his office (Joseph, 1991).

The respondent, who used the term "clientilism", linked it with the character of the Nigerian state, and used what he calls the 'Capture Theory' in politics to explain it. According to the respondent, 'Capture Theory' in politics or in political science simply means, in the case of Nigeria, that there are two contending forces. These

two forces are firstly, the people who want reforms and progress, and secondly, those who want the status quo to remain - they do not want changes. These latter groups, according to the respondent, are the 'clients' and they seem to dominate in Nigeria. The respondent maintained that, unless those who want reforms dominate those who want the status quo to remain (the character of the Nigerian state) then there will not be an end or a change in the character of the Nigerian state.

Moreover, some participants in FGDs frowned at the government's silence over the incidences of corruption in Nigeria, thereby making life unbearable and miserable for the people. For instance, a participant in one of the FGDs specifically from Ulakwo community made the following remark:

> *"The society is corrupt but the government is not doing anything to reduce the scourge of corruption. The major problem is money laundry and there is nepotism in every sector of the country."*

It is understood from the above submission that, the government of Nigeria has for long time and to a significant degree, been paying lip service to fighting corruption. At the inception of every government, there is always an agenda to fight corruption. For instance, the government of Goodluck Jonathan put forward the "transformation agenda" dedicated to fighting corruption and correcting the bad image of the country overseas. The success of this agenda remained a question yet to be answered, as TI ranked Nigeria as the 33rd most corrupt country in the world during the Jonathan administration, compared to Botswana which ranked 74th, the cleanest African country (Kalu, 2014). The current government of Mohammadu Buhari, since inception on May 29 2015, has also embarked on a wide anti-corruption crusade prioritised as a major agenda of his administration, but the impact has yet to be internationally assessed at the time of writing this thesis.

The culture of impunity has made life difficult for other Nigerians. Embezzlement of public funds has stiffened the ability to provide basic amenities for the people. In view of this, there are no quality roads, with the attendant road accidents. The number of deaths recorded on Nigerian roads is not only attributable to over-

speeding but also to the insensitivity of the country's leadership to the provision of good roads, modern, adequate and accessible health facilities. Those involved in accidents do not have access to quality healthcare services, with a majority dying of internal injuries. Those in government embark on global health tourism, using public resources and depleting the common patrimony, while the hapless die of lack of access to quality health services.

The culture of corruption has further deepened poverty in Nigeria. All levels of government are charged with cases of corruption, caused mostly by a lack of accountability. Money laundering has become the order of the day, with most Nigerian engaging in this activity. This has necessitated the establishment of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). According to respondent Evaristus Odam:

> *"…there is a money laundering act that the government has established through the EFCC, where they undertake financial monitoring, and everyone is expected to comply with that law*."

However, the promulgation of this act seems not to have been as effective as expected, as many people still involve themselves in money laundering. For instance, an interviewee, Nuru Edet, a male staff from a government organisation opined:

> *"In Nigeria, the things meant for the poor don't reach them again. Our money is taken away by those in authority and banked outside the country. Some use it to buy houses in America and Britain; very expensive houses for that matter, while the country is suffering from lack of industrialization and poor entrepreneurship."*

Despite the anti-money laundering laws promulgated by the federal government, it has been observed by some studies that most highly placed Nigerians, especially the political office holders, still engage in this act. They use this money to either buy expensive houses or embark on huge investment in foreign countries (see Okeshola, 2012; Abiola and Obasan, 2012). Close to two thirds of former state governors in Nigeria are facing corruption cases in the EFCC. The EFCC on its

own has abandoned its mandate to fight corruption, and thus became a toothless watchdog being used for persecuting perceived political enemies (see also Ohanyere, 2003; Abdullahi, 2006, Abiola and Obasan, 2012).

The above-mentioned participants and interviewees believed that failure on the part of government to fight corruption hinges on leadership problems in Nigeria, as most of its leaders are also corrupt. For instance, Daniel Obi from a religious organisation said:

> "…*how can corruption be fought, when most of our leaders are involved in it?"*

Based on his experience on Nigeria and its leadership, the renowned writer, Chinua Achebe, (1930-2013) noted that the causes of the major problems in Nigeria are rooted in bad leadership. Achebe (1983) argues that: "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with Nigerians. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land, climate, water, air or anything else; the Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which is the hallmark of a true leadership" (p. 1). There is bad leadership in the government, religious institutions, various communities and societies in Nigeria. In all, these participants maintained that corruption, alongside the bad leadership prevalent in all segments of society are the major problems that cause and perpetuate poverty in Nigeria.

7.3.5 Overpopulation

Over-population has been defined as a situation where large numbers of people struggle over scarce resources and little space (Amsden, 2012). Participants from Ikare-Akoko, Ajamgbadi, Anyigba and Umunede communities identified over-population as contributing to poverty. This position is also supported by respondents Cyril Onukoba and Grace Nodim, both from religious organisations. In line with this argument, Grace explained:

> *"Overpopulation and cluster of individuals in a particular place contribute to poverty. For example, why would people cluster in Lagos part of Nigeria? Because of lack of*

amenities in some areas, a lot of people cluster in a particular area. So, uneven development leads to clustering in a particular place and this breeds poverty."

These participants argued that due to the severity of poverty in rural areas, people tend to migrate to urban areas in search of a better living. They cited example with the rural-urban migration incidence in Nigeria. In the country, the rate at which people, especially youth, migrate from rural to urban areas is on the increase. Ajaero and Onokala (2013:6), note that over 60% of youth migrate from rural to urban areas annually. These participants gave reasons for this migration that included searching for a better living, the availability of basic amenities and job opportunities. Such basic amenities include electricity, clean water, housing, good roads, communication facilities, amongst others. This keeps most of the urban areas and cities clustered and overpopulated.

Dim (2013) contends that the rural-urban migration in Nigeria came into existence during the era of the colonial masters, who created a dichotomy between the rural and urban areas by centring most of their development strategies in the main cities and towns of the country, such as Lagos, Enugu or Kano. This was, in order, to some extent, make life easy for them, since there was access to some amenities in the urban areas, such as electricity, water and hospitals amongst others. In doing so, the colonial masters neglected and fostered poverty and low quality of life in the rural parts of the country that were left without basic social amenities (Dim, 2013). This policy of development, many argued, was adopted by the policy makers in Nigeria at independence and still guides them today, thereby leading to uneven development as is seen in the rural and urban areas (Dim, 2013; Onuba, 2012).

In the context of Nigeria and based on participants submission, this thesis views over-population from the rural-urban migration perspective. The pattern of rural-urban migration, which tends to cluster people in cities, creates a serious problem of absorptive capacity (Todaro and Smith, 2003; Dim, 2013). As more people cluster in a particular area, there is a likelihood that unemployment will rise, as well as social vices, poverty, low standard of living, high cost of living, food scarcity and environmental pollution. In line with this, Amakom (2008) and Babanyara et al. (2010) remark that the general trend of poverty in Nigeria gives an indication that

the basic social infrastructure is declining in cities due to rural-urban migration and over-population. Hence, participants' views that if basic social amenities were provided in rural areas, there would not be any need for people to cluster in a particular urban area. Therefore, over-population and the clustering of people in a particular place create chances for even greater poverty.

In summary, the evidence from the respondents in all of these sections indicates the various factors perceived to cause poverty. For instance and in reference to respondents' perceptions, poor family backgrounds may continue to have untold hardship on other members of the family now or in the future. Personal laziness or lack of intrinsic interest in working hard can cause poverty to thrive in an individual's life. Some people also hide under certain religious principles that can make them remain poor. Can one assume then that religion does not fix the underlying causes of people's pain and poverty level? Discrimination against women in terms of lack of access to family inheritance and prevention from engaging in capital intensive entrepreneurship, as well as girl-child abuse in terms of forced early marriage and denial of adequate education, all of which stem from cultural practices constitute to poverty. Poor implementation of anti-poverty policies, lack of proactive measures, pervasive culture of corruption in all sectors of the country, and over-population in a particular city are other reasons the above respondents view as responsible for the scourge of poverty in Nigeria.

7.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter has examined the various conceptions of poverty from the Nigerian people and actors from various APOs. It also discusses the fundamental causes of poverty, highlighting the individual and environmental factors, institutional practices as well as other socio-economic factors contributing to poverty in Nigeria as identified by participants. Findings indicate that perspectives on the conception of poverty are related to the organizations' philosophies, locations of the respondents/participants, as well as the experiences of the participants. These, variations are reflected in the approach to conceptualizing poverty.

An all-embracing conception of poverty generally emerged as lack of money, which

is material poverty, lack of knowledge and information, lack of peace, lack of respect and lack of freedom among others. Furthermore, poverty is conceived as deprivations of basic social amenities such as food, clothing, shelter, electricity, clean water and road accessibility. Location poverty is also identified, as well as poverty based on gender discrimination and the abuse of children's rights. The moral and spiritual dimensions of poverty are also identified by participants as ways to conceptualize poverty. Thus, the understanding and explanation of poverty through CPA becomes broader and clearer, rather than the uni-dimensional conceptualization approach to poverty, which sees poverty as only lack of money or lowness of income.

Indeed, the clear and simple understanding is that nobody ever has all that is needed and the expressed belief that nobody exists without a deficiency of some kind. Nonetheless, many of the actors have differing perceptions of what constitutes poverty. That is, actors differ in the dimensions and understandings of poverty. Some emphasize more than one conception, while others are interested in other conceptions or dimensions of poverty. These differences could affect the measures actors adopt to fight poverty, which shall be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Environmental factors involving broader environmental/social phenomenon (outside the control of the person) and Individual factors involving individual deficiencies, are part of the perceived causes of poverty, as identified by participants. Other factors, such as institutional practices involving traditional, religious and cultural practices are also identified. Equally, government inability to make and implement policies, structural imbalance and inadequate management of resources are identified as socio-economic and political factors contributing to poverty in Nigeria. Furthermore, over-population and clustering, as well as bad leadership, corruption, indolence, unemployment, insecurity were identified as causes of poverty and factors contributing to poverty in Nigeria.

The next chapter gives an account of and the fundamental basis for attendant changes in poverty conceptualizations.

8 Changes in poverty conceptualizations and their underlying drivers

8.1 Introduction

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus (535 BC to 475 BC) said that one of the constant things in life is change. We live in a world where changes continue to occur, in technologies as well as in the understandings and conceptualisations of phenomena. In view of this and in relation to conceptualisation of poverty under discussion, we ask: Have there been changes in the conceptualisation of poverty? Is poverty conceptualisation affected by time, place or people? Does it have to do with changes in institutional arrangements in the understanding of poverty? What have necessitated these changes? These are some of the issues and questions addressed in this chapter. In other words, this chapter discusses the dynamics of poverty conceptualisation and its underlying drivers in accordance with respondents' views. These changes according to participants' opinions include ownership of farmland and number of wives, structure of abode and livestock, activities and appearances, gender discrimination, education, empowerment as a new dimension of poverty alleviation, commercialization and politicization of poverty, and from breadwinner to dual earner model. The changes are not without Influences like western education, religion, technology, use of global standards/globalization, peer influences. This discussion is to some degree absent in the literature on poverty in Nigeria.

8.2 Changes in the conceptualization of poverty

The findings of this present study from both interviews and FGDs reveal that there have been significant changes in the conceptualisation of poverty as observed by this author. Several factors are adduced to explain the observed changes in poverty conceptualisation. In what follows, the responses of participants are analyzed, in relation to the perceived changes and their underlying drivers in the conceptualisation of poverty in Nigeria.

8.2.1 Ownership of farmland and number of wives

The changes in the conception of poverty, from pre-colonial to modern Nigerian society, can be understood within the context and understanding of people of what constituted the main drivers of the economy. These according to the participants of this study were rooted in the quantity of farmland owned and number of wives married. For example, one of the participants from Ulakwo community in Imo state, SE Nigeria explained:

> "…*due to the agrarian nature of most traditional olden days societies in Nigeria, the ownership of land determined the worth of the owner."*

From the above statement, it transpires that while some owned small pieces of land, but lacked the capacity to till or farm on it, others owned hectares of land used for oil-palm and cocoa plantation among other high-yielding cash crops. There were also others who did not have access to land. The above participant explained that because of such possession, these farmers controlled most of the economy, while those who did not have land to farm were simply employed as wage workers by the land owners. This development, according to participants from Otobi and Ulakwo communities, whose occupations are largely agriculture, led to the development of a class of rich and poor people in the olden day's traditional Nigerian society. In this way, the poor people who owned no land were regarded as slaves and were employed to work on the farms of wealthy farm owners. For instance, Tina Arigo, a female interviewee and founder/director from a private NGO stated:

> *"Most of the poor in traditional Nigerian society were mainly used as slaves to work on the farm, and as such, were not paid what was commensurate with the work done*."

What the foregoing means according to this respondent, is that being a slave was one of the ways to conceptualize poverty in the past. Although poor people might be used as slaves in the olden days with little or no wages, the term "slave" is no longer popular in today's conceptions of poverty. This finding is seemingly lacking in almost all the literature reviewed in respect of what constitutes poverty in Nigeria. Many sources have not analysed the nature of poverty in Nigeria from a

historical perspective based on ownership of land, though Narayan et al (2000) explained that the issue of land ownership as a factor which makes an individual to be seen as rich is still viewed as a contemporary challenge when they state that "Nigeria's lack of access to land emerges as the top problem on the lists among both men and women" (p.47).

In order that these farm owners may increase their yield and command more respect in the society, the number of wives a person married and the number of children was another way of categorizing an individual as rich or poor, and by extension a different way of conceptualizing poverty. In line with this opinion, one of the participants from Otobi community in Benue state, NC Nigeria submitted:

> *"…a man with large number of wives and great volume of farmlands would be viewed and classified as wealthy while a man with one wife or even without a wife would be classified as being poor in the olden days."*

It stands out clearly from the above submission that being poor entails not having enough farm lands and not marrying more than one wife. In the traditional Nigerian set up, a wealthy man was seen as having large farmland and marrying more than one wife and having many children. This idea was expanded by ATR (Metuh, 1987) before the advent of Christianity, and other forms of religion. In traditional Nigerian society, as in most parts of Africa, polygamy was mostly practiced before the advent of Christianity, which was referred to by the Africans as a Western religion (Metuh, 1987). Polygamy as a social practice allows a man to marry more than one wife to the extent that his wealth can support him and his family (Kyalo, 2012). In this way, the African traditional society believes that polygamy ensures the survival of widows and orphans within a family setup (Dalton and Leung, 2011). Elesin, (2013) has argued that though marrying more than one wife still persists today, especially in the northern part of Nigeria, where majority are Muslims, this might be due to religious beliefs rather than being rich and wealthy. The focal point being emphasized here is that wealth, in terms of having large farmland and marrying more than one wife in the traditional Nigerian society, demarcated the rich from the poor, who were not able to have those but were mainly employed as wage slaves.

Apart from the fact that having many wives is thought traditionally to show possession of managerial abilities, participants from Otobi and Ajamgbadi communities viewed the large number of wives and children as assets, as they also worked and increased production from the farms. Indeed they saved on wages which would have been paid to hired farmers.

In line with the above, this present study argues that this practice of marrying more wives and having many children (which the above participants referred to as assets) also enhanced the division of labour. Division of labour, as proposed in the 'Wealth of Nations' by Adams Smith (1723-1790), is linked with the concept of economic growth (see Nava et al., 2005). Here, large jobs are broken down into smaller components so that it enables each worker to specialise and excel at the work allotted to him or her, thereby increasing production and maximizing efficiency. It saves time and money. Following this line of thought then, a participant from Otobi community said:

> *"…a man could divide his portions of land with the wives, and the proceeds generated would be used to take care of the needs of his children."*

These needs, the above participants mentioned, could range from sacrificing and performing rituals in thanksgiving to the gods on the anniversary of a son or a daughter,[33] and also in providing clothes and food for the children. This submission is supported by a female participant from Eziagulu community, who remarked that:

> *"I came from a polygamous family and in the early 40s my father had a very big farm land which he divided among his three wives, and my own mother had to pay my school fees through profits she realized from produce on her own portion of the farm land."*

It can be said that paying school fees here may be interpreted as something rare in the early 40s. As at that time, most of these wealthy farm owners believed that education was a means employed by the white population to control and exploit the human capital of the native population. They preferred to work on the farm with

[33] In a Nigerian traditional set up; sacrifices and rituals performed to the traditional gods on the anniversary of the birth of a son or daughter were common, before the advent of Christianity and Muslim. Christianity and Islam abolished these practices and preached belief in one God.

their sons and daughters, rather than sending the kids to school. They depended much on oral tradition and folklore as means of educating their children (Awolalu and Dopamu, 1979; Ezeigbo, 2010). Hence, this participant from Eziagulu community, who is advanced in age, was probably lucky to acquire a minimal level of education, due to his parent's influence with either the warrant chief[34] or those who had links to colonial forces. Therefore, the pluralism in the understanding of poverty in the Nigerian traditional society is not mainly linked with education, but with large farmland, several wives, and the ability to control these possessions, which the above mentioned participants referred to as managerial abilities. This has largely not been articulated within the literature on poverty.

There are also literal and implied meanings attached to possession of more than one wife. Participants from Ulakwo, Otobi and Ajamgbadi communities were of the opinion that it shows a high sense of responsibility and having qualities that endear women to men. For instance, a male participant from Ulakwo in Imo state said:

> *"One is a 'man' in the real sense of it, when one has more than what other men in the community have, when one has the ability to offer protection and provide food for a large number of people."*

In addition to the above statement, some participants from Afaha Eket, Umunede and Ikare-Akoko communities were of the opinion that it also conferred certain respect on such individuals from the community. Such an individual becomes bold and may be proud, more assertive, and can stand and talk anywhere. This opinion was succinctly captured by one of the participants from Afaha Eket thus:

> *"In our community, our fathers attached a lot of importance to the number of wives and children in their care because of the associated societal prestige. To them, a large number of wives and many children were economically advantageous since they would be used for farming, but such may not stand for today."*

The above submission elaborates the socio-economic importance, and advantage, attached to marrying several wives and begetting many children, as they gave the

[34] 'Warrant chiefs' were established by British colonialism in the Eastern part of Nigeria. They owed their authority to the colonial forces who instituted them. These warrant chiefs later on became what is today known as 'Eze' or 'Igwe'. An 'Eze' or 'Igwe' is the traditional ruler of a given town or community whose power and authority are recognized, both by the government and by the church (Adegbulu, 2011).

man a place and position in the traditional Nigerian society. This may not be the case in contemporary Nigerian society. This present study has earlier stated that wealth is needed to maintain a polygamous household, and this further explains the potential virtuous and vicious wealth cycles. Polygamy was advantageous then because the household members were productive by virtue of their engagement in agriculture. The more the children meant to work on the family farmland, the more the wealth that would be amassed. However, people who could not afford to start a polygamous household would not be able to reap its potential benefits (see for instance, Boserup, 2007).

While it may be a rational economic decision to marry and adopt polygamy and have more wealth and social status in traditional Nigerian societies, such decision in the present day socio-economic conditions can be argued. An average man weighs the cost and benefits of managing small and large family sizes. Hence, participants from Ulakwo, Eziagulu, Afaha Eket, and Otobi communities unanimously argued that having several wives may no longer be fashionable, due to the changing economic system as Nigeria transitions from traditional agrarian economy to modern industrial and capitalist oriented economy. The same view was echoed by Jude Uchem, a director from a government organisation. According to him:

> *"…though very advantageous in the past, acquiring many wives and more children has a lot of disadvantages in the contemporary world because it will take you a lot to feed many mouths."*

The contemporary changes regarding marrying several wives may be a result of negative implications associated with large family size. Large family size without the resources to cater for it, may lead to the onset of several social problems, such as child labour, child trafficking, early marriage, prostitution and strife over the meagre space and resources (see for instance Okogu, 2011, UNICEF, 2007; Cimpric, 2010). These leave children unprotected and sometimes leading to child death. This is poverty understood as children's rights abuses (ECLAC, 2003). The consequences of marrying more wives than can be catered for are enormous. This present study argues that this may make the idea of polygamy repulsive and

unsustainable, particularly among those with a weak economic base. Marriage of this kind is likely to lead to competition for resources, spaces, and time. According to participants from Ulakwo and Umunede communities, the affected children are not likely to be well catered for when the husband is weak economically as opposed to an economically viable husband. The children are likely to be deprived of the basic needs of life by living in overcrowded room, dropping out of school or attending schools with poor facilities. An early school leaver has less potential to compete in the labour market. A female child is more vulnerable and may become a victim of early marriage or adolescent pregnancy with consequence of reproducing poverty (see for example Oyediran and Abanihe, 2005; Field and Ambruse, 2008; Osakinle and Olufunmilayo, 2012; Okereke et al., 2013).

The above findings, as emanated from many participants from Ajamgbadi, Otobi, Umunede, Ulakwo, Eziagulu, and Afaha Eket communities, as well as from respondents Tina Arigo and Jude Uchem, show that ownership of farmland and numerous wives were distinguishing factors between the non-poor and the poor in the traditional Nigerian society, and thus contributes to the dynamism of the pluralism in the understanding of poverty within the Nigerian context. This present study however notes that this conception may not stand the test of time, given the challenges of the economic situation and migration to the cities for “greener pastures”, which have overtaken the concentration on farm plantation. Boserup, (2007) has predicted this when she observed that future changes in the patterns of marriage in most of the rural African communities will in the times to come be linked to changes in farming systems, and this might enhance or lessen the economic incentive for polygamic marriages.

8.2.2 Structure of abode and livestock

Alongside the issue of spouses, participants from Eziagulu, Anyigba, Ajamgbadi, Ulakwo, Otobi communities stated that ownership of livestock such as sheep, goats, poultry and other assets have contributed to distinguishing the rich from the poor. For instance, a male participant from one of the FGDs in the Ajamgbadi community observed:

"Besides many wives, the large number of livestock one has is very important without which one will be regarded as a poor person."

From the above, one is also categorized as rich in the traditional Nigerian society, when one has a large number of livestock. Not being able to have this categorizes one as being poor. Even though these possessions in large number may still count to some degree, ownership of few livestock may not today imply poverty as has been argued by Vabi and Olawole, (1992). When owned in small quantity, livestock may be a strategy to have meat during festivities such as Christmas and the New Yam Festival, since a regular flow of income may not be certain at that time (Ugo Pica et al., 2007). This is also the case in India (see for instance Gol, 2006; Mehta and Nambiar, 2007). Hence, classification between the rich and the poor may not be based today on the number of livestock owned by an individual or family in Nigeria.

Also some participants from Ulakwo, Otobi, Anyigba and Ajamgbadi communities raised the issue of house ownership and habitation. It was argued by participants from the above mentioned communities that the type of house in which people live is now used to classify the poor and the rich. Participants from Ikare-Akoko and Umunede communities however maintained that house classification was not a major yardstick used hitherto to define poverty. In view of this, a participant from Ikare-Akoko community also said:

"Even though my grand mum lived in a mud house with thatched roof, she wasn't seen as poor because of regular maintenance; but anybody living in a mud house today will be seen as poor".

According to these participants, most people in traditional Nigerian societies, up until the early 1970s, were mainly living in mud houses designed with thatched roofs. People who lived in these mud houses were equally regarded as wealthy as their riches are premised on their possessions ranging through having numerous wives, livestock, many children and large hectares of farmlands. This implies that the type of houses one lived in those years was not used to distinguish the poor from the non-poor. Today, however, there are different types of houses, which may indicate the socio-economic status of the inhabitants. For instance, there are the

'face me I face you' 'flat'[35], duplex and mansion. Those who live in the 'face me I face you flat' are seen as poor, as against those who live in duplex and mansions. In other words, it can be said that in Nigeria as economic standards change, so does the understanding of poverty.

Equally, conceptions of poverty have become associated with geographical location and habitation in modern-day Nigerian society. For example, in Lagos State in SW Nigeria, where the researcher worked for some years, there are some areas that are either occupied by the rich, or the poor, or by a mixture of 'not too poor' and 'not too rich' (the middle class). Such areas include: the Victoria Garden City (VGC), Lekki and Victoria Island, which are for the rich, and Mushin, Ajengule and Ibafo (amongst others) that are occupied by the poor. Ikeja, Festac, Yaba are inhabited by the middle class.

The above reveals the case of 'social differentiation' based on class, prestige and status (Moreh, 2014), as evidenced in Nigeria, as well as in other parts of the world. 'Social differentiation' is the set of strategies that are employed for the division of persons or society into groups and classes (Stanek and Veira, 2012). According to Moreh (2014:8), these differentiations can be cultural, economic, political, occupational or religious. A close look at those living in the VGC area of Lagos reveals that these people might have something in common. The occupants of this area might be the upper class, most of whom are politicians or political appointees or people who control most of the economic resources, like those who work with the multi-national oil companies. This differs to those who live in Ajegunle, who are mostly bus drivers and mechanics. Therefore, it might be said that, within the context of Nigeria, the life choices of people, including the location where people live, might also shape the understanding of poverty.

In sum, with regard to changes in the conceptualisation of poverty, participants from Otobi, Anyigba and Ajamgbadi communities reckoned that living in houses built with clay or mud did not actually distinguish who were poor and non-poor in

[35] This is a type of house obtainable in most of the semi-urban areas mainly occupied by the lower class. It is built in such a way that the rooms face each other and there is a corridor to demarcate the rooms and also to serve as entrance for the occupants of the house. Usually, there is always a general toilet, bathroom and kitchen for all the occupants.

the traditional Nigerian society, as opposed to ownership of livestock and wives. In Nigeria today, the ownership of such mud houses or living in the mud houses, may be interpreted as poverty, while those who use modern building bricks in the construction of their houses might be deemed rich. However, there are still some poor people today who live in bricks houses that are built for them by philanthropists or even their relations. People who live in estates, mansions and duplex are regarded today as rich and wealthy, unlike those living in unplanned settlements (shanties) in 'face me I face you flats', who are defined as poor. Next, we consider activities and appearances as part of the changes in the conceptualisation of poverty.

8.2.3 Activities and appearances

Furthermore, participants from Umunede and Ikare-Akoko, Ajamgbadi and Anyigba communities noted that the way people carry out their daily activities is used to define the rich and the poor, and therefore gave examples that have to do with walking activities and appearances. For instance, a member of the group from Ikare-Akoko community remarked:

> *"Many years ago you must walk a very long distance as a secondary school student from your home to your school which was an indication that you were from a poor home. Today, a student that picks the next bike or the next 'Keke'*[36] *and pay 50 Naira*[37] *to school is seen as being rich."*

In traditional Nigerian village society, economic transactions were executed by people who commuted on bare feet. Today commuting on barefoot rather than using a car is seen as poverty. Today, categorizing people as poor based on commuting style may be biased. This is underpinned by the fact that someone may decide to walk for health reasons, ranging from burning body fats to reducing the levels of bad cholesterol in the body, as bad cholesterol is dangerous according to medical experts (Lusk et al., 2010). Most people around the globe, it has been

[36] 'keke' is a tricycle bike used in Nigeria as a means of transportation. It is cheaper and affordable and can go to the remotest areas where buses and taxes cannot reach due to bad roads. It was introduced in the last few years by one of the government's agents for poverty alleviation for use in the remote areas. It is now being used both in the rural and urban areas.

[37] 'Naira' is Nigeria's legal tender. The minimum currency denomination is 1 kobo while the maximum is 1000 naira.

argued, cut down their cholesterol levels by adopting the habits of walking (Jeon et al. 2007) despite being rich and able to afford travelling by whatever means of transportation.

Participants from Ikare-Akoko and Umunede communities explained that many of their forefathers, who walked long distances, remained strong and healthy throughout their lives, in comparison to those who find it difficult to walk for just a short distance nowadays. Participants from Ikare-Akoko community, for instance, put forward that today children do not walk to schools anymore. Even if the schools are nearby, children prefer to go to school by being dropped off by their parents or taking taxis or 'keke' or buses. One may further argue that the reason for this mentality may not necessarily be to escape being classified as poor, but to do with security reasons in a country characterized by rape, trafficking and kidnapping of innocent children. Elesin (2013) observes how school and university students are kidnapped and how millions of naira are demanded as ransom from the parents or relatives for their release (See also Agbu, 2003). Stories abound in Nigerian media of how children are raped and infected with HIV/AIDS on their way to and fro school (Sampson, 2012). In this type of situation, extra care is taken to protect children whether the parents are rich or poor. In view of this, one might say that the issue of security in Nigerian has also altered the understanding of poverty.

There are, however, some overlaps in the conception of the poor and the rich as gathered from the above mentioned participants. The type of clothes worn in the olden days was used to delineate the social class of an individual. This still holds in distinguishing the rich and the poor in contemporary Nigerian society. Indeed, purchase of clothing from boutique shops shows the social status of a rich person, while buying 'okirika' from 'second hand stores', as was discussed in the previous chapter, is defined as poverty. What can be inferred from the above narratives is a change in the conceptualisation of poverty, which now considers the socio-cultural milieu of the modern era against the stereotyped traditional walking and dressing lifestyle. Hence, in contemporary Nigerian society, daily activities and appearances are used to define the rich and the poor, and thus have formed part of the changes in the conceptualisation of poverty.

8.2.4 Gender discrimination

Gender discrimination and child right abuse are among the noticeable changes that have occurred in the conceptualisation of poverty within the Nigerian context. Narayan et al (2000:211) have argued that in some places that are different from Nigeria, women and children are regarded as property themselves, and their lives are regulated accordingly through marriage and labour practices. In other places also outside Nigeria, women have control over few assets and the security of their inheritance is tenuous. In Nigeria for example, participants from Eziagulu, Ulakwo, Umunede and Anyigba communities, including respondents Tina Arigo and Marg Uda, from private NGOs unanimously submitted that preference for sons above daughters dominated in the traditional conception of social relations, in contrast to what obtains today. Specifically, a female participant from Eziagulu community remarked thus:

> *"In our community, having female children without a single male child does not bring prestige. Female children are viewed as strangers while male children are viewed as assets."*

From the above submission, one infers that the cultural emphasis on having sons is rooted in the ownership of family property. If a man begets daughters without having a son, his social status within the community is diminished. Such a man was not considered 'man' enough. According to this participant, if a man does not have a son from his wife, the man marries more wives and blames the lack of having sons on the wife. This was in relation to the prevailing cultural practice, which blamed the woman for the sex of the child in most part of the country (see for instance Odu et al., 2014). Ifemeje (2008) and Chukwu et al. (2014) note how women were beaten to death in the past (and are shown extreme hate even today) in most cultures in Nigeria for failure to beget a son.

Our findings indicate that the need to beget a son may entail marrying more wives until a son is born. What follows, again, is large family size, which has adverse implication on the wealth of the family, physical space competition and the reproduction of poverty in the family. What is important here is the place of women

in society. This goes to confirm the findings of Ajani (2008) on the issue of gender inequality prevalent in the Nigerian society. Based on this gender inequality, daughters were less likely to be educated when family resources were scarce. Sons were given all the attention and resources.

It was thought irrational, as gathered from some participants from Umunede and Ulakwo communities, to use family resources to train a person who would not perpetuate the family name. A male participant from Ulakwo community in Imo state said:

> *"These girls or females marry and abandon their father's names to answer the name of their husbands. So what point wasting the little resources in training them."*

According to this participant, not perpetuating the family name means that eventually the girl will get married to another man from another family. The practice prevalent in Nigeria, as in most part of the world, is that the moment a girl marries she changes her paternal surname to that of her husband. With such cultural discrimination against daughters, they were more likely to experience poverty than sons. Their career prospects are limited by cultural inhibitors that relatively put little or no value on women. Therefore, if poverty is conceived as a condition of lack, then a man who has not begotten a son but has many daughters in the Nigerian situation, is seen to have suffered a serious deficiency. Hence, the understanding of poverty in the context of Nigeria, looking at the above, is shaped by people's attitude towards gender, where a man who has sons is not seen as poor as against a man who has only daughters.

However, such cultural discrimination against women is now questioned, especially as there is an intensified effort towards achieving the MDGs of 2015 (now extended to 2030). According to the UN (2010), the MDGs third agenda item is centred on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women (see also the Centre for Democracy and Development Report, CDD, 2013). This agenda stresses the need to eliminate gender disparities in all forms of education before the year 2015 and now extended to 2030. With this gradual elimination of

gender disparity, career progression of women is being enhanced as they now receive the same level of education as men.

In Nigeria, following the MDG agenda, the need to empower women and give them their rightful place has become the reigning paradigm (CDD, 2013; Ajani, 2008; Okereke et al., 2013). Gender equality is becoming a way to reduce poverty by exposing girls to those areas hitherto considered the exclusive preserve of boys. It should be made clear that gender equality as emphasized by the MDGs, is not only about equality in education, but also about equity in meeting the needs of both genders so as to provide equal opportunities (CDD, 2013). Men and women ought to have equal access to opportunities. Women should have choice and control over decisions that affect their lives and be allowed access to life transforming opportunities through education, economic independence, amongst others, so as to reduce hunger, poverty and inequality amongst women (CDD, 2013; UN, 2010; Yusuf and Adepoju, 2012). Despite this changing attitude to gender discrimination in Nigeria, pockets of it are still being recorded, with implications for the poverty cycles on women (see also Oyediran and Abanihe, 2005; Muoghalu and Abrifor, 2012).

The issue of inheritance is also part of the changes noted in the conceptualisation of poverty. Some participants from Eziagulu and Ulakwo communities argued that women were not given the right of inheritance. For instance, a female participant from Eziagulu community said:

> *"In my community's culture, a female does not inherit the property of the father simply because she is a woman and nothing more."*

When further probing was done, it was discovered that this culture of excluding women from inheritance rights is prevalent in Eastern Nigeria, predominantly inhabited by Igbos. This is rooted in the fact that women are given away in marriage, and as such, should not have any inheritance from their fathers. The same reason was adduced for why women should not be educated as this study explained in the previous section. Even in marriage, women are still denied the right to inheritance. Oke (2001) notes that when a man dies not having a son, all

his belongings according to tradition are taken by the brother or uncle, and this explains why having a son is much valued in this part of the country (see also Allanana, 2013). The right to inheritance might contribute towards lifting one out of poverty as a woman. Women, who are left without the right to inheritance in Nigeria, might end up in poverty. Therefore, the denial of the right to inherit on the side of women affects and shapes the changes in the understanding of poverty.

To the contrary, in Western Nigeria, women have the right to inheritance, as reckoned by participants from Ikare-Akoko and Ajamgbadi communities, SW Nigeria. For instance, the following statement was made by a participant from Ikare-Akoko community, signalling a better understanding and appreciation of gender equality in that part of the country:

> *"In Yoruba society, when the father dies and if he owns a building, his building will be shared room by room between both the females and the males; and I hope many other tribes in Nigeria will start to pick lessons from this."*

In terms of inheritance, Western Nigeria, populated mainly by the Yorubas, gives women the right to inheritance, especially those still single. Whether married or single, the women, who are included in the inheritance rights, are believed to have a stake in their father's property within Yoruba culture. The reverse is the case in Igbo land as women seem to have no right of inheritance whatsoever, whether single or married (see also Oke, 2001). Even though the Yorubas do not discriminate with regard to inheritance, Familusi (2012) still remarks on the importance attached to sons, as usually the first question asked at the birth of a child is, 'is it a boy or a girl?'; and announcing it is a boy, gives much joy to the man. This explains why a son, no matter how young he is, has always been regarded as the head of the family at the demise of the father, even among daughters who are older than him (Familusi, 2012).

The fact stressed above is that in Nigeria, the attitude of people with regard to gender issues, especially on son preference, has predominated. This has shaped the understanding of poverty, leaving families without sons as poor and vice versa. In sum, notwithstanding the findings of Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke (2003:4) that

Nigerian women are plagued by a lack of recognition, with insufficient numbers of women in positions of power; some participants from Ulakwo, Eziagulu and Ajamgbadi communities expressed the view that gender discrimination is gradually giving way to gender equality, due to the many sensitizations campaigns and programs coming from government organisations, national and international NGOs, as well as religious bodies.

8.2.5 Education

Closely tied to the dynamics of poverty conceptualisation was the attitude to education in agrarian village life. Participants from Afaha-Eket, Otobi, Umunede, Ajamgbadi, Ikare-Akoko, Anyigba, Eziagulu and Ulakwo communities believed that parents were not favourably disposed towards educating their children. It was thought that going to school was a waste of time. In addition, those who went to school would at completion wait for long-term returns while the farmer would probably not wait that much to become successful and popular within the community. These participants held the opinion that education in the past was a taboo in the sense that it was a means to abolish most of their traditional practices as well as polygamy by the colonialists, and as such, most people did not send their children to school (see also Obomanu, 2011; Martins, 2005; Adebisi, 2009; Adebisi, 2009). In view of this, one of the participants from Ulakwo community remarked:

> *"In the olden days, parents didn't allow their children to go to school feeling it was a lazy person that does that. Any compound that sent their 'pikin*[38]*' to school would be expelled from that particular community; but every parent cherishes education today."*

The above submission implies that most people in the traditional Nigerian society suffered ostracism from their own people, simply because they sent their own children to school, thus allowing them to mingle with the white people, and bringing abomination on the community. Accordingly, this participant contends that parents believed that allowing their children to mingle with the white people might end up making the children imbibe the White culture, which parents believed would have

[38] 'Pikin' is a Pidgin English expression for a child. 'How is your child doing?' can be phrased in Pidgin English as 'how is your 'pikin' doing?'

adverse implications on their own culture. In the first instance, it would deprive the children not only the opportunity to help out in the farm work, but also inculcate some values that may be opposed to polygamy, as well as other cultural and traditional practices. In this way, children were mostly encouraged to engage more in their fathers' occupations of farming, fishing, blacksmithing, and some children were sent to learn various vocations from other masters, such as the art of traditional medicine and rearing of cattle. This was all done in an attempt to discourage children from getting educated by the white people.

However, it might be argued that the reasons for not educating children at that time could be a result of lack of information and awareness. People were not informed and, as such, were not aware that with education, farming could be much more productive using knowledge about soil components and the various ways of improving yields. Therefore, lack of education in the traditional Nigerian society, which could have improved farming systems, and thus provided more resources to farmers, shaped the understanding of poverty, as against the values that are today attached to education.

Even though sending a child to school can create very large costs for the poorest families (Narayan et al, 2000:241), the attitude towards educating children (sons and daughters) today has become positive. Most rural and urban dwellers appreciate the importance of Western-oriented education with its emphasis on empowering people (see Boserup, 2007; Ajayi and Afolabi, 2009; Orji and Job, 2013; Garba, 2012). For example, Orji and Job (2013:312), underscoring the importance of education in Nigeria argue that the love for education is today appreciated by most parents, who are willing to face whatever challenges (especially financially challenges) in order to send their children to school. In view of this, a female participant from Ulakwo narrated how a woman struggled to educate her daughter who later became successful and eventually assumed the responsibility of caring for her mother financially which was not always the case. According to this participant:

> *"I know a woman in our community who struggled and went as far as selling some of her property in order to train her child in school. In fact there are lots of women in our community who have done similar things and today they are reaping the fruit"*

This thesis states that the reasons behind this crave for education are basically distinguishable in the case of the above mentioned participants and some authours who have argued on the importance of education. For some of these participants, the crave for education is based on the idea that most Nigerians equate education with having money and being successful in the future, while for authors like Boserup, (2007); Orji and Job (2013:314), Ajayi and Afolabi, (2009), the crave for education is based on the idea that education is investment in human capital development which helps to foster social and group relationship as well as long term productivity and growth amongst others.

It is interesting to note that all participants from Afaha-Eket, Anyigba, Eziagulu, Umunede, Ajamgbadi, Otobi, Ikare Akuko and Ulakwo communities in their craving for education, longed for a quality education. For instance, a female participant from Eziagulu talked about the good quality education which the missionaries offer but which is seriously declining due to government takeover of schools, and this according to her leads to a low quality of education which in turn contributes to poverty. According to this participant:

> *"If the educational system is still retained by the missionary, they would know how to control everything, but unfortunately government has taken over schools and everything got spoilt and poverty sets in".*

Recently, the quality and standard of education is declining on a daily basis in Nigeria. Most of the above mentioned participants attributed this to government takeover of schools from the missionaries, while some critics and authors have attributed it to inappropriate education policy and the endemic corruption in the education system of the country (See for instance, Memory and Dogitimiye, 2013; Nwaokugha and Nyewusira, 2013). This fall in the quality of education has its accompanying negative effects as Nigerian education standard is not recognized internationally and most Nigerians cannot find jobs overseas due to poor rating of our educational system.

Notwithstanding all these challenges ranging from finance, corruption and takeover of schools, traditional societies, which survive on communalism, witness the communal efforts to send some gifted children to school. Participants from Ulakwo community, however, deemed that most children who are exceptionally intelligent, but have no one to sponsor them, are being taken care of in most communities in Nigeria. This is testament to the positive value attached to education in the contemporary Nigerian society, especially among the poor. However, the exception to this crave for education as discussed above is 'Boko Haram', which contends that Western education is bad (sinful) (Walker, 2012; Agbiboa, 2013).

8.2.6 Empowerment as a new dimension of poverty alleviation

One of the main changes that have occurred in the way that poverty is conceptualized is the movement from lack of empowerment to empowerment. Hitherto, poverty was conceived as deprivation. This had led to most of the APOs, especially non-state APOs, raising the need to address such identified deprivations. These APOs believed that a gap, such as inadequate food or lack of it, was addressed by providing grains for the affected families. There was no direct aim of empowerment in the policy. However, such types of intervention were found to be wanting, because a continuous provision of food instead of empowerment for those who lack may not be an appropriate strategy, as it will continue to keep them poor. By contrast, as stated by Jude Uchem, a director from a government organisation, Rita Igwe, a deputy director from an NGO, and Cyril Onukoba, a director from a religious organisation, the contemporary approach to poverty used by various organisations and government is empowerment.

According to the World Bank (2011), empowerment denotes the process of building up individual or group capacities in order to enable them to make appropriate choices that could be transformed into positive outcomes, thereby fostering stability in their lives (see also Narayan, 2005). The World Bank further notes that empowerment could lead to the development of capabilities and assets of the poor. This aligns with the capability approach of Sen (2009), who maintains that empowerment is a process of helping individuals achieve their capabilities and become what they want to be. Based on the above definitions, a disempowered

person is deprived and may continue to be so unless provided with the requisite skills, which would draw such a person out of a poverty trap (see also Narayan, 2005; Duru and Ufiem, 2012).

In relation to Nigeria, it has been argued by Ayoola et al (2001:1) that poverty is no longer an issue of 'inputs', understood as the extent to which public goods and services are available for wellbeing. Rather poverty is viewed by people as an overwhelming denial of their right to a quality of life that is enabling and empowering. The IMF (2005:xv) country report perceived the government's established NEEDS, as empowering the poor by tackling social exclusion, paying attention to generating jobs in order to improve incomes, housing, health care, education, political power, and physical security. In contrast to this, some participants from Ajamgbadi community believed that hitherto, there was no empowerment or supporting of individuals' capabilities from the government, either in the form of youth or gender empowerment. This is a contrast to what is obtainable in contemporary Nigerian society, where most non-governmental organisations are embarking on empowerment awareness. In support of the above, an interviewee, Kenneth Okoli, a staff from a religious organisation observed that:

> *"I'm aware that several church organizations have some empowerment schemes like technical and vocational training centres, where all kinds of vocation are designed to enable the poor people gain a sustainable income in the long run. Micro credit schemes are also made available to the poor."*

The above findings have revealed that there are several empowerment programs which various religious APOs, as well as other public and private APOs, are embarking on in Nigeria, in order to enable people get sustainable income and live an independent and better life. These could be in the form of vocational trainings, such as learning how to rear fish and snails, welding, amongst others (see for instance Onyemekara, 2013). Some of these vocational training centres are free while others are subsidized. Onyemekara (2013) reasons that an empowered person is more likely to be out of poverty through imparting knowledge gained in vocational skills (see also Ikeanyibe, 2009; Ilemona and Akoji, 2013). Therefore, it might be said here that the former approach 'fishing for the poor', has now become

'teaching the poor how to fish', in order for them to be independent. While acknowledging the merits of these programmes, this thesis argues that the empowerment approach is not without some criticisms and barriers. For instance, one of the key obstacle to poverty alleviation and to equality of opportunity may stem from social discrimination and exclusion, an incompetent state, ineptitude or corrupt officials, and so forth. If this is the case, then the impact of empowerment programmes on the majority of the poor could be reduced.

Participants from Ajamgbadi community mentioned the use of micro-credit schemes, which is part of micro-finance, as one of the means of empowering people. Specifically, a male participant said:

> *"Sometime ago, the government of Lagos embarked on micro-credit scheme to help empower the poor especially in the rural areas, but the money was so small that you might end up using it to solve your immediate problems other than using it to start a small trade."*

Micro-credit, according to Armendariz and Morduch (2010), is the provision of small loans to people who are impoverished and may lack collateral or verifiable credit history with which to access loans in the traditional banks, as well as people who have no steady employment. It is mostly designed to support entrepreneurship and alleviating poverty, but also for the empowerment of women and in some cases, the youth. It is generally believed that today's micro-credit scheme originated with the Grameen Bank, that was founded in Bangladesh in 1983 (Riwajanti, 2013; Armendariz and Morduch, 2010; Rosenberg et al., 2009). These micro-credit schemes have been established to assist the poor in some parts of Nigeria, as well as in many parts of the world. In Nigeria, it exists in the form of micro-finance banks, micro-credit schemes, and co-operatives. Most state and non-state APOs embark on these as means of alleviating poverty and fostering stability and sustainability (see Obaidullah, 2008; Riwajanti, 2013).

Micro-credit schemes in the form of micro-finance banking, according to its advocates, have helped in the reduction of poverty, the expansion of small business enterprises, and the improvement of schooling levels, amongst others

(Asutay, 2010; Khandker, 1998). Following this line, and looking at what the poor need in order to be empowered, it might then be argued that access to financial services in general, and micro-credit assistance in particular, is important. When access to these are denied or restricted, the poor are put in a situation which, according to Obaidulla (2008), forces them to seek loan from the traditional banks, which normally will require collateral as well as attract high interest rates, thereby putting the poor in a more disadvantaged position (see also Karnani, 2007; Barnejee and Duflo, 2006). This might be the reason behind the establishment of micro-credit schemes and micro-finance by state and non-state APOs in Nigeria to help empower the poor. Micro credit schemes according to some authors have proved to be a helpful tool in the fight against poverty, and have the potentials for the expansion of employment opportunities, especially self-employment (see Karnani, 2007; Chapra, 2007).

Notwithstanding the above stated merits of micro-credit schemes, Rosenberg et al. (2009) observe that this has been criticized for high interest rates, which are gradually creeping in, but which the operators say, are only used to ensure the retention and expansion of the services being provided (see also Rosenberg, 2010; Armendariz and Morduch, 2010). This might be due to administrative costs, which are higher in the micro-lending institutions than in other traditional banks (Rosenberg et al., 2009). In this way, some authors believe that most micro-credit schemes do not reach to the poorest of the poor, and might sometimes do more harm than good to the poor as a result of high interest rates (see for instance Banerjee and Duflo, 2010). Others believe that micro-credit schemes keep people poor and make them poorer (i.e. disempowers them) and as such should not be encouraged (see for instance Bateman, 2010).

On the other hand, Karnani (2007) believes that though micro-credit schemes have impacted positively on the empowerment of women and the reduction of vulnerability during unexpected crisis, they do not cure poverty more than employment creation does. Therefore, he advocates that labour markets and industries should be expanded rather than the greater establishment of micro-credit schemes. His argument was based on the findings of studies carried out in

China and Vietnam showing that poverty has significantly reduced in these countries with little micro-finance activity, as against such countries like Bolivia, Bangladesh and Indonesia, which have not witnessed such significant reduction in poverty, despite the high influx of micro-credit activities (Karnani, 2007). He advocates that the poor taking a job at reasonable wage may be better than accessing the micro-credit schemes.

Along the same theme, Peter Johnson, a respondent and staff from government APO talked about a system, which their organisation has also adopted, and thus remarked:

> *"We are engaging the poor in a sustainable way through empowerment other than giving, and we adopt what we call 'inclusive growth strategy' that involves the poor in decision making."*

The issue of giving food items and money to the poor is recurrent in almost all the views of some of the organisations on how poverty was conceptualized hitherto. The idea before empowerment strategy was based on giving, which more or less amounted to a lack of empowerment. With giving, the individual remains the same, still trapped in poverty. Such individuals are disarmed rather than armed. Therefore, the idea of giving has gradually faded away, making room to empowerment. When asked what the *"inclusive growth strategy"* is all about; the respondent, Peter explained this strategy as:

> "*…a system, whereby an anti-poverty organization does not just give to the poor, but includes the poor in their organizational strategies, so that the poor becomes part and parcel of the value chain*. "

From this respondent, there is the need for the poor to be engaged in the making and implementation of policies that concern their well-being. For instance, Dim (2013) argues that, for there to be a meaningful economic growth and human development, the participation of the poor in decision making is essential. This respondent therefore remarks that the inability to incorporate this inclusive growth strategy portrays a basic disconnection between the formal sector (government

and policy makers) and the poor. This, therefore, might have some implications for the poor who remain impoverished despite the policies designed to assist them.

In the same line of thought, Vincent Eke, a respondent and secretary from a religious organisation further remarked that, the understandings of poverty have been transformed relative to organisations tackling poverty in society. Hitherto, the understanding of the church and some NGOs, according to Vincent, was to placate the poor through giving of free food and free clothing and this was conceived as charity. According to him:

> *"Our understandings of poverty have changed from just giving poor people some food items and small amount of money; to empowering the poor through skills acquisition and knowledge sharing."*

According to this respondent, focusing on charity does not give people the chance to own their destiny and become independent. Studies have realized that such efforts could not be sustained; hence, the idea of charity is now surpassed by the need for empowerment (Duru and Ufiem, 2012). This throws light on the fact that the understanding of poverty today is more oriented around practical solutions in an effort to create sustainability. Today, people in Nigeria, according to Vincent, are empowered more than before to begin to take ownership of their own lives, so as to become independent and move out of poverty.

On another note, Grace Olaye, a director of a non-state APO, mentioned the belief by the deprived that any intervention from government is their right and not a privilege. Another respondent, Jude Uchem, who emphasized the need for a total re-orientation of the individual's mentality, supported this view. Otherwise, the empowerment efforts become a futile exercise. Hence, he remarked:

> *"The greatest problem in Nigeria today is people's mentality about life. This has often resulted in failures to take fruitful advantages of empowerment schemes. Before we talk about empowerment therefore, a change in people's mentality about poverty has to be worked on and changed. It should be understood that empowerment doesn't really mean completely giving money."*

It is well understood that individual mentality matters. Many have argued that the real problem with many Nigerians is nothing but attitude (Achebe, 1983). This mentality borders on the fact that most people believe that things coming from the government or any other sources can be wasted. This is mostly seen in the way people vandalize properties, oil pipelines, electricity, amongst others, in Nigeria and most part of African countries, on the understanding that these are coming from the government (see Mallory, 2007; Okoli and Orinya, 2013). Moreover, backed with this aforementioned mentality, individuals mismanage the money given to them as soft loans to begin businesses. In view of this, such individuals end up not returning the loan when it is due.

The point here is that if individual mentality is not changed, there is no point in talking about empowerment. The above notwithstanding, empowerment in the form of vocational training, micro-credit scheme and inclusive measures still remain a noticeable change in the conceptualisation of poverty, as the above mentioned participants have observed, and has thus shaped and contributed to the understanding of poverty now within Nigeria.

8.2.7 Commercialization and Politicization of Poverty

One of the main aspects revealed in the changing conception of poverty is the commercialization of poverty in the contemporary Nigeria which was not the case hitherto. The commercialization of poverty is the situation where most APOs from the state or non- state sector are capitalizing on their role and using it to exploit the poor for their own benefit. According to Gladys Odenigbo, an interviewee and secretary from a government organisation:

> *"Private sectors or the NGOs are fond of depriving the poor beneficiaries. Majority of the NGOs get funds from abroad on behalf of the poor, but often share it amongst themselves and give the crump to the poor which will be insufficient to help them escape from poverty."*

The proliferation of NGOs in poverty-related issues and the commercialization of poverty were described by Gladys as a rational economic decision oriented towards making money, rather than helping the deprived. According to her, this has

to do with the way issues of poverty within the country are showcased to donor agencies to paint a sorry state of poverty. Smith (2010) argues that, due to the widespread levels of corruption prevalent in Nigeria, most private NGOs are now perceived as deriving benefits from the social conditions of others.

With the proliferation of so many NGOs in Nigeria, one begins to wonder what might be the motive behind their establishment and operation. Smith, (2010:14) has argued that one of the factors associated with burgeoning NGOs has been the attraction of funding from foreign donors. This might be one of the reasons why participants made comments on the intentions and motives behind the proliferation of NGOs in Nigeria. In contrast to the above submission by Gladys, Odia and Omofonmwan (2009) explain that NGOs are groups established outside the circle of government and are known as non-profit making organisations that are also led by volunteers. Nevertheless, given the corruption levels in Nigeria, it might not be out of place to argue that there might be some NGOs whose motives and intentions for coming into existence are to use the poor for money-making from both local and international donors. For example, Smith (2010), in his study on 'Corruption, NGOs and Development in Nigeria', notes that corruption in Nigeria is so high that both the public and private sectors are implicated in it. He advances his argument by citing an example from his experience while working with some NGOs and the public sector in Nigeria. He narrated how an over $9 million loaned to Nigeria to fight HIV and AIDS by the World Bank in 2001 was mismanaged by some AIDS NGOs. He concludes that looking at the level of corruption in some of these AIDS NGOs sector reveals how it has become part and parcel of the maintenance of both social inequality and ordinary person's struggle to respond to it (Smith, 2010:14).

On the other hand, religious APOs are not left out of this issue. Some participants from Ulakwo and Ajamgbadi communities also viewed their missions of attracting funds for the poor as selfishly oriented. According to a female participant from Ulakwo community:

> *"Some foreign donors are being deceived by some of these religious organizations to give aid in support of the poor, and some of these religious organizations end up converting the money for their personal use."*

According to Essien (2010), this might be the reason behind the proliferation of religious APOs as well as some NGOs in Nigeria. Some of these churches, participants from the above mentioned communities referred to as 'Limited Liability Churches'[39] (LLCs). These LLCs, as argued by some of the above mentioned participants, have made a lot of money from international donors. These international donors tend to believe and trust religious organisations more than the government. This could be due to their beliefs that religious organisations and other NGOs have the advantage of being closer to the targeted populations, and more often work from the grassroots more than the government (see Eluminade et al., 2006).

Furthermore, commercialization of poverty may also occur when people claim to be deprived or poor when they are not. This kind of poverty is described by a respondent from a religious organisation as 'manufactured or feigned poverty' as against 'actual experiential poverty'. In line with the above, Kemi Fashola, a female respondent and staff of a religious organisation expatiated:

> *"There is poverty of telling the truth when people pretend to be poor; and this leads us to another aspect of poverty, 'a really poor person' and 'a manufactured poor person' in terms of material things."*

The above finding reveals that commercialization of poverty does not stop at the organizational level, but also, includes the individual who might exploit the poor for their own betterment. Perhaps, this is what Kemi referred to as 'poverty of telling the truth' i.e being dishonest, which makes one 'a manufactured poor person'. This actually means that people who are not poor tell lies to obtain benefits that are meant for the poor. This habit can be displayed whenever there is an intervention for some affected groups of deprived people.

[39] 'Limited Liability Churches' refer to some of the new-generation churches emerging today in contrast to the traditional orthodox churches like Catholicism, Anglicanism, Methodist, Adventist, etc. In Nigeria, these LLC are mandated to register with the corporate affairs commission since their activities, even though religious, are more or less profit oriented.

For instance, Daniel Obi from a religious organisation, remarked during the course of this data gathering, how the government opened an emergency relief camp in a certain part of the South Eastern Nigeria where there had been flooding. Accordingly, people were fed in the camp, and those whose properties were lost to the flooding documented their losses with a view to garnering aid from government. Besides, they were housed in a public school, supplied with mattresses and fed daily. However, Daniel, who witnessed the incidence, reported that due to the anticipated gains, people not affected by the flood moved into the location and struggled to put their names onto the list and to eat from the camp. It may be argued here that such people, though not affected by the flood, might be experiencing material poverty, such as lack of food, or even money, and thus see this as an opportunity to be exploited.

Interestingly, this attitude is not peculiar to Nigeria as similar situations are found in most developing and developed countries. For example, the issue of benefits in England has been seriously contested, as some people are believed to submit false claims for benefits. The joint report of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (2013:24) remarks that more than 40% of the population in UK believes that some people living in the UK falsely claim benefits. This situation of telling lies from the part of individuals might create challenges for the government to effectively address the needs of the 'really' deprived people. Commercialization of poverty relatively thus, contributes to the changes in the conceptual pluralism in the understanding of poverty.

Equally, the concept of poverty has been politicized in modern days, which was not the case hitherto. Jude Uchem from a government organisation had this to say:

> *"I think that the concept of poverty has been politicized today contrary to what it was before. For the efforts at reducing poverty in Nigeria to be realistic, the conceptualization of poverty in the country should go beyond the Western World's view and be made traditionalistic."*

The World Bank's definition of poverty, as depicting people living below one dollar per day (UN, 2010) is seemingly understandable from the Jude's opinion above.

The government of Nigeria adopts the concept of poverty of the international body to be able to get funds. In the previous chapter, we discussed how this definition of poverty by the World Bank, in terms of living below one dollar per day, has failed to capture the realities on the ground. The true poverty situation, Jude argued, would be best captured when the concrete situations and experiences of people, with regards to how and what they experience in their day-to-day activities, and what affects their means of living in their community, are taken into consideration. Such concrete situations and experiences of people include: not having access to basic minimum needs to survive such as shelter, medicals, education, food, water, electricity and many others. However, this view might not be considered appropriate as World Bank had since conceptualized poverty (in the WDR of 2000/2001) not only as living below one dollar per day but also as powerlessness, vulnerability, risk, lack of basic amenities etc. This sees poverty now as a multi-dimensional phenomenon rather than a uni-dimensional phenomenon alone (World Bank, 2000/2001).

8.2.8 From breadwinner to dual earner model

One of the changes that have emerged in the conceptualisation of poverty is the assumption that poverty stems from family dependence on a single source (breadwinner) for means of living. It was a situation, according to some female participants from Eziagulu community in Anambra state, SE Nigeria, where gender determines access to both power and source of income. In this case, the man is seen as the head of the family, and as such, responsible for the sustenance of the family. This understanding means that the man is the breadwinner of the family and should work and earn money with which to maintain the family.

Along the same line of thought, a respondent, Rita Igwe, deputy director from a non-governmental organisation, noted:

> *"In the traditional Nigerian society, women were dependent and financially non-supportive in the family while men make themselves the only bread winners. A demise of the man often plunge the whole family into poverty."*

The above observation reiterates the importance of roles and tasks assigned to gender in the traditional African societies (see for example Ogege, 2011). The breadwinner family model, particularly in a patriarchal society like Nigeria, gives the man the responsibilities of catering for his family. Women are neither allowed to work nor do business. The reason adduced for this, according to some of these female participants from Eziagulu community, is the fear that women might start earning more than men and might end up denying men their deserved respect. Hence, the woman, and indeed the entire family, is seen to be dependent on the man. Indeed, a man is thought to be responsible if such a man has wife and children to cater for. The wives, on the other hand, were reliant on their husbands due to cultural notions that limited their roles to domestic chores (see also Ogege, 2011; Familusi, 2012). In this sense, Ogege, (2011) and Familusi, (2012) argue that women are said to have the tasks of child rearing, cooking food provided by men, as well as scrubbing and keeping the house clean, together with other domestic works.

However, the death of a husband usually leads to vulnerability to poverty or experience of poverty by the dependents left behind. Vulnerability to poverty means that this family, which hitherto was not poor, has become poor as a result of shocks coming from mishaps, in this case, the untimely demise of a husband (see also Best, 2013; Kasirye, 2007; Yusuf and Adepoju, 2012). They are vulnerable and defenseless (Chambers, 1989), because there is no longer any source of income available. This present study argues that the woman may become vulnerable, not only to poverty, but also to the sexual appetite of men who demand a sexual relationship with her before they can assist her. This has however increased the rate of transmission of HIV/AIDs among widows in Nigeria, in particular, and Africa in general (Fasakin, 2007; Izugbara, 2004; Izugbara et al., 2008; Odu et al., 2014).

In modern-day Nigerian society, the dual earner family model is now emerging. Here the wife and the husband become economic partners for home sustenance, as is being practiced in most developed countries (Seema and Charlotte, 2009). The husband's untimely death might in this case not entail poverty as much as was

the case before, since the woman is economically empowered while the husband was alive. She would also have the right of succession in the case of a family business to avoid external sources of succession problems (see for instance Ogundele et al., 2010). Poverty is therefore, less likely to be experienced after the death of the husband.

However, this practice is not yet widely spread, as can be seen in Northern Nigeria where, according to Muoghalu and Abrifor (2012), women are still kept under the strict watch of men, with little or no opportunity to engage themselves in working or doing business. This, they argued further, might be due to cultural and religious beliefs associated with Islam, which is predominant in that part of the country. Therefore, in the traditional Nigerian society, experiencing poverty under the breadwinner model seems to prolong the cycle of poverty and thus contributes to pluralism in the understanding of poverty.

All these notwithstanding, it is important to stress that some participants from Ikare-Akoko and Ajamgbadi communities both in SW Nigeria, including Joseph Kedi and Peter Johnson both respondents from religious and government organisations respectively, did not believe there have been changes in the conceptions of poverty. Some were of the view that the only changes that occurred are seen in the social areas in human lives. In particular, there is no change in poverty, when conceived from the perspective of a lack of basic amenities. Both past and present conceptualisations still see lack of basic amenities as engendering poverty.

In summary, the evidence from these sections highlights the respondents' views on the changes in the conceptualisation of poverty as that based on the higher volume of resources an individual possessed over other people in the society. Specifically, the ownership of big farm land, many wives, a great number of slaves, a lot of farm produce, beautiful abode, and large number of livestock made one to be regarded as wealthy. However, an individual that lacked all these or had them in limited volume or quantity would be seen as poor. This was necessitated by the agrarian nature of the society many years ago.

The socio-economic reality of the modern times seems to have changed this conceptualisation of poverty. For instance, a man with many wives may not necessarily be seen as wealthy in the contemporary period. Unlike in the traditional Nigerian society when there was discrimination against female children in terms of education and inheritance, and which eventually defined the poverty level of women, today's reality has shown that parents value education for both the male and the female. Some societies today consider female in the issue of inheritance. The definition of poverty as the financial dependency and non-supportive nature of women in the family has changed to the possibility of women becoming financially independent. The next section analyzes the factors responsible for these changes in the conceptualisation of poverty.

8.3 The underlying drivers of change in poverty conceptualizations

This section discusses the factors that have necessitated the above changes in the conceptualisations of poverty, as gathered from interviews and FGDs.

8.3.1 Western influences

8.3.1.1 Education

The changes in the conceptualisation and understanding of poverty have been greatly influenced by western education, according to participants from Ajamgbadi, Anyigba, Eziagulu, Otobi, Afaha-Eket and Ikare-Akoko communities, as well as Uzi, Uzom and Aku, Anthony both academics. For instance, a female participant from Eziagulu community said:

> *"If our grandparents had been educated, the rate of poverty would not have been as high as it is today".*

In the traditional Nigerian society, the conception of poverty was related to individual prowess. The amount of land cultivated and the barns available, the number of wives under the household, all enhanced the socio-economic status of an individual. However, with the influences of Western education and tightening economic situation in the country, this conception of poverty has been revised. The

revision advocates the view that education has the potential to eliminate different types of poverty.

The productivity of any nation depends on the extent to which human capital is developed, of which education is a part (Blank, 2003; Meyer and Wallace, 2009; Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2008). Rather than being confined to farm plantation without the use of modern implements, an educated mind is more likely to appreciate modern implements and in return, makes use of them for more efficient production and greater output. The indigenous knowledge of farming was learnt through the socialization of children in the ways of handling farming implements. Due to lack of education, participants from Otobi, Eziagulu and Afaha Eket communities believed that a low yield, among others, was attributable to supernatural causes. For instance, among many traditional Nigerians, such beliefs as *'the gods are not happy' or 'have been provoked'* were seen as the reasons for low or poor harvest. Scientific knowledge, such as fertilization of land, shifting cultivation, bush fallowing and farm mechanization seemed to elude rural farmers. The argument here is that there was an indigenous form of education and apprenticeship, during which people were trained and taught to farm (Ezeigbo, 2010). What was lacking was an understanding of how yield could be boosted to increase income and sustain household demands.

According to Nyerere (1974), education functions "to transmit from one generation to the next the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the society and to prepare the young people for their active participations in its maintenance of development… to liberate both the mind and the body of man" (p. 47). In other words, the education system is responsible for liberating the mind, and shaping values and attitudes to the needs of contemporary society. Undoubtedly, education is good for manpower planning and the empowerment of people (Garba, 2012). Therefore, within the traditional Nigerian setting, poverty was understood as the inability to acquire education that could help boost farming and other agricultural activities.

Across gender, participants from Anyigba, Afaha-Eket, Umunede and Ulakwo communities were of the opinion that education has changed the conception of

poverty considering those who were to be trained with the family money in schools as discussed in the previous sections. Unlike in the past, when only sons were sent to school, contemporary realities have shown the importance of educating the daughters. Njoku (2001) notes that the education of daughters is more likely to empower and reduce poverty transmission across generations. Similarly, Ayoola et al (2001:43) opined that social and economic gaps between men and women are closing up and the roles are changing, particularly due to empowerment of women through education and changing economic situations. In this way, literacy fosters social changes, especially with respect to gender discrimination (Joseph, 2007).

Peil (1976) observes that "even with a fairly low level of educational achievement, men and women who become literate, either by attending primary school or an adult literacy course, or through their own efforts, have access to government information and a useful tool for small-scale business and for dealing with the demands of bureaucracy" (p.179). Here, intellectual poverty and/or knowledge poverty can be addressed with higher likelihood of empowerment (see also Martins, 2005). In other words, education is seen as an indispensable tool in every facet of national development (Garba, 2012). However, there are still millions of educated people today who are poor in different parts of the world, probably on account of unemployment or other reasons that might be peculiar to a particular nation (see Gbenu, 2012). Therefore, with the advent of education in Nigeria, poverty conceptualisations changed from training a particular gender to all-inclusive education irrespective of gender.

8.3.1.2 Religion

Participants from Ikare-Akoko, Ulakwo, Anyigba, Umunede and Ajamgbadi communities noted that there is a positive relationship between religious values (as a form of western influence) and economic success. For instance, a male participant from Ajamgbadi community in Lagos state, SW Nigeria observed:

> *"Western education and religion are important factors that have influenced the understanding of poverty in Nigeria."*

Accordingly, religion is seen as an important tool for development. Okere (1990) remarks that religion, in addition to education, inculcated values in the lives of people and have helped them to develop morally, emotionally, economically and socially. He argues further that religion is much valued, and has reputable influence in such areas as freedom, health, children, food security, respect, dignity and morals. In this way, religion ceases from being merely conceived of as a transcendental relationship, to becoming a positive intervening factor prevalent in people's lives (Durkheim, 1995).

In his classic, "Protestant Ethics and the Spirits of Capitalism", Weber (1930) shows how religious attitude and activities spurred the desire of men to achieve success and avoid failure. It is the belief that diligent pursuit of gain is a virtuous thing, linking material and spiritual success. While Catholic doctrine encourages members to passively accept their social condition and expect reward in the future (perhaps Heaven), Calvinists were taught that they were to achieve and utilise all opportunities in the world. Salvation, they argued, was related to the successes achieved on Earth, which ultimately guarantees their place in the afterlife (Balserak, 2014).

In a similar manner, Pentecostal preaching in Nigeria, as well as in most other parts of the world, encourages materialism and success in achievement. There has been an explosion of what is now called the neo- Pentecostal movement in Nigeria since the early 1970s (Adeboye, 2006; Amanze, 2014). These churches are today led by men of different professions who, according to Adeboye (2006), employ modern marketing techniques in their evangelization. These neo-Pentecostal churches are today known as 'prosperity gospel churches', as most of them preach and promise prosperity, success, healing and 'breakthroughs' from physical ailment and evil bondages, which most of them believe are responsible for failures in business and other endeavours (Akubor, 2014). This new 'prosperity gospel churches' simply lays emphasis on materialism and preaches the right of every believer to both divine health and material prosperity. In neo-Pentecostalism, the 'prosperity gospel' teaches that material wealth should not only be desired, but should be something which is the natural heritage for every Pentecostal Christian

believer (Ojo, 1998; Adeboye, 2006; Essien, 2014; Bangura, 2014). In this way, the 'prosperity gospel' doctrine, according to Marshall (1995), serves to "integrate the Christian Pentecostal's experience of redemption with social mobility, conspicuous consumption and the legitimization of wealth in a time of scarcity" (p. 249).

This ideology, propagated by the Pentecostal churches, has been argued to be part of the reason why some members of these churches have been involved in fraud and embezzlement scandals from their workplaces, and were alleged to have donated part of the money to the church as a form of tithe[40] offering (Ogunrinade and Ogbole, 2013; Owoeye, 2012). The members donate this money to the church based on the teaching of the Holy Bible in Malachi 3:10 whereby 10% of earnings should be paid as tithe offering. This has negatively affected the image of the new Pentecostal churches in Nigeria and in most African countries, as well as in Europe and America where Pentecostalism is also expanding widely (Abioje, 2010). Most of these Pentecostal pastors are today known as religious entrepreneurs, controlling chains of businesses in some part of the world. This then confirms the opinion of some writers who have viewed this trend as worrisome, and this prosperity doctrine as part of what is encouraging corruption and insincerity in Nigeria today (Abioje, 2010; Ogunrinade and Ogbole, 2013).

However, some have argued that 'prosperity gospel doctrine' is an effort made by these neo-Pentecostal churches to adapt to a hostile and increasingly challenging environment (Ojo, 1998). In other words, Pentecostal churches use this avenue to respond to the needs and yearnings of many Nigerians in the face of prevailing and challenging socio-economic situations and uncertainties in the country (Ojo, 1998; Adeboye, 2006; Ogunrinade and Ogbole, 2013). This attitude of preaching prosperity now pervades Nigerian society in such a way that people crave to be prosperous and to have a better place in society. Apparently, there are Pentecostal churches on every street in Nigeria, all clamouring and preaching God of prosperity, that 'our God is not a poor God' (Ogunrinade and Ogbole, 2013). Therefore, poverty in the traditional Nigerian society was conceived as being under

[40] 'Tithe' is a one tenth of earnings. Every Christian following the biblical instructions is mandated to pay his/her tithe offering. The biblical mandate for the paying of tithe in the Christian churches has its root in the Bible in places like Malachi 3:10, Gen. 28:20-22; Deut. 14; 28-29; etc.

the influence of the evil spirit, which has necessitated the rise of these Pentecostal churches to free people from these bondages and make them prosperous. Religious influences therefore, taken together with education, serve as a factor in the changing conceptualisation of poverty in Nigeria.

8.3.2 Technology

Vincent Eke, a respondent and Secretary from a religious organisation and Rita Igwe, a respondent and Deputy Director from a non-governmental organisation, listed technology as one of the factors that has necessitated the changes in the conceptualisation of poverty. For instance, Rita stated:

> *"Compare to olden days, technology has done a lot to lift farmers in particular out of poverty".*

Technology as explained by Lai and Kritsonis (2006) is the knowledge, modification and usage of machines, tools and techniques in either solving problems, improving on an existing solution to a problem, or to perform a particular function. Technology has taken the debates on the limits of man in conquering the environment and bringing about modern development. If technology was well harnessed, the living standard of people would be improved. The combination of technology with other means of production can improve productivity as well. However, it has been argued that the technological innovative sector and generally the productive techniques in Nigeria have become antiquated, uncompetitive and expensive to maintain, with a negative impact on Nigeria's development. There is therefore the need to improve technology in order to attain sustainable poverty alleviation in the country (Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, 2003:4).

In traditional Nigerian society, most farming work was done with hoes and cutlasses and production was relatively inefficient when compared with today. Equally, there was little that the farmers' local tools could do with regard to the various pre and post-planting operations and activities. The reliance on hand tools, which was then about 70% was part of the problem faced by traditional farmers towards achieving high production (Asoegwu and Asoegwu, 2007; Otterdijk, 2005).

The advent of technology is believed to have brought about efficiency and effectiveness in socio-economic activities. The costs of technology notwithstanding, farmers now have more and better opportunities to enhance their livelihood through employing research and agricultural mechanization (Ani and Onwualu, 2002; Raji and Alamutu, 2005; Asoegwu and Asoegwu, 2007).

Most farmers today, as was gathered from the above views of Rita, use modern technology such as tractors, grazers, irrigation systems amongst others, though this is limited to what the government is willing to provide. Technology is no doubt viewed by the participants as one of the factors that have contributed towards the changes in the conceptualisation of poverty. Specifically, participants from Afaha Eket community were of the view that, apart from technology needed by farmers to improve their production, there are also other social amenities such as good roads and transportation that are available as a result of technology. Technology has shaped the understanding of poverty within the context of Nigeria, and has contributed to the changes in the pluralism with regard to the understanding of poverty.

In contrast, technology has its own accompanying disadvantages. Lai and Kritsonis (2006) argue that many people will lose their jobs to machines leading to unemployment, which may directly impact on poverty. In turn, unemployment may lead to a reduction in economic growth as firms' investment and household consumption may decrease. Lai and Kritsonis (2006) highlight the complexities involved in the use of machines as one of the disadvantages of technology, as it consumes much time and resources to put people through the learning processes. Irrespective of its own disadvantages, technology is seen by some participants from Afaha Eket and Eziagulu communities, as well as Vincent and Rita from religious and private organisation respectively, as one of the factors that has necessitated the changes in the conceptualisation of poverty in Nigeria.

8.3.3 Use of global standards/globalization

Globalization designates an expansion of global connections and linkages, and the organization and growth of a global social life and consciousness, that culminates

in the amalgamation of world societies, such as World Trade Organization, (WTO), World Bank and IMF (Mittelman, 2000; Wade, 2004). There are several issues that come with globalization in relation to conceptualizing poverty. It has been argued by neo-liberals that several countries are constantly in open trade relations with other countries (Wade, 2004). The scope of foreign aid, bilateral union, cultural transfers and policy influences from the West on developing countries is enormous (Wade, 2004; Braun and Diaz-Bonilla, 2007). The argument in favour of a positive effect of globalization states that "world poverty and income inequality fell over the past two decades for the first time in more than a century and a half, thanks to the rising density of economic integration across national borders" (Wade, 2004 p. 567). Apparently, this argument suggests that globalization has generated more mutual benefit and advantage than conflicts.

On the contrary, the anti-globalization position posits that world poverty and inequality are far from falling, but keep on rising due to forces that are unleashed by globalization itself (Wade, 2004). Their argument is based on the assumption that most of the powerful and wealthy countries seem to have little or no interest as regards carrying the poor countries along in terms of development at the same pace, which probably might leave the poor countries more disadvantaged (see also Arrighi et al., 2003).

In Nigeria, globalization, as noted by Jude Uchem from a government organisation and Anthony Aku, an academic, is one of the factors contributing to the changes in the conceptualisation and understanding of poverty. For example, Anthony Aku stated:

> *"The world is a global village and the influences of activities in the advanced industrial societies are impacting on the lives of people in developing countries like Nigeria".*

The conceptualisation of poverty by government and non-governmental organisations involves the use of global-standard definitions as enunciated by World Bank. The World Bank defines poverty as living below a poverty line, which is living below one or two dollars a day (UN, 2010; World Bank, 2008). (This conception of poverty has been updated by World Bank adoption of the

multidimensional approach to poverty). Such global standards, the above respondents remarked, are used to measure poverty. According to these respondents, these influences on definitions and activities should not be the yardstick used in the developing countries like Nigeria. Commenting further, Anthony Aku stresses the following points:

> *"It has been difficult to address poverty in Nigeria because concerned government officials rarely go to the communities to find out the needs of the people in order to formulate policies that will meet those needs. They rather often adopt top-bottom approach and rely on the global standards of using the poverty line to find solutions; which might not solve the problems of the poor people eventually."*

Unclear conceptual definition by governmental organisation in particular was linked to inability to tackle the problem of poverty from the grassroots. This is because the understanding of poverty is essential for formulating intervention policies that could address the identified gaps. This outsiders' conception employed in the understanding of poverty tends to exclude the poor's experiences and opinions. The top-bottom approach conception was faulted by these respondents, owing to its inability to capture poverty realities at the grassroots. Thus, such policies did not seem to yield much in the way of solutions.

Ejumudu and Ejuvwekpokpo (2013) argue that many of these policies were not pro-poor from the time of conception and design. Instead, they were structured to enrich the Nigerian elites and their cohorts. For them, it became a manipulative process of the end justifying the means, where the means represents the deficiency in the design and content, and the end represents the enrichment of the programme designer and initiators. Therefore, the understanding of poverty amongst government and non-governmental organisations in Nigeria had been based on the use of global statistics and conceptions from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), etc, rather than practical experience of interacting directly with the poor. This is what respondents Anthony and Jude referred to as use of global standards or globalization.

Whether negative or positive, globalization, as observed by the above mentioned respondents has indeed been seen as one of the factors contributing towards the

changes in the conceptualisation of poverty. Because of the overbearing influence of inter-country relations, the influence of distant nations manifests on the way of life of Nigerians. This is seen in their perceptions of life, attitudes to work as well as notions on poverty. Hence, the understanding of poverty, by the use of global standard from the Western World by government and non-governmental organisations in the country has today influenced the changes in the understanding of poverty within the context of Nigeria.

8.3.4 Peer influences

The conception of poverty has also changed with the meaning attached to human conduct. Daily routines of people are now interpreted or evaluated relative to the economic worth of carrying out a particular activity. Peer influences were given by some participants from Umunede, Ulakwo, Eziagulu, Anyigba, Afaha-Eket and Anyigba communities as an example. Peer influence means a "direct pressure as well as other social processes with peers that involve an influence from the peers to the adolescent" (Arnett, 2007 p. 595). Individuals, more often than not, tend to conform to group behaviours and attitudes as set out by their peers within a given situation (Paluck, 2011). Some researchers, according to Brown (2004), have termed this 'homophily', which is the desire for individuals to associate with like-minded fellows and friends during adolescent period. The participants from the above mentioned communities believed that peer influence among adolescents, and even among some adults, is a contributing factor to the changes in the conceptualisation of poverty. For instance, a female participant from Umunede gave the following submission in support of the peer influences:

> *"Peer pressure is a strong factor. This factor influences poor people in particular to behave like the rich people with a view to avoiding a perceived shame. Nobody wants to walk, everybody wants to use bike or car."*

Walking was a common means of transport in the traditional Nigerian society. It was commonly used to facilitate trading among neighbouring communities. However, the rich had horses and donkeys while those who were richer used human beasts of burden. These were usually slaves. The poor and rich categories also emerged with the ownership of cars and different types of cars. Sometimes,

non-ownership indicates that such a person is poor. In effect, when a child walks to school, as opposed to children from wealthy families who are taken to and from school in cars, such a child is considered as coming from a poor family.

Competition in modern industrial society has transformed ways by which the poor and the rich are being categorised. People are more interested in reproducing behaviour which will result in a good economic evaluation among their peers (see Hamilton and Catterall, 2006; Oni, 2010). For instance, while not considering the quality of education offered in public schools, it is now evaluated that insufficient resources forced some parents to send their children to public schools. Those who attend private institutions pay more and are generally deemed wealthy. Based on this, participants from Umunede community explained further that, the amount of money paid and the infrastructure, equipment and modern teaching materials are the reasons for the rich to send their children to private institutions. In other words, human preferences for expensive goods and services, based on peer consumption patterns have affected the changes in poverty conceptualisation in Nigeria.

Peer influence also exists in some other socially deviant behaviours of adolescents, particularly substance abuse, smoking, and reckless driving, amongst others. Some of these habits tend to push one into poverty especially with regard to substance and drug usage. For example, Arnett (2007) argues with regard to smoking, that, peer influence has for long been seen as one of the important factors contributing to substance use and smoking habits among adolescents. His argument is based on the outcome of the U.S Department of Health and Human Services of 1994 that showed peer influence as being a major factor in how cigarettes and other substances (drugs) are first tried by adolescents (see also, Thomas and Larsen, 1993; Morris, 2003).

As explained in the previous section, these socially deviant behaviours might result in depression, which might lead to a loss of jobs, and thus end up keeping one in poverty (Room, 2005). In sum, it was found out that peer influences in forms of human conduct and other social misbehaviours have necessitated the changes in the conceptualisation and understanding of poverty in Nigeria.

In these sections, the views of respondents indicate that the change in the conceptualisation of poverty is largely influenced by the westerners, especially in terms of education and religion. The advent of technology has also transformed the traditional way of defining poverty, particularly in the area of farming. The identification with the activities of the foreign and developed societies has also changed the understanding of poverty. A seemingly reduction in the gap between the rich and the poor and the corresponding interactions also influenced a change in poverty conceptualisation.

8.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter has examined the changes in the understandings of poverty in Nigeria, as well as the underlying drivers. In particular, there are variations in the factors that have altered the meanings of poverty across time. Gender-related factors have altered who is considered poor or rich owing to female empowerment, which has redefined and extended the need for women to be educated. Harmful traditional practices, which had hitherto subjected women to disempowerment, are now being challenged with an increasing likelihood of significant change.

While the number of wives and land owned mattered in a purely agrarian society, contemporary definition sees the possession of many wives without the necessary resources to cater for the large family as resulting in poverty. While living in mud houses did not constitute being poor in the traditional Nigerian society, living in mud houses connotes poverty in contemporary Nigerian society. The conception of poverty has transformed from giving to empowering the poor in order to make them independent. All of these show, in general, that understandings of poverty in Nigeria have changed with changes in the economic standards, as well as the concomitant social and cultural changes.

Nevertheless, not all participants identified above believed that there are changes in the conceptions of poverty then and now, when poverty is conceived from the perspective of lack of basic amenities. Both past and present conceptualisations still see a lack of basic amenities as engendering poverty. Meanwhile, the role of western influences, in terms of religion, education, technology, peer pressure and

globalization, as drivers of the changes in the conceptualisation of poverty have also been emphasized. What is important is the dynamics of such alterations across the people and various organisations in the study.

The next chapter discusses the relationships between the poor and actors of APMs, the linkages between poverty conceptualisations and anti-poverty strategies, the implications and challenges associated with pluralisms amongst others.

9 Conceptualizations of poverty and implementation of anti-poverty measures: linkages, implications and challenges

9.1 Introduction

This chapter offers explanations on the linkages between poverty conceptualisations and the strategies and policies adopted by anti-poverty organisations (APOs) for reducing poverty. For example, the findings from this study showed that APOs adopted different strategies in poverty reduction. These include advocacy, giving food, scholarships, apprenticeship schemes, giving people money to set up their businesses, etc. Prior to explaining these strategies, this chapter discusses the place of APOs and their relationships with the people they aim to help.

In this chapter, emerging tensions and conflicts resulting from the pluralism in the understanding and conceptualisation of poverty from the poor and within and across the APOs are discussed. This chapter discusses also the challenges faced by APOs in the implementation of anti-poverty measures (APMs). Finally, the need for a change of attitude is discussed as well. This change of attitude is needed from individuals, religious groups, governmental and non-governmental institutions. To begin with, the next sub-section looks briefly into APOs in Nigeria and their relationships among themselves and with the people.

9.2 Anti-Poverty Organisations

This present study showed different types of APOs. They are considered formal APOs, in the sense that, according to their brochures and websites, their official duty is alleviating poverty. They include government, NGOs, and religious institutions. There are also those without an official duty of fighting poverty such as individuals, who are agents of poverty reduction by persuasion, circumstances or of their own accord. These are women, farmers and traders, among others. This study is concerned mainly with formal APOs. This study's evidence also shows

different types of relationships among these APOs as well as between them and the poor.

9.2.1 Formal anti-poverty organisations

The formal APOs from governmental institutions exist at the levels of federal, state and local government, as has been explained in the previous section. Many of these public organisations were set at the time of the collapse of the oil boom in the 1980s, and the subsequent economic mismanagement of the nation's economy (Obi, 2007).

In view of the increase in macroeconomic imbalances and the upsurge of poverty and inequality, the government of Nigeria (as discussed in the previous chapter 5 of this present study) has introduced, through its organisations, policies and strategies to combat poverty. Ajakaiye and Adeyeye (2001b:13) note that there have been over 27 poverty alleviating schemes initiated by the government of Nigeria since 1960. Recently, the number according to NBS, (2014:26) has increased to 36, with some no longer in existence. These are being supervised by various organisations across the pre and post independent eras, and between the SAP era and the transition to democracy,[41] as discussed previously.

Equally, the churches (religious organisations) are among the formal APOs identified in this present study. However, within each of these churches, there are different mandates. The mandates may come either from the injunctions of the Holy Book/Koran or the experiences of poverty and conceptions of poverty within their areas of operation. The church organisations located in the South-Western Nigeria bear different factors influencing their conceptions of poverty and involvement in APMs. The church organisations in the Northern and Eastern part of the country on the other hand confront different manifestations of poverty. All these are done on the basis of their own conceptions, environmental and geographical necessities. Such manifestations of poverty range from kidnapping, child labour,

[41] Nigeria was a British colony until 1960, when it got her independence and became a republic. The era of SAP was the period of military dictatorship in Nigeria which lasted for almost two decades. The transition to democracy came in 1999 when the democratically elected president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was handed over power.

rape, armed robbery to growing insecurity (see also Agbu, 2003; Elesin, 2013). A church organisation like JDPC joined the anti-poverty drive to eradicate the consequences of poverty which might threaten societal existence. On account of this, Daniel Obi, a respondent and director from a religious organisation, JDPC explained:

> *"Nigeria has problems of extreme poverty, the church in the country is therefore making every effort to help solve these problems by empowering the poor."*

The above respondent, who chairs and manages a religious organisation department, stresses the efforts various churches are making, with regard to eliminating the societal problems mostly common among the youth. In support of the above, another respondent, Joseph Kedi, a staff from a religious organisation said:

> "…*there are funds from foreign religious organizations, and through this, those in charge empower the youths in various parts of the country".*

The above respondent explained that this empowerment can either be in the form of vocational training and skill acquisition centres as explained. Evidence abounds of the existence of skill acquisition and vocational centres established by these religious organisations in various part of the country (see for instance Oseni, 2012). Ubong and Oguzor (2007) contend that part of the reason for engaging in these acquisition and vocational training programs is that there are persons in the society who may not be able to acquire formal education and as such the programs would allow them gain paid employment. This gives support to what Daniel said:

> *"…the church as an organization, empower the poor with a view to reducing poverty.* "

According to this respondent, the church tries to establish vocational training centres with the intention of reducing the high rate of poverty, especially among the Nigerian youth. Most private organisations in Nigeria also do the same. For instance, Rita Igwe, a female respondent and deputy director from a private NGO, Grace Olaye a female respondent and Director from a private NGO and Tina Arigo, a female respondent and founder/director of a private NGO, stated that most of

these NGOs focus on the empowerment of the youth, encouragement of women in creativity and micro enterprise management, making micro credit available to rural dwellers, and the funding of agricultural projects. Some studies on the activities and roles of NGOs in Nigeria have also documented some evidence of the establishment of skill acquisition and vocational training centres for people who may not have the opportunity to acquire formal education (see for example, Suharko, 2007; Smith, 2010; Ferguson, 2011; Oshewolo, 2010). According to Oshewolo, (2010), NGOs establish skill acquisition and vocational training centres for people through sourcing funds from both international and local donors, and using such funds to provide education for poor candidates, and also in the areas of gender inequality and childrens' rights abuses.

Next, this present study reviews the relationship among these APOs, as well as between them and the poor.

9.2.2 Relationship among Anti-Poverty Organisations

The findings of this present study show that some relationships exist among APOs. Nevertheless, these relationships are mediated by the way poverty is conceptualized and understood by each organisation. Government APOs in the SE claimed they have a cordial relationship with non-governmental APOs, but said the opposite is the case in the Northern part of the country. For instance, Gladys Odenigbo, a female respondent and secretary from a governmental organisation in the SE said:

> *"Unlike in the Northern area of Nigeria, I will say that we have a cordial relationship with the South-East and we collaborate, largely because there is a bit of similarity in our modes of operations."*

This, she argued, might be a result of the institutional practices prevalent in the Northern part of the country, especially from the religious perspective, where early marriage and polygamy are practiced as discussed in the previous chapters (see also Osakinle and Olufunmilayo, 2012; Okereke et al., 2013). The issue of working hand-in-hand and collaborating was emphasized more in the area of immunization. For example, Gladys continued to explain:

> *"…during immunization of children, religious organizations in the south-east are seen helping out and explaining to people the need and why their children should be immunized, but the reverse is the case in the Northern part of the country."*

The above respondent argued that government, NGOs and religious organisations from the SE believe that eradication of poverty through the immunization of children will aid in the development of the individual into a stronger person, capable of confronting poverty, instead of having children that are incapacitated because of polio. In her view, government, NGOs and churches share the same view with regard to immunization in the SE. However, the respondent explained that the reverse is the case in the northern part of the country where some organisations, especially religious organisations, prevent the immunization of children. Studies on immunization conducted in Northern Nigeria have shown that immunization is low, and this has been linked to the religious and cultural beliefs of the region's inhabitants who are predominantly Muslim. It is claimed they see the activity as avenues used by Westerners to cut down their population (Anger, 2010; Babalola and Umar, 2009; Adebayo et al., 2012). This is part of the Western influence, as discussed in the previous sections, which should be rejected as 'haram' (sinful) (Walker, 2012).

Contrary to the above, some respondents from non-governmental APOs explained that there is not a sound relationship between the governmental and non-governmental APOs. For instance, Tina Arigo, from a non-governmental APO cut in when she heard the word collaboration from the researcher and said:

> *"What collaboration are you talking about? Do we have any collaboration? Their (government) corrupt attitude will not allow for any collaboration. The government should come down to the idea of public-private partnership; otherwise I don't foresee any form of collaboration".*

Collaboration, according to Gray (1989), is a process that allows different stakeholders to create a dialogue and work together on diverse and dynamic issues that neither might be able to solve individually (see also Selin and Chavez, 1995). Poverty alleviation, one might argue, needs the collaboration of both the state and non-state APOs. In collaboration, people are given opportunities to

participate and contribute on a particular issue. Daniels and Walker (1997) remarked that collaboration does not in any way entail the stakeholders putting aside their self-interest, but clearly voicing it and actively contributing to achieve those interests (see also Senge, 1990; Daniels and Walker, 1996). In other words, collaboration is a call for cooperation and not for competition (Sirmon, 1995).

Furthermore, the submission of Marg Uda, a female participant and Director from an NGO indicates an absence of collaboration between the state (public sector) and non-state (private sector) APOs in the fight against poverty in Nigeria. According to her:

> "…*lack of transparency and corruption on the side of government anti-poverty organizations is the main reason for this seemingly lack of cordial relationship".*

The above respondent observes that, because of the corruption prevalent among government organisations, the idea of public-private partnership is still far-fetched, leaving little or no room for better collaboration. This lack of cordial relationship will be discussed below under the implications of the conceptual pluralism in the conceptualisation and implementations of APMs. The next sub-section discusses the relationship between APOs and the poor.

9.2.3 Anti-Poverty Organisations and the poor

The findings of this present study reveal positive and negative relationships existing between APOs and the needy. These can be seen in the different activities of the various APOs as explained below, as well as in how each APO understands and conceptualizes poverty.

Indeed, due to the unfamiliar nature of the community terrain, some formal APOs, like privately owned APOs, locate what they call "gatekeepers" who could facilitate their operation within the locality. Based on this, Rita Igwe from an NGO remarked:

> *"We operate through actors who know the actual poor people, such as the Igwes[42], the presidents of town unions, the women leaders and the stakeholders in the towns, villages and the church."*

According to this respondent, in rural areas these structures mostly involve using the existing traditional institutions and in particular the monarch council. It also involves using some key stakeholders, market leaders (men and women), community elders among others. The usefulness of these individuals, explained the above respondent, is in the use of their knowledge to identify those local people in need. This approach serves as indirect contact with the poor. It was gathered from the respondent, Rita that these people are involved from the conception of intervention and usually form part of the implementation committee. The advantage of using existing structures lies also in facilitating acceptance of the intervening group in the community.

In addition, Daniel Obi from a religious organisation affirmed that:

> *"…without this approach or structure, it might be difficult for anti-poverty organizations to identify or differentiate the poor from non-poor or able to traverse the geographical space in the locality".*

This present study argues that the consequence of the inability to use insiders to identify the poor is a diversion of intervention materials into private use, while the poor remain in their precarious social conditions. This is what has been aptly described by Grace Olaye from an NGO as "*wrong dissemination of funds*".

However, it might be argued that, despite the use of this approach by APOs, funds meant for the poor people are still sometimes diverted and misappropriated. For example, Adesote and Abimbola (2012) observe that the rate of financial corruption in Nigeria is alarming, and this is seen mostly in the diversion of public funds and materials meant for the poor, and the misappropriation and mismanagement of such funds (see also Aluko, 2008; Smith, 2010). As long as corruption is not

[42] An 'igwe' is a paramount chief in-charge of a particular town. He is entrusted with the traditional custody of the town. This practice is mainly seen among the Igbos in the South-East Nigeria. In some areas, this prestigious post is transferable from generation to generation while in some others, it is given by appointment. The 'igwe' is seen as incorruptible, righteous and administrator of true justice.

addressed, money from APOs might still not get to the right people.

As part of the way they relate with the poor, private and religious APOs may also target communities and people through general poverty index mapping for a specific state. This is called 'Community Driven Development' (CDD). Tina Arigo from an NGO attested to this by saying

> *"…this (CDD) has been used in Anambra State[43], South-East of Nigeria, and it seemed to have worked."*

According to this respondent, this index shows the distribution of areas which are lacking in infrastructure and other basic needs. Agents of APOs may therefore enter such communities by further selecting people in clusters, with a view to knowing their needs and how to intervene and empower them. They try to identify what their problems are and begin to drive the change needed to address such problems.

This is what Narayan et al. (2009) call "consultation with the poor". Consultation with the poor entails gathering the poor and discussing with them what their problems are, and how to solve them, as well as involving them in the execution of the projects (Narayan et al., 2009). Notwithstanding the merits of consultations in gathering experiences, views, reflections and recommendations from the poor (Narayan et al., 2009), it can still be posited that consultations without better implementation might not achieve the desired impact. For example, Ayoola et al (2001) explain that many times, the problem is not meeting with the poor and knowing what their problems are. The problem is the implementation of the recommendations; and the federal government has been slow with regards to implementation of such recommendations. The reasons for this might include, among other things: corruption and tribalism that might generate questions like: 'what will I gain from this project if it is approved?'; 'where are these recommendations coming from?'; 'will this benefit my tribe or region?' (Ayoola et al, 2001). If answers to the above are negative then the recommendations are likely to

[43] 'Anambra' state is one of the states in the South-East Nigeria. People from this state speak 'Igbo' and Christianity is the predominant religion.

be swept under the carpet.

With respect to APOs within the government, the approach of getting to and relating to the poor is different. Jude Uchem, a PhD holder and Branch Director from government organisation explained:

> *"With our offices at the 774 Local governments of the Federation and well-staffed with chief orientation officers, we carry out constant research on people's wellbeing and give feedback to the federal government for appropriate interventions and constructive anti-poverty policies.*

The respondent who gave the above statement believes that being a government institution facilitates their national outreach. Their staff are located in all the 774 local government areas in Nigeria, and thus, they are able to reach vast areas within the country. Based on this strength, these organisations, as claimed by Jude, embark on collecting data about the people with a view to making appropriate interventions. The respondent was of the view that, through localization of offices nationwide, government APOs are able to be in touch with grassroots realities.

This respondent explained that, through this means, peoples' consciousness are raised with regard to the potential dangers such as weather forecast as well as information on immunization, HIV/AIDS amongst others, which tend to plunge many families into situation of deprivation. It has been argued that if proper information is disseminated on things like HIV/AIDS, it will go a long way to helping people identify ways and means to avoid being infected (Odu et al., 2014). It was also part of the view of the respondent that through localization of their staff in every Local government of the federation, people are empowered through education on voting, on how voting can actually change the social economic fortunes of their individual lives and their communities, if the right decisions are taken by electing the right person.

The above statement from respondent Jude is doubtful, following the opinion of participants from FGDs who told stories of neglect. Participants from Ajamgbadi, Ikare-Akoko, Ulakwo, Anyigba, Eziagulu, Otobi and Afaha-Eket communities

lamented the neglect that came from APOs, specifically public organisations. For instance, a male participant from Anyigba community (a community that has been with a broken bridge for 10 years now without any intervention from the government) in Kogi state, NC Nigeria lamented:

> *"…there is no government influence in our community. Look at our broken bridge. For 10 years now, we are using canoe to connect other neighbouring communities and government is not doing anything. I don't think we are part of this nation called Nigeria."*

Such neglect, it was gathered from these participants, includes: accessibility to healthcare facilities, road construction, agriculture, lack of access to information, renovation of old and decayed structures, especially of schools and health centres, and misappropriation and mismanagement of funds meant for cash transfers to the poor. For example, conditional cash transfers recently have become one of the adopted means of fighting poverty in many developing countries (UN, 2010). Conditional cash transfers are given to the disadvantaged and poor people, based on the commitments that they will send their children to school as well as attend regular health check-ups (UN, 2010). This is done in an effort to reduce poverty, and with the notion that a lack of education and good health are all forms and dimensions of poverty. Conditional cash transfers first started in Latin America and South-Asia, in countries like Mexico, Brazil, Colombia and Bangladesh (World Bank, 2009). Today, it has spread to almost all developing countries including Nigeria, and is practiced mainly in the SS and NC regions of Nigeria (Holmes et al., (2012).

However, participants from Otobi and Afaha-Eket communities were of the view that the money meant for conditional cash transfers is misappropriated. For instance, a female participant from Otobi community said:

> "…*some anti-poverty organizations, especially from the government, entrusted with this responsibility, divert and misappropriate the mapped-out funds*".

This then contradicts the claim made by respondents from governmental organisations on their anti-poverty strategies and interventions. Nevertheless, reports from most of the countries where conditional cash transfers are practised

have shown the importance of cash transfers in the fight against poverty, as it has reduced child labour and increase school enrolment (UN, 2010). Therefore, to reduce the high level of misappropriation of funds the government should adopt, for example, the system practiced in countries like Mexico and Brazil, where the money is disbursed directly to the beneficiaries through a sort of debit card, even though this comes with its own cost as the beneficiaries need ATMs to withdraw the money (see Soares et al, 2007).

Explaining the issue of neglect from the government, one of the participants from Eziagulu community remarked:

> *"The Nigerian government has failed to show a sincere concern for the poor in the country because of selfishness and corruption, and the poor are often denied good things and infrastructure."*

The level of corruption, salary structure as well as benefits and allowances among the executive arms of the government are a source of concern for Nigerians. Most revenue coming from oil is believed to be transformed into salaries paid to the executive arm of the government. This runs contrary to the expectations that this revenue ought to be used in the development of the nation in areas such as agriculture, health, infrastructural development, human capital development among others (Times Magazine, Oct. 2012).

Nigeria is gifted with more abundant natural resources than some foreign donors, but these countries offer better infrastructural development. Reasons adduced to this range from corruption, poor governance, misappropriation, lack of accountability among others. For example, with misappropriated funds, according to Imhonopi (2013), such persons can travel abroad to have a medical treatment, use expensive cars, enjoy a 24 hour electricity and clean water, buy houses abroad. Ordinarily, the misappropriated funds could have been used to provide services to the poor, especially basic ones like electricity, clean water and good roads. These might account for the reasons why the above mentioned participants from FGDs believed that the poor are neglected, which contradict the statement made by the respondent from the government APOs on their understanding and

alleviation of poverty.

The findings of this present study reveal that, government programmes on the alleviation of poverty have not yielded the desired results based on the unavailability of data base. Some participants from Ajamgbadi and Anyigba communities complained about the absence of a database in the administrative system of the Nigerian government. For instance, a participant from Ajamgbadi community, who is a kindergarten teacher, asked a question:

> *"How can the government relate well with us when there is no database with which to monitor their policies and strategies, and find out who are the poor, and where are the poor"*

By database, the participant meant a reliable electronic record in which vital information on the poverty situation in various communities is stored for the purpose of poverty alleviation policies. The use of database is something practically employed by government in most countries but the reverse seems to be the case in Nigeria, as claimed by these participants. The Federal Office of Statistics and some other bodies charged with this responsibility seem not to live up to expectations. This situation could be described as a pure neglect of the importance of databases for national development. The above participants averred that without this database, it becomes difficult to know what is happening with the poor, who are the poor, where the poor are and whether the policies are making an impact or not. For example, Chiedozie (2010:4) notes that the federal government's efforts to meet the MDGs by 2015 and by extension 2030 are undermined by a lack of adequate quantitative information on the different programmes in the various strata of government. Without this database, it would be difficult to make evaluations on performance as well as make future plans. Therefore, the importance of database records should not be neglected in conceptualizing, understanding and alleviating poverty in Nigerian.

Of importance is the view of participants from Ajamgbadi, Umunede and Eziagulu communities that these forms of neglect, especially in the area of mismanagement of funds, equally come from some religious APOs. They were of the opinion that,

even if governmental and non-governmental APOs neglect the poor in their anti-poverty activities, the church, knowing full well whom it represents (God), should try and relate cordially with the poor. For instance, one of the participants from Umunede community in Delta state has this to say on how the church generally relate to and treat the poor:

> *"Unfortunately, the church seems to multiply the plight of the poor people. The church seems to be selfish and interested in contributions, donations and tithe offerings; much more than solving the problems of their poor members."*

According to the above participant, religion in Nigeria has been commercialized by many churches and many individuals. It no longer holds the mandate of helping the poor and alleviating their situation, but is rather an opportunity for exploitation and making money from them. In today's Nigerian churches, there are lots of contributions every Sunday, which make people wonder whether churches are places to worship God or to amass wealth. Many lies are being told in the name of God just to make money. Hence, a male participant from Ajamgbadi community in Lagos said:

> *"…many priests and pastors tell lots of lies in the name of God, just to make money and enjoy expensive things at the expense of poor people".*

Tithes are employed to siphon money from members of the church and the poor as well (see also Nwoka, 2006; Ogunrinade and Ogbole, 2013; Owoeye, 2012). Such monies made from the poor are used by these entrepreneur pastors to buy personal jets, build mansions and establish businesses in foreign countries at the expense of the poor (Abioje, 2010). These practices, according to participants from Umunede and Ajamgbadi communities, have led to a mass exodus from some churches. Therefore, this attitude of making money out of the poor has become a means of commercializing poverty, and this, to a great extent, affects the ways poverty is understood and conceptualized in Nigeria, especially from among these participants who are members of different churches.

Likewise, participants from Anyigba community in Kogi state, NC Nigeria commented on the way some Muslim children are allowed by their parents to beg

for alms in the street, all in the name of Allah. According to a male participant from this community:

> *"Most streets in the northern Nigeria are filled up by children begging for alms under the cover of religion".*

It was gathered from the above participant that in Northern Nigeria, where the majority are Muslim, some have converted the streets into begging spots in the name of Allah. They often use Arabic words like "fi sabilillah" which means, 'give for the sake of Allah' or "du Allah du Annabi", which means, 'for the sake of Allah and for the sake of Prophet Muhammad, help and give alms to me' (see also Muhibbud- din, 2002). This is rooted in Islamic doctrine on charity (alms giving), which is termed 'Zakat' (Quadri, 2006; Ogunkan, 2011). It is the belief of Muslims that one who is begging in the name of Allah should be assisted. The Qur'an (74:42-45) has it that anyone who fails to render this assistance to the poor should, together with the unbeliever, be thrown into the fires of hell. In this sense, charity becomes a duty which the rich owe to the poor (see also Qu'ran, 30:38). Part of the reason, as explained by Qur'an (59:7), is to allow wealth circulate to everybody instead of the rich alone.

Capitalizing on these instructions of the Holy Qur'an, for instance, many indeed resorted to help themselves, thereby commercializing religion. Most of these people see it as a profession, and many parents encourage their children to engage in this as a means of making a living (Quadri, 2006). However, it should be noted that Islamic religion does not support laziness through this teaching. Islam as a religion has procedures, principles and modalities on how to earn a living, and begging for alms should be the last option for the needy and when that is done in these circumstances, then one is bound, according to the teaching of the Holy Prophet, to give alms to the needy (see Ogunkan, 2011). Therefore, it can be argued that poverty in Nigeria has been understood and conceptualized as an opportunity to beg and tell lies using the name of Allah as stated by these participants. But the challenge faced with this understanding is that there were no clear evidences from participants that these people begging are not seeking a last resort.

However, reasons have been adduced as to why religion has been commercialized today in most developing countries, especially in Africa. Ogukunle (2006) argues that part of the reasons for the commercialization of religion may be traced to poverty and unemployment. He explains that the poor wages in most of the churches, which at times makes it difficult for the ministers to survive on their monthly income, has necessitated the ideas of commercialization of religion. On account of this, Ogukunle (2006) notes that, in order to survive, most of these pastors employ various gimmicks within their services, with the sole purpose of making money. Accordingly, they twist Bible passages as well as employ such means as citywide crusades, mass media preaching, newsletters, healing programmes and tag these with names such as: 'operation destroy all obstacles', 'let my people go', 'poverty is not my portion' 'formula for success and prosperity' (Ogukunle, 2006:23; see also Abioje, 2011). However, these participants claimed that, most of these people who beg in the name of Allah might not have done so, if there were to be employment opportunities.

The aim is to make money out of the poor people who attend these churches, whom some of these pastors claim to help. This confirms the neglect experienced by the poor as submitted by some of the FGDs participants. Therefore, participants from some of these communities agreed that for there to be a good relationship between APOs and the poor, state and non-state APOs, especially government APOs should increase employment opportunities, create database records, provide infrastructural facilities, restructure the salary packages for government executives, and create more jobs. This would fight poverty and thus reduce commercialization of religion at all levels and proliferation of churches in Nigeria.

In summary, the formal APOs claim to be aware of high level of poverty in the country and are making intra and inter organizational efforts towards helping people suffering from extreme poverty. However, the views of respondents in this section indicate that there is little or no cordial relationship and collaboration among APOs, especial between NGOs and governmental organisations, perhaps because of suspicion and dishonest attitudes. The APOs staffs, according to the above respondents' views, are able to penetrate, understand and relate with the

poor in their various communities through gatekeepers. Although the APOs give advice and make recommendations to the government based on their relationship with the poor, the Nigerian government was viewed not to be forthcoming because of protracted challenges like corruption, insensitivity and selfishness. Some religious organisations are equally viewed to be culpable in the act of selfishness and insensitivity.

This takes us to the next section, where this study discusses the link between poverty conceptualisations and the APMs adopted by these APOs.

9.3 Poverty conceptions and anti-poverty measures: linkages

Fundamental to APMs is the understanding by APOs of what poverty means. The type of poverty identified by APOs guides the measures taken to address the identified gaps in people's lives. The durations and variations in the APMs are also influenced by the agenda and focus of different APOs, management and ownership of such organisations, sources of funding, and the target groups. Hence, this study finds that APOs adopted strategies such as advocacy, workshops, trainings and education to change people's mentality, provision of basic needs, entrepreneurship, governance, empowerment, and measures that involve participation of the poor in the activities of APOs. These are, in one way or the other, linked with their conceptions and understandings of poverty as explained below.

9.3.1 Empowerment through training and workshops

The different conceptions and perspectives on poverty affect the approaches taken to address poverty. Those, for whom poverty is conceived of as lack of knowledge and absence of empowerment, believed that this conception can be addressed by empowerment through training, seminars and workshops. Hence, Tina Arigo from a private NGO recognized the existence of lack of knowledge when she opined that:

> "…*with this form of lack, individuals do not have sufficient knowledge that can transform them from their present state of lack to surplus."*

It is on this basis that seminars, trainings and workshops are organized with a view to empowering the poor. These seminars are more likely to centre on exposing the poor to how they can stand on their own, by learning a vocation or becoming an entrepreneur. In view of this, Cyril Onukoba from a religious organisation submitted:

> *"We organize seminars and workshops in order to address the issue of lack of knowledge. We send out our workers to go and learn and get trained so that they can come back and train us. We call it TOT – Training of Trainers. Through this, we train people on entrepreneurship and jobs are created."*

Lack of knowledge, as submitted by the above mentioned participants is understood to be "a situation where one is not equipped with the necessary tools required to engage in activities that could help make one independent". For example, many who are not able to go to school can engage themselves in some learned works or vocational skills. However, to be able to do this, one needs to acquire knowledge about those skills and thus be equipped. This is skill acquisition, a process of gathering technical or practical knowledge from individuals or institutions that have the ability of imparting such knowledge. These skills are mainly for practical purposes and are used more in trades, vocations or occupations (see also Ubong and Oguzor, 2007; Usman and Tyabo, 2013; Onyemekara, 2013). These APOs impart this knowledge through seminars, training and workshop.

According to Cyril, this training is a sort of empowerment. People may be trained in the areas of thriving economic activity or new business ideas. Training may be focused on new ways of farming, fish farming or other types of livestock farming. After the training, the trainee may be empowered financially, as claimed by Cyril. Most of these APOs, which create this training, are being sponsored by some local and international charity organisations, to be able to empower those who have participated. This might be the reason why the respondent Cyril explained that the organisations are empowered financially.

However, Daniel Obi from a religious organisation submitted that:

> "…*due to the existence of different categories of the poor in relation to the task in which they are engaged, those identified as attending schools are also empowered by some of these organisations through purchase of school uniforms, payment of tuition fees as well as purchase of books."*

From the above statement, identification can be made of two categories of empowerment: in school and out of school. While the poor who are out of school need immediate empowerment to help them cope with poverty realities, those in school need financial help to sustain their education and learn how to navigate difficulties. The implication of this is that those empowered through skill acquisition begin to learn and understand the dynamics of economic life, and how they can become independent. This helps to reduce, to some extent, the societal problems associated with the youth such as kidnapping, raping and robbery.

Uddin (2013) explains that education empowers the youth so that they are able to cope with the daily demands of life, and thus contribute to the growth and development of the nation and its economy, as well as become independent themselves. Youth empowerment contributes to and encourages economic growth, as they make up half or little more than half of a nation's population (Melamed et al., 2011). This is based on the argument that youth empowerment maintains a stable socio-political environment, which promotes macro-economic stability thereby leading to economic growth and development (Onyemekara, 2013). The emphasis here is that empowering the youth through education and other training may be avenues through which poverty is, or can be reduced in Nigeria. The strategy of empowerment through training and workshop situates poverty as lack of knowledge and empowerment. It can therefore be concluded that this strategy has a significant relationship with the conception that poverty is lack of knowledge and empowerment.

9.3.2 Provision of basic needs

The conceptualisation of poverty as a lack of basic needs posits an absence of the material requirements needed to minimally fulfil the basic human needs at both the individual and household level (see Spicker, 2007; Oyeranti and Olayiwola, 2005). With a view to addressing material poverty, this present study found that there are

also provisions for meeting basic needs and empowerment strategies. Formal APOs from various institutions make efforts to see that people have access to finance, which can be used for trading and earning a living. For instance, Rita Igwe, a deputy director from a private NGO noted:

> *"We have been able to identify material poverty, and we are combating it accordingly. We make efforts at empowering some poor people, particularly the rural farmers as well as small scale farmers. Our strategy is to give them soft loan with no interest."*

According to the above respondent, soft loans are given by her APO as means of enabling the poor to be financially independent, who are mostly rural and small farmers in Nigeria. As explained in the previous section, unlike other financial institutions, most of these soft loans do not require collateral but simple forms of identification, which may either come from the president of the town's union, the Pastor/Imam in charge of the church/mosque where the beneficiary worships, or the traditional ruler of the community. However, to ensure that the money is not mismanaged, the respondent, Rita said that it is granted on a soft revolving loan scheme.

A revolving soft loan can be used in some forms of business projects. These groups of people are mainly farmers, artisans and women, who are not able to access loans from other financial institutions due to the risks involved. The APOs involved do not intend to make money from the loan scheme, as noted by the above respondent. This might be due to the fact that most of these funds are coming from non-profit charitable organisations, and as such, these APOs see it as obligation to respect the donors' intentions.

According to the above respondent, Rita:

> "…*in revolving soft loan scheme, loans given are paid back by recipient without interest for the use to fund and support a new person."*

The above respondent also remarked that the type of business anticipated by recipients, as well as the economy of the location, are two major factors considered in granting such loans. In all, recipients use this loan to engage in cultivating

vegetables and some staple crops. At maturity, and during harvesting period, these are harvested and brought to market for sale. The proceeds are then used by the farmers to meet some of the basic needs of the household, such as food, clothing, and shelter, as well as to help their children at school.

However, this present study found that people may take the money and end up not using it for the purpose it was meant for. In view of this, some formal APOs such as Rita's adopt two types of strategy. First is to enable individuals within a group, and ensure that the next person to benefit from the loan is aware that unless the first person repays, the next person may not benefit from the loan. Second is to attach an interest to the amount of money lent, so as to make people cautious about the loan. However, the above respondent averred that such interest may not be taken from the beneficiary at the point of return of the capital, as usually the beneficiary may be asked to add the interest to his/her business/projects. In this sense, the loan becomes a free interest loan. From the above statement made by Rita, it becomes evident that efforts are made to see that people have access to finance that could help them engage in trading or farming. The understanding of poverty as lack of having their basic needs met has prompted this APO to design appropriate measures such as provision of finance or capital through soft loans for the individual poor. Through this the scourge of poverty can be reduced.

9.3.3 Moral and renewal activities

It has been revealed in the previous chapter that spiritual poverty is a form of non-material poverty, which pertains to the spiritual aspect of man rather than the physical. This entails that spiritual poverty is a deprivation reflected in the human mind. This ends up manifesting in such things as slavery, greed and sometimes powerlessness over sinning. In other words, a spiritually bankrupt person is thought to be 'in darkness', with the need to bring such a person into 'light'.

Accordingly, this present study gathered from a respondent, Maria Opah from a religious organisation, that the motivation for church organisations to be involved in the fight against spiritual poverty was borne out of the understanding that the

myriads social problems in society may have emanated from lack of morals. According to her:

> *"Most of the problems being encountered in our society today are as result of lack of morals from people. You see for instance, how the lives of innocent people are being wasted in this country on a daily basis by armed robbers, cultists, etc, and government continues to keep quiet over this."*

It is the belief of the above respondent that the majority of the problems in society must have been caused by those who lack moral foundations in general or those who have broken their relationship with God, in particular. For example, the above respondent and others like her who are religious, believe that God is the one who owns life and any form of terminating life goes against the commandment of God. However, going by the materialist view of the world, this might not be well digested by some school of thoughts, like the empiricists and materialists, who hold that everything that exists is material (Duncan, 2005). This school of thought believes that man is material, without soul or any spiritual essence. This, by extension, means that non-material things do not exist and therefore, God by this definition does not exist (Duncan, 2005). This does not mean that the empiricists and materialists do not respect life; they do, but deny that life belongs to God.

Based on the view that spiritual poverty is regarded as one of the major causes of economic poverty and every other social problem as claimed by the above respondent, church organisations embark on programmes of spiritual renewal and retreats. They also establish mission schools to help salvage the situation of moral decadence in the society. Therefore, this present study argues that, since poverty can also be conceptualized from the spiritual and moral point of view, any campaign against poverty should therefore consider some moral measures as well. As part of moral measures employed, Joseph Kedi from a religious organisation remarked:

> *"…moral instructions and religious education are parts of the curriculum in most of the schools owned by religious organisations*."

In the same line of thought, another respondent, Grace Nnodim, a female and operational manager from a religious organisation, also remarked that:

> "…*most of the religious organisations organize retreats and renewals for the youth on a regular basis, and through these, youths are empowered spiritually and morally, and are made to know the dangers of drug addiction and trafficking, raping, robbery, kidnapping*."

It is believed that "the renewed mind is a mind freed from the dominion of greed, idolatry, superstition and the search for luck, that creates a mentality that might lead to poverty" (Osalor, 2012, p. 38). Empowerment here is not understood in terms of economic empowerment, but in terms of helping the youth develop their power of expression, build a sound moral structure, learn and appreciate the importance of rendering services to humanity, effectively contribute towards the advancement of civilization, as well as use their energy for a meaningful and constructive life (Chee, 2010). Thus, many among them begin to see meaning in their lives and are able to be psychologically lifted up.

All this notwithstanding, there are still pockets of societal challenges, such as incidents of gun shooting, drug trafficking and addiction, rape, among others, which are believed to come mainly from the youth (Bruce, 2008; Goetsch, 2012). No matter how these challenges seem to widen, the need for the use of moral measures can neither be questioned nor be neglected, since the majority of the youth are believed to benefit from these moral and spiritual activities. With these series of non-economic empowerment, the above mentioned respondents believed that moral decadence in the society, which is a form of poverty, is to some extent taken care of in the Nigerian context. Therefore, since poverty is conceived of as moral decadence, then this understanding has prompted religious organisations to organise programs of spiritual renewal and retreats to help salvage the situation of moral decadence in the society and by extension, to reduce poverty.

9.3.4 Entrepreneurialism

Entrepreneurship is a "process where individuals seek to use their talents, efforts and resources to create and/or grow ventures that capitalize on business

opportunities and thereby create value" (Oyelola, 2013 p.199). These values may range from educational, financial, communal, spiritual or any other values, which are dependent upon the goals and ideas of a particular organisation. Some APOs from government, NGOs and churches, fight poverty by identifying the practical needs of the people and offering some forms of entrepreneurship and empowerment. Based on this, Tina Arigo from a private NGO said:

> *"We identify the practical needs of poor people and use the strategy of training in various skills and entrepreneurship such as fish farming to help people earn a living and escape from poverty".*

Entrepreneurship involves identification of opportunities for business and investment and mobilizing resources in order to exploit those opportunities (Aja-Okorie and Adali, 2013). The above respondent was of the opinion that money under micro credit scheme can be given out to invest in a particular kind of business enterprise, which could improve the social and economic conditions of the poor. This is not often the case, as entrepreneurship involves some risk-taking and uncertainties, and entrepreneurs might go bankrupt (see Gana, 2001; Oviawe, 2010; March and Shapira, 1987; Ilemona and Akoji, 2013). It has also been argued by Banerjee and Duflo (2006) that some people do not have an "entrepreneurial spirit"; but might opt for entrepreneurship not out of conviction, but out of lack of better alternatives.

Entrepreneurship may also dovetail with training. Rita Igwe from a private NGO explained that people may be trained in areas of thriving economic activities or on other forms of skill acquisitions. On account of this, Oyelola (2013) explains that entrepreneurship is an on-going learning process that can be enhanced by means of training and education, thereby enabling individuals involved to run and manage an enterprise in a successful way. The respondent, Rita, further expressed the views that:

> "…*entrepreneurship in education gives an opportunity through which the majority of unemployed graduates and students are likely to be helped and provided with some tools, to lean on, and become independent*."

From the point of view of the above respondent, this present study argues that, entrepreneurship in education offers students and graduates the tools, with which to think and develop creatively. They learn to be analytical of business and project ideas; to develop confidence in solving problems and to develop the ability of networking and communicating, as well as being able to make evaluations of a given project.

Onu (2013) thinks that entrepreneurship education has contributed to some extent towards providing skills, knowledge, encouragement and motivation culminating in success in different vocations. Given the above, one sees from the submission of respondent Rita, that training students, graduates, youth and indeed adults, who have an interest in entrepreneurial culture, helps them to succeed and become independent, thereby addressing the problem of poverty that results in dependency. However, the potential limitation of this strategy still remains as some people may not have a natural interest in entrepreneurialism.

In sum, Oladele et al. (2011) note that entrepreneurship should be at the centre of every nation's economic development despite the risks involved. Their arguments are based on the evidence of studies carried out among some entrepreneurs in Nigeria, which shows that entrepreneurship has contributed, among other factors, towards reduction of unemployment in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship they argue, offers opportunity for self-employment as well as creating jobs for others who might not be able to get them from the labour market (Oladele et al., 2011). The rate of dependency, which culminates in poverty, might therefore be reduced if there are greater percentages of people who are self-employed through entrepreneurialism, notwithstanding the limitations of entrepreneurialism.

In Nigeria, Ariyo (2008) and Ogundele (2012) contend that promoting and developing entrepreneurialism might assist in the diversification and dispersal of economic and development activities in the country. Based on this, entrepreneurialism might become a catalyst that increases job opportunities, overall economic growth and thus minimizes the rate at which manufactured goods are imported into Nigeria, thereby reducing the trade deficits that normally results from those imports (Osuagwu, 2002).

Therefore, the understanding of poverty as the inability of the poor people to have access to entrepreneurship skills and empowerment has necessitated this measure from APOs.

9.3.5 Governance/inclusive measures

As part of the ways of combating poverty, some religious and private APOs held that the needs of people are addressed by good governance through inclusive measures that involve policies that bring the poor into markets, promote social inclusion and attack discrimination. For instance, Daniel Obi and Cyril Onukoba, both male respondents from religious organisations explained that good governance can contribute to improving the fight against poverty in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. When asked what good governance means, Daniel explained:

> *"Besides identifying the practical needs of the people and attending to them, there is need for good governance; which has to do with government living up to its responsibilities and making life easier for people."*

Governance is defined as "the effectiveness with which a government or other institutions perform its work and promote the public good" (Nyong'o, 2001 p. 6). Public goods in this case, and according to Nyong'o (2001), might include enforcement of law and order, allocation of resources, promotion of human rights, revenue collection, accountability and enhancement of participation. Therefore, in good governance anti-poverty agenda should include not only policy documents of government or any other institutions in the fight against poverty, but also, how the systems of these institutions could be structured to improve popular participation, respect for human rights, accountability, as well as inclusion in other aspects of societal life (see also Werlin, 2003; Arogundade et al., 2011; Muoghalu and Abrifor, 2012, Nnonyelu, 2013).

Contrary to the above statement of Daniel, Fatima Husseni, a female staff from a government organisation, shared the view that the government is trying its best to include good governance in the fight against poverty. According to her:

> *"…Good governance and inclusive measures, in addition to other strategies are being*

adopted in the fight against poverty by the government."

According to Fatima, government APOs embark on making governance an issue via educating the poor on their fundamental human rights. In other words, by empowering the poor with information concerning their rights and the need to demand from government what belongs to them, they not only attend to solving the problem of poverty as lack of information but also making the poor people involved in the issues that concern them. For example, it is argued that good governance might work better when people feel they have the right to participate and are convinced that they have a stake and voice in the process of governance (Nyong'o, 2001; Nnonyelu, 2013). This seems to be what the respondent meant when she stated that inclusive measure and good governance constitute part of anti-poverty strategies. This falls in line with the Narayan et al. (2009) consultation with the poor as explained in the previous section.

However, it might be argued here that concern for good governance as a means of fighting poverty in Africa is not something new. It dates back to the time of the nationalists' campaign for independence. Therefore, Nyong'o (2001) reckons that independence served to open a new chapter in the efforts made by the colonized against poverty, disease and ignorance.

Some inclusive measures and consultations with the poor, known as Community Action Programme for Poverty Alleviation (CAPPA), had been established in 1996 by the government (Obadan, 2003). CAPPA was established as a community and rural-based approach. Based on past experiences, it adopted a combination of social action strategy and social funds in its operations, making sure that poor people were not only included in the design, mapping and implementations of empowerment projects, but also were part of the supervision and management of these projects (Obadan, 2003).

This study found that such inclusive measures like intervention and consultations with the poor, have contributed to some extent to reducing the level at which items meant for empowerment of the poor and materials meant for poverty interventions are being diverted. For instance, Peter Johnson from a government organisation

said:

> *"I have experience in the distribution of fertilizers and farm inputs to poor people as provided by the government. We ask people to be conscious of how the distribution is done so as to avoid diversion."*

The above submission reflects the issues prevalent in Nigerian society, where people, because of lack of information and power on the part of the poor, divert materials meant for the poor (especially farmers) for their own personal use. For example, the above respondent reported on how some individuals and agents, who were given fertilizers in 2006 to distribute to farmers at a no cost, in fact sold these fertilizers to the poor. These instances of corruption, mismanagement and diversion might be part of the reasons why access to information through awareness creation is relevant in governance. In Uganda, for example, Reinikka and Svensson (2011:1) stress the relevance of information on governance. They employed what they called the "unusual policy experiment" through the use of a newspaper campaign to monitor public grants in the area of education, and thus provided parents with organized information to be able to monitor local officials entrusted with the large education programmes. With the use of survey and administrative data, they found that public access to information might go a long way to deterring the local officials from embezzlement of funds as well as other forms of corruption.

In view of this, Marg Uda and Rita Igwe, both female respondents and Directors from private APOs, explained how their organisations have allowed for public participation in governance, by providing the population with information concerning national budgets, technical information and policy information, with a view to allowing them engage those in authorities. For example, Marg commented:

> *"On our own side, we started letting them know that the communities should be involved because we did find out that they don't have the information like technical information, budget information, policy information, etc. People should engage with authority at the local levels and at the state levels.*

The information provided by these private APOs to the poor on technical budget

and policy issues have enhanced participatory democracy, according to the above respondents. To buttress her point, Marg explained further that:

> "…*people now are able to follow up on the policies of government, which are implemented within their locales and with such information, the poor are more likely to be empowered*."

According to the above respondents, this campaign for transparency may have yielded appreciable results. On account of this for instance, respondent Rita believed that:

> *"…both federal and state government now publish the amount of money allocated for specific projects in a particular area*."

Such areas, according to the above respondent, include education and security. It is likely that the same result might be obtained if participation is extended to other areas like agriculture and infrastructure. This is what was done in Uganda (see Reinikka and Svensson, 2011).

In this way, the above respondents believed that the poor can then monitor what and where materials meant for poverty intervention are going, and, based on the power and information given to them, make immediate report to appropriate authority. However, these claims from the above respondent can be argued. For example, Onagunisiaka (2014) observes that there are still no reductions in misappropriation, mismanagement and diversion of materials in most areas in the country. Based on this, the claim by respondent Marg that participation has been adopted in governance and could lead to more empowerment of the poor remains to be substantiated.

In line with participation and monitoring of projects, Cyril Onukoba from a religious organisation said that:

> *"…there are also budget monitoring, project tracking and monitoring whereby tracking and monitoring of projects confer ownership on the community where intervention projects are located*."

By this is meant, ownership of an intervention project is likely to make the community jealously guard it for its overall interest and wellbeing. However, such attitude may be influenced by whether the project conception involved consultations with those who will benefit from it or not.

There is also social inclusion as a measure and strategy to empower the poor. This is in contrast to exclusion, whereby some groups of people are excluded, not only from their community or from having access to some basic needs and facilities, but also from participating either in the political, social or economic life of the society (Sen, 2009). It cuts across gender, in terms of structural exclusion, where women are excluded and perceived as being inferior and subordinate to men (UN, 2010). A female respondent, Grace Olaye and Director from a private NGO remarked:

> *"We started using an inclusive measure policy because we discovered that there is gender discrimination. For instance, the men have town hall meetings without inviting the women. Women's views seem not recognized and this calls for inclusion of all women groups."*

Some private APOs have observed the tendency for policies not to address the specific needs of the people because their voices are not heard. According to the above respondent, this may include women, who by virtue of social and cultural inhibitions are not likely to be considered for inclusion in decision-making processes. A typical example is seen in the North, where women are forbidden to stay together with men for religious reasons. Equally, the situation was the same in Eziagulu community, which the researcher visited for data collection and had in attendance only women participants for cultural reasons. Those that are marginalised in policy formulation are likely to suffer further exclusion in their treatment in the larger society. Recently, the Federal government of Nigeria has started allocating some key posts to women, and this example is being copied now both at the state and local government levels. Nigeria has now about two to three states where women are deputy governors and many more have women as commissioners and special assistants.

In sum, the respondents in this section view the poor as lacking in terms of

knowledge and as such the APOs claim to be providing them adequate knowledge through seminars and workshops. The respondents also opine that the identification of material poverty in the lives of the poor is also being tackled through entrepreneurship, education and micro-credit scheme. Similarly, moral instructions and religious education are also offered to the poor, especially the youth through regular retreats and renewals. The respondents further opined that good governance, better strategies, transparency, and all-inclusive policies are viewed by the respondents as productive APMs.

However, despite the fact that these APMs are adopted, there are implications and challenges that might be associated with the understanding of poverty, as well as the implementation of these APMs. Some of these implications and challenges are discussed in the subsequent sections.

9.4 Various conceptions of poverty: Its implications to poverty reduction efforts

There is no universal definition of poverty due to the fact that poverty is a multidimensional social phenomenon with divergent understandings. In Nigeria, the findings of this present study reveal that there are also various conceptions of poverty especially from the cultural, traditional, religious, spiritual, material and non-material perspectives. This section focuses on the paradoxes identified in the course of conceptualizing poverty and implementing APMs in Nigeria. Interestingly, this is an area that the previous literature on poverty in Nigeria has not investigated.

Data from FGDs and individual interviews showed that conceptualizing poverty and the implementation of APMs by various APOs have implications in the forms of accusations, external and internal tensions. These accusations and tensions are seen between APOs' conceptualisation of poverty, their intentions in the implementations of APMs, and their practices. The first of these implications is seen in the way APOs view each other on poverty conceptions which are discussed below.

9.4.1 Anti-poverty organisations views of each other on conceptions of poverty

There are various APOs with different ideas and conceptions of poverty. The findings of this present study show how actors of APMs view their colleagues from across and within their own organisations in terms of conceptualisation of poverty. This, as shown in table 5, forms the pivot of our discussion in this section.

Table 5: Anti-poverty organizations' view of each other on conceptions of poverty

Organizations as viewers	Organizations as viewed			
	ANTI-POVERTY ORGANIZATIONS	**RELIGIOUS**	**NGOs**	**GOVERNMENT**
	RELIGIOUS		• Poverty conception skewed towards economic dimension and selfishness • Good works	• Conception of poverty underpinned by political motives
	NGOs	• Conception of poverty towards increase in membership or attracting more members.		• Politically minded • Selfishness • Commercialization of poverty
	GOVERNMENT	• Conception of poverty based on the injunction of the Holy Book	• Conception of poverty embroiled in selfishness • Commercialization of poverty • Creation of awareness to make personal money	

Source: Author's design.

Each type of organisations holds misinterpretations or misunderstandings with regards to what the other's activities and conceptualisations of poverty are. As a result, some do not consider other actors as partners in the same fight against poverty. Many of them adopt measures that, to other actors, are not really targeted at poverty and this may be largely due to the way they conceptualize poverty. For instance, the conceptions and activities of actors from government APOs and NGOs seem to differ to that of actors from religious APOs. Religious APOs do not share the same understanding with government and NGOs, as to what poverty means and how to address it. This therefore, raises the issue of tensions and conflicts associated with the pluralism of concepts among institutions and organisations as discussed in the literature.

The opinion of respondent Cyril Onukoba, a director of a religious organisation states:

> *"Government anti-poverty organisations' understanding of poverty is mostly political."*

According to this interviewee, there are political underpinnings in the governmental APOs' conceptualisation of poverty that serve to promote their political ideologies and personal strategies. If APOs owned by the government conceptualize poverty with political motives, anti-poverty policies designed to be implemented by these organisations may not be effective. Elsewhere, Ejumudo and Ejuvwekpokpo (2013) explain that most of the anti-poverty government programs are politically motivated and might not be really structured to address the economic needs of the poor in particular, and that of Nigerian society in general.

In the same line of thought, interviewees, Daniel Obi, a director of a religious organisation, as well as Vincent Eke, a secretary from a religious APO, noted that the conception of poverty amongst NGOs is skewed towards the economic dimension. These respondents opined that poverty thrives due to the inability of NGOs to better conceptualize what poverty is. Daniel captured this in the following statement:

> *"Many NGOs to be precise do not understand what poverty is; they define it the way they like and not the way it is. That is why in solving the problem of poverty, they find it difficult to always get into the root of the problem because they do not know what that problem is."*

According to Daniel, NGOs are oriented to making money through the poor. It is this selfish orientation that drives their activities, in his view. NGOs isolate two motives of intervention: act of helping and act of getting. While the former is oriented towards alleviating the poverty condition of people, the latter is economically driven, in the sense of making money selfishly in the process of helping. By implication, the above agents of religious APOs hold that the essence of funding an organisation is to reduce the scourge of poverty to a desired level. For religious APOs' agents like Daniel and Vincent, NGOs' understanding of poverty is sometimes embedded in selfishness. That is, the NGO's conception of

poverty is much more rooted in organisational financial rewards in the course of carrying out anti-poverty activities. This influences their understandings and program of activities.

On the other hand, Jude Uchem, Peter Johnson and Nuru Edet, who were respondents from government APOs, hold that religious APOs' conceptualisations of poverty are based on the teachings of their Holy Book. For instance, Nuru Edet, a male staff of a government organisation based in Abuja, the FCT said:

> *"I believe, religious anti-poverty organisations' understanding of poverty is rooted in the teachings of their Holy Book which encourages giving help to the poor."*

In line with this statement, this present study assumes that the Christian Bible, though not encouraging poverty through laziness[44], stresses the need to assist the poor as a divine mandate. It is a mandate that is repeated in several passages of the Christian Bible, such as proverbs 29:7, Jer. 22:16; Matt. 5:16; Gal. 6:7-8, amongst others. In all these passages there is the divine call and mandate to show concern for the poor. Following this mandate, religious APOs believe that the poor should be assisted through the giving of alms. It is believed that this divine mandate to help the poor is meant for every human being irrespective of religious affiliation. However, it has been argued by Adeboye, (2006) that most of the programs organized for the poor by some religious APOs are targeted at their members and not the general public. This suggests an attitude of discrimination, which might go against the teachings of their Holy Book.

Furthermore, actors from government APOs are of the view that NGOs' conceptualisation of poverty is also embroiled in selfishness. This view was captured by John Uchem from a government organisation, when he confessed that:

> *"I have come to discover that selfishness is behind many non-governmental anti-poverty organisations' understandings of poverty based on what they might probably get in return while fighting poverty."*

[44] St Paul's 2nd letter to the Thessalonians in chapter 3:10 states that: "he who is unwilling to work should not eat." In this way, the Holy Book discourages laziness.

In support of the above, other agents of government APOs like Gladys Odenigbo and Fatima Husseini, with the role of secretary and staff member respectively, call this the 'commercialization of poverty', i.e using the poor people to make money. According to these respondents, some NGOs have devised avenues of using the poor to earn money from both local and international donors, who are willing to make donations when it comes to assisting poor people or communities. These so-called avenues, these government APOs' agents believe, might not be related to poverty but the imaginations of the NGOs directors, which they think, will attract the attention of foreign donors. This fulfils their personal interest at times rather than the interests of the poor. These government APOs agents refer to a situation whereby NGOs solicit donations from local and international donors as creation of awareness. According to them, some of these NGOs create awareness by advocating for certain things they might call dimensions or types of poverty, and use them as avenues to make money from donors.

The NGOs' actors, Marg Uda, Tina Arigo, and Grace Olaye, share the same understanding with religious organisation actors about the way government actors conceptualize poverty. They believe the governmental concept of poverty is largely politically minded and, as a result, does not really serve the poor. For example, Marg, said:

> *"Government uses poverty to score some political points and gets enriched through diversion of funds meant to assist the poor."*

These respondents believe that, more often than not, government activities lack lasting empowerment that truly helps the poor. Rather, government officials end up becoming enriched and empowered to continue staying in power, thereby exploiting the poor all the more. Some authors have likewise referred to this as commercialization of poverty on the side of government (Kwaghga, 2011).

However, the above interviewees from NGOs, Tina, Marg and Grace viewed the activities of religious APOs as a means towards increasing membership or attracting more members. The drive for membership pushes many religious organisations to get involved in the so-called activities for the poor, while in truth

they are hunting for members. The fact that their activities are only for their members creates the impression in the minds of the public that such organisations are the ideal religious organisations for them to attend, thus increasing their numerical strength. It is believed that most religious organisations in Nigeria employ this approach (Essien, 2010; Owoeye, 2011; Omotoye, 2012).

Another interesting aspect of the implications of pluralism concerning the understanding of poverty that came up during the interview is that actors from the same APO have also different conceptions of poverty. When asked on how poverty is perceived and conceived even within their own organisation, Daniel Obi, from a religious organisation stated:

> *"Understanding of poverty is relative even as we work here; some are here because they want to work, but by being here they learn to understand what poverty is. For instance, some of our members believe in maltreatment and intimidation of poor persons, especially during our meetings with the poor perhaps because they perceive the poor as powerless. This is how those who exhibit this attitude understand poverty."*

From the above narration, the author of this thesis argues that even actors of the same organisation conceptualize poverty differently, to the point that some use APMs as a form of intimidation. For such actors, poverty means "no self-worth", "no dignity"; one can be treated "anyhow", because one is poor. For such actors, a poor person is one who can be intimidated, who can be treated to the extent of inflicting injury on the person; a person whose rights can be infringed upon; and a person who can be physically abused.

Answering the same question from a different viewpoint, Jude Uchem from a government organisation holds that government APOs do not have a different conception of poverty other than conceptualizing poverty along same lines as the government, the body that sets them. Thus, he explained:

> *"Our own understanding of poverty in this organisation is just in line with the understanding of poverty according to the government of Nigeria. That is, poverty as deprivation, inability of our people to have access to basic necessities of life."*

This present study argues that understanding poverty in line with the Nigerian government implies government APOs conceptualizing poverty in line with the Nigerian government. If the government conceptualizes poverty as lack of basic amenities, such as food, shelter, health facilities among others, then, their agents in APOs, based on the above statement, must follow in the same direction. This might not be unconnected with the character of the Nigerian state where civil servants are the voices of their masters (Uchendu, 2012). These APOs are set up by the government, and as such, staff members are meant to dance to the tune of their masters, i.e. top government officers. Acting contrary to the government's conceptions of poverty and how to combat poverty might cost them their jobs. The government directives also make it almost impossible for some categories of staff, especially at a more junior level, to have alternative conceptions.

From the above, it stands that the government conception is reproduced in the activities of government APOs. Based on the understanding that poverty connotes deprivation of basic amenities, government organisations' conception may however vary with a change in government, including their ideologies and policies. Therefore, all respondents from the government do not see any basic difference in the conception of poverty within their own organisations. What this means is that government officials do align their thinking with that of the government.

In summary, the above views of APOs on each other, across and within their own organisation reveals the implications of pluralism in the conception of poverty. These views show that conceptions of poverty are politically, selfishly and fanatically motivated. It is linked with discrimination, intimidation, fraudulent and corruption. If APOs conceptualise poverty with political and selfish motives, anti-poverty policies designed to be implemented by these organisations may not be effective. One might argue that these APOs through their programmes are just managing the poor and not really resolving the poverty issues. The resources no doubt are there, but the officers are misappropriating them based on the ways they conceive poverty. This is greed rooted in capitalism as agents of these APOs keep on amassing wealth at the expense of the degradation of the poor in the society. In

this way, these capitalists, in the form of actors of APMs end up producing poverty instead of fighting it.

Furthermore, due to the nature of corruption in the forms of fraudulent, mismanagement and misappropriation of funds existing among some of these APOs, there is a significant withdrawal of funds being released to aid Nigeria in the fight against poverty by most of these international organisations. In this type of situation, the victims are the poor. For example, Smith, (2012:476) reported that some AIDS NGOs and even government APOs misappropriated and embezzled the funds sent to Nigeria to help fight the menace of HIV. No account and report were given on the way the funds were spent and the government did no investigation. This situation is not only applicable to international organisations; such also exists when government itself releases money to some of these APOs for some poverty reduction projects within the country.

In general and considering the above APOs views on each other, poverty reduction efforts could become a more difficult task as all APOs accuse each other of following other objectives, especially organisational or personal objectives, rather than the main objectives of helping the poor. Next, this study examines other implications in the form of tensions and conflicts.

9.4.2 Tensions

The findings of this present study also reveal that the implication of the pluralism relating to poverty is not only in the conception and definition of what poverty is, but in the areas of implementation of anti-poverty programmes. This is not a new development as issues of pluralism of concepts and logics among institutional actors have recently attracted interest (see for example Oyen, 2002; Greenwood et al., 2010, 2011; Christoplos, 1995; Hoffman, 2011; Dorado, 2010).

Tensions may occur between church organisations, NGOs and government agencies. The interpretation of intentions of some APOs may prevent facilitation of the enabling environment for the implementation of programmes of other APOs. For a better understanding of these tensions, this thesis distinguishes between internal and external tensions.

9.4.2.1 Internal and external tensions

9.4.2.1.1 Internal tensions

Internal tension refers to disagreement within an organisation over the understanding of poverty and the modalities for tackling the identified needs of the poor. This form of tension may arise between the authority structure and the field officers in the process of determining what a particular form an intervention should take. This has some implications for poverty reduction efforts. The researcher noticed this form of tension from Daniel Obi from a religious APO, when he submitted that:

> *"We used to have conflicts in our organisation, especially in relation to authority, hierarchy and decision making. For instance, the issue of some funding we got sometimes ago has pitted some of us who are staff against the chancellor[45] in terms of strategies regarding how the fund should be utilized."*

The above submission shows that field workers who interact on a daily basis with the poor can have a different understanding, methods and modalities for administering APMs, which may run counter to a superior officer within the same organisation. This internal tension might vary from organisation to organisation. For example, Christoplos (1995) has argued that the instability in some organisational environments together with un-harmonized planning approaches have tended to put constraint on the field workers, who might try to tailor their services to that of the authorities within the organisation.

Therefore, formal APOs, such as the church, believe in the traditional way of placating the poor by giving them money and food which may be used for a week. This approach, according to respondent Daniel, is viewed differently by those on the field, because they feel that giving free money without empowering the poor will not alleviate poverty but sustain it. According to Daniel:

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[45] In the Roman Catholic Church there is an administrative post called chancellor which is occupied by a priest. He keeps the records of the diocese and manages the personnel and finances, in addition to other administrative duties. He sometimes has another priest who is known as vice-chancellor assisting him. His office is called chancery but does not possess a jurisdictional authority.

"…*we have rules; there is the procedure by which we run this program. It is not about giving people money and just leaving them. It is not the normal church thing of giving out money because it can generate conflicts."*

Therefore, this tension can result in disempowerment. The tension here, this present study argues, is between giving out money in the form of charity and using the money as means of empowerment. When money is used as charity, poverty is likely to be sustained; when used as a means of empowerment, poverty is likely to be reduced.

Therefore, tension in the modalities of administering intervention was reported as a major internal tension. The understanding of a field church worker is to administer intervention funds based on set criteria, which beneficiaries must meet to be part of the programme. This basic tension, may emanate at the point of conceiving and implementing the programmes, and if allowed to continue, might hamper the efforts being made to fight poverty.

9.4.2.1.2 External tensions

External tension is usually seen between formal APOs. Due to ownership structures and the underlying interests, conceptions and modalities for the implementation of intervention differ. This present study shows that non-governmental organisations reported uncooperative attitudes from governmental institutions in the implementation of their programmes. For instance, Evaristus Odam from a religious organisation, said:

"Sometimes, it is very difficult working with the government anti-poverty organisations because they often shy away from their responsibilities. We are non-governmental organisations; we are only trying to support them to make sure that they do what they are supposed to do".

Government organisations' refusal to attend planned programmes and workshops, and demand for compensation has combined to frustrate the APMs of other APOs. For instance, in the agricultural empowerment programmes, non-state APOs required the provision of extension services by government APOs, which usually were not available.

Extension services in agriculture are one of those few areas where government and NGOs' agencies meet together with the farmers to consider how to provide support, with government strategies towards poverty reduction (Christoplos, 1995; Carney, 1996). Christoplos (1995) argues that extension is nothing but communication, a communication between farmers and either state or non-state organisations. However, participants from non-state APOs expressed the view that state APOs have not been living up to their responsibilities with regard to extension services, especially in agriculture.

One of the major reasons submitted by Grace Olaye from a private NGO was the issue of discord in the area of compensation. For example, Grace said:

> *"…non-state anti-poverty organisations had to pay compensation in order to get link or support from government anti-poverty organisations*."

Similarly, another respondent Evaristus Odam from a religious organisation submitted:

> *"…when you remind the government authorities about their responsibilities, they expect you to pay them..."*

This payment of compensation is likely understood by Grace to be as in the same category as payment of bribes. Non-state APOs have to bribe government APOs before a successful link or support is achieved. This may not be strange, when one considers the level of corruption in Nigeria, where individuals, groups or communities have to bribe before they can get the attention of government or have government embark on community development projects. For example, Aluko (2002) states that institutionalized corruption in Nigeria has altered the behaviour and value systems of majority of Nigerians, to the extent that inducement (bribe) assures individuals, groups or communities of preferential treatment and favours, at the expense of others not willing and/or not able to pay bribe (see also Ogbeidi, 2012; Nnonyelu, 2013). This creates tensions and discord among various APOs in Nigeria, in their conceptualisations of poverty as well as implementations of APMs.

The findings of this present study further show another interesting side of the

conflict and tension as regards the issue of programme design hijacking. Non-state APOs like JPDC, reported that some of their proposals for the involvement of government organisations in community interventions were hijacked, diverted and used by government APOs as 'government programmes' without the former's involvement. A respondent, Vincent Eke from JPDC explained:

> *"There was a youth program we designed and were supposed carry out in partnership with the ministry of information; but the ministry eventually hijacked and executed the program without our knowledge, perhaps because of a political interest behind it."*

A well-designed programme by this APO gets 'taken away' by a government APO, while the original owner is sidelined. A probable factor in this may be politics. Government organisations consider the political implications of allowing these non-state APOs to implement a well-designed intervention poverty programme, and non-state APOs are more likely to have concern for the welfare of others in their focus. Politicians may delay a particular poverty intervention for the electoral period to attract voters while delaying such may be counterproductive for the lives of the potential beneficiaries. This may account for the reluctance of government agencies to support programmes that may threaten their political chances. In other words, clashes of interest between APOs in anti-poverty campaign may hamper successful implementation of any conceived programme, if not checked.

Chukwuemeka (2009) remarks that the hijacking of poverty-related programmes by the political ruling elites may tend to prevent these programmes from getting to the people at the grassroots, where, it is presumed, most of the poor live. In sum, these tensions, whether internal or external, with respect to the conceptualisation of poverty and implementations of APMs, affect the efforts for the fight against poverty in Nigeria. In what follows next, this study discusses the possibilities for addressing these tensions as gathered from interviewees.

9.4.2.2 Can these tensions be addressed and how?

In recent times, concepts that are plural in nature have become a challenge for many organisations and institutions. This often leads to conflicts, tensions and challenges in the understandings of concepts, and also, in the management and

implementations of policies. These tensions and conflicts pose serious challenges for the assimilation of these differences in order to try and put up a better understanding among the many visions and conceptions of a particular phenomenon, as in the case of poverty. Pluralism of concepts and logics does not imply a threat to institutional set up, but may be a means of achieving a better understanding of that concept (Reay and Hinnings, 2009:643). What matters is that various actors from within and across institutions to come together, even in their differences and disagreements, and achieve their set goals (Reay and Hinings, 2009). The question of how institutional actors address the issues of pluralism of concepts is therefore an important one (Greenwood et al., 2011; Dorado, 2010).

This present study shows that some organisations have exhibited interest in resolving these tensions. As a way of addressing these internal tensions, Joseph Kedi from a religious APO said they have employed what the respondent called *'team meetings'* and '*constructive engagement and advocacies'*. According to him, in team meetings, some organisational issues are looked at, with a critical constructive suggestions and solutions. Advocacies are then made in order to face future challenges.

In the area of external tensions, it is however gathered from Joseph Kedi, that:

> "…*breaking this barrier of uncooperative attitude of government agencies involves doing what I call 'power analyses'."*

According to Kedi, power analysis involves identifying the authority or influential sources of power within a particular organisational structure with a view to getting instructions down to the subordinates. Government organisations work with orders emanating from a superior to the subordinates. Without a power structure behind a programme, a programme may suffer.

However, the claims of the above respondents might not seem to offer a definitive solution to all the conflicts and tensions resulting from the pluralism of the concept of poverty. Borrowing from our discussions on the literature, pluralism recognizes the unavoidable occurrence of conflicting opinions on some issues, concepts, and policies (Anderson et al., 2007; Thevenot, 2006). These divergences, according to

Anderson et al. (2007), are based on different values, objectives and perceptions, which describe the changes between various interests, ideologies and organisations. Awareness of this pluralism, argued Christoplos (1995), allows actors from various organisations, in this case APOs, to acknowledge that all variables and functions cannot be performed by any of the actors alone. Pluralism acknowledges that our conceptions, definitions, plans and implementations are not the only ones in existence.

As discussed in the literature, tensions and conflicts arising due to a pluralism of concepts are likely to instigate individuals to develop the ability to test and manage these unavoidable conflicts. To be able to do this, individuals should be knowledgeable about their institutions as well as their environments (Kekes, 1993; Stark, 2009). In this way, conflicts resulting from pluralism ought not to be seen as stupidity or wickedness, but as something that keeps on occurring, as long as conceptions and values are plural, incompatible and incommensurate (Kekes, 1993). Anderson et al. (2007), together with the literature, remarks that, “pluralism may be messy, but it helps bring us closer to the reality of the field” (p. 73). Therefore, to acknowledge pluralism is to develop ways and means of accommodating it, so that various groups and actors can come together to collaborate and work for a better understanding among the many visions and conceptions of policies imbued in pluralism.

Equally, it is argued that there ought to be organisational or institutional networks propelled by good communication amongst actors and groups in either different or the same institutions (Oliveira, 2002:17). Sometimes there might be some actors or agencies from a particular institution or organisation who entertain fears of participation from other actors, who they regard as undue interference in their own activities. Likewise, some see participation from other actors or agencies as putting themselves at risk of being overshadowed or manipulated by other actors. However, Oliveira claims that the benefit of interaction and dialogue among actors supersedes whatever fear of intimidation or manipulations that may arise (Oliveira, 2002:17).

Woolcock (2002:27) holds that, whenever there is a proper relationship and participation among actors, there is a notable change in the way that a particular concept is viewed. This begins to open up a learning process for the actors or agencies involved, whereby each actor, based on its comparative advantages, contributes and adds value to the understanding of the concept in question, without fear that this might result in the denial of their own identities or a confusion of roles. Pluralism entails differences and disagreements in the understanding of concepts, just as we have differences and disagreements in democracy (Woolcock, 2002; Clegg, 2010). Tensions and conflicts are within the nature of democracy (Woolcock, 2002:38). The important thing is for people, and in this case, actors from various APOs, to come together, in spite of their differences and achieve their set goals, either via various institutions or organisations or within institutions themselves (Oliveira, 2002).

The coming together of various actors to handle policies or concepts that are pluralistic follows a well-defined pattern (Woolcock, 2002; Oliveira, 2002) and through this, a sustainable policy (Daniels and Walker, 1997) might be achieved. This well-defined pattern is what Oliveira (2002) describes as “when several partners join forces, the resources they mobilize are broader and more diverse; the redistributive impact of the public programmes is greater, while the risks of waste, patronage and corruption are diminished” (p.18). He cites an example, using the concept of social capital. For example, social capital, like poverty, is embedded with pluralism. Using the case of Brazil, Oliveira (2002) argues the case of solidarity, seen from among actors in social capital, where social capital has increased the confidence of the community in particular, and the nation in general, despite its pluralism. These actors, he claims, are both from the government and civil organisations, of which the NGOs and the Church are part of it. Following this line of argument, this study recommends the use of these approaches for actors who are saddled with the responsibilities of managing concepts and implementing policies that are related to pluralism, especially with regard to poverty under discussion.

There are also in addition to the implications discussed above, some challenges being faced by the APOs in the fight against poverty. In the section that follows, these challenges are discussed.

9.5 Challenges faced in the implementations of anti-poverty measures

This section is concerned with the potential challenges faced by APOs in the course of implementing constructive APMs in Nigeria. However, the magnitude of challenges faced could vary from one organisation to the other. The problems are identified during the attempts and efforts at conceptualising poverty and implementing APMs in Nigeria. This study therefore revealed the following major challenges faced by APOs in the fight against poverty, as highlighted and discussed by some members of APOs during the fieldwork.

9.5.1 Scarce resources

Lack of financial resources has been found to be one of the challenges that APOs, particularly private ones, face in the implementation of APMs. According to Tina Arigo, a female Founder/Director of Adaife NGO:

> *"In every organisation, lack of reliable financial sponsors often results in a lot of challenges. But our organisation has designed a strategy of big scale cassava and plantain farming in order to address constant financial problems."*

The above respondent argued that, despite many lofty programs and ideas, a dearth of finance continues to hamper achievement of a reduction of poverty by most non-state APOs. This has been noted also in the literature reviewed (see for example Agba et al., 2014; Onyeozu, 2011; Abegunde, 2009; Olomola, 2001).

There is a general agreement that many anti-poverty related programmes have failed due to lack of sufficient resources, and this impacts negatively on the lives of the poor (Ukpong, 1993; Antyo, 2012). Most non-state APOs such as Outreach Foundation and Adaife complained of lack of sponsors, which has restricted most of their anti-poverty programmes. Due to this anticipated insufficiency, APOs, specifically Adaife, make investments in certain areas where the proceeds of such investments are ploughed back into APMs. For instance, just as quoted above,

non-state APOs like Adaife have farm plantations, and these farms' produce is sold, with the intention of generating enough funds that can be used in fighting poverty. Although not only designed as a money-making venture, the farm serves to intervene in specific areas of the needy, such as food. This type of initiative could be argued to eliminate, to some extent, the rate of dependency of these non-state APOs on both local and international sponsors. For example, Omotola (2008) argues on the need, for non-state APOs to combat poverty by means of embarking on different investments, which could serve as sources of income, thereby eliminating the high rate of dependency on local and foreign donors.

Another important consideration for setting up a farm plantation as was gathered from the director of Adaife is the issue of health. According to the director of Adaife NGO:

> "…*our organisation planted plantain with the purpose of helping the diabetic patients, who rely on it as a major stable food, because of their health condition."*

This particular APO, as represented by this respondent, realized that the cost of producing plantain was high and out of the reach of the poor; hence, the organisation went into plantain production. Out of this, those poor people diagnosed with diabetes are helped, without collecting money from them.

Equally, respondents from the NOA and the NAPEP noted that failure of federal government to empower their staff with funding, and other logistical resources needed to go into communities, was found to hamper APMs as well. Officials may have been trained in extension services, which are mostly needed to train farmers and improve the quality of their yields. However, non-mobilisation of such trained workers to where they are needed contributes to poverty perpetuation. For example, Ukpong (1993) observes that the shortfall in the reduction of poverty, mostly in the rural areas, is attributed to a government inability to utilize resources to mobilize its staff who work in these areas (see also Chukwuemeka, 2009; Oshewolo, 2011). However, it might still be possible that, even in situations where there is adequate remittance and mobilization of staff from the government, some officials misappropriate and divert the resources. These factors, among others,

offer reasons why Nigeria might not be able to meet the MDGs of 2015 (and by extension the SDG of 2030) in the area of combating poverty.

9.5.2 Accessibility

This present study reveals that the more critical among these challenges is accessibility, which includes road accessibility as well as access to information. In other words, difficult terrain makes it impossible for intervention agencies to reach the needy. For instance, Rita Igwe, a deputy director from an NGO stated:

> *"There is accessibility challenge for our organisation. We have many places to visit; but the roads, especially the river line areas are so bad that they have become inaccessible."*

Accessibility has become a big challenge for APOs navigating their ways into poor indigenous communities due to their layout and topography. There are poor road networks in most of the rural areas, and even in some urban areas, thus hampering the movements of some of these APOs (see also Daniel, 2012). Nigeria could boast of having only 10% of their rural roads in good conditions (Usman, 2013:6). The deplorable conditions of these roads are worsened by the slow responses of government in maintaining and renovating these roads (Ibok and Ekong, 2013; Usman, 2013).

The above respondent, Rita, further noted that:

> "…*some of these communities have natural barriers like water, which makes it difficult for aqua-phobic people to access them. Bridges are not built across these rivers*."

According to this respondent, good rural roads and bridges form one of the major bases for communication and transformation in community development. If there are good rural roads and bridges built across rivers, these will aid the community in the transportation and delivery of farm products, reduce cost of transportation, as well as contributing to the socio-economic development of such rural communities. Similarly, Tina Arigo from a private NGO remarked:

> *"In the course of our interactions with some communities, who are largely framers, we discovered that they were always discouraged, as a result of their inability to convey*

their perishable produce to the nearest cities due to bad road networks; and this has further compounded their poverty level."

The opinions of these respondents have merit as lack of bridges and good roads were among the basic amenities noticed by the researcher in the course of data collection. For example, the researcher observed that, in Anyigba community in Kogi state, NC Nigeria, people have as their major occupations farming, fishing, petty trading and craft works. Yet the town has bad roads and a broken bridge. According to participants from this community, the bridge has remained broken for almost ten years, and as such contributes to the high mortality rate and high poverty level in the community as they find it very difficult to get to hospital and to transport their farm produce for sales, amongst other problems.

This present study equally argues that, due to huge proportion of unused land in most of these rural communities, individuals, groups or even government might decide to build industries and factories that might end up creating job opportunities for the indigenes. This might reduce the tendency towards rural-urban migration in search of job opportunities. Kassali et al. (2012) hold that a lack of good rural roads tend to kill the resilience and dreams of people, who might have opted to live in the rural communities, where they could stay in a likely quiet environment and from there move freely to the city for their business.

Access to information is also an issue, as submitted by Marg Uda, a Founder/Director of a private NGO. According to her:

"…because there are no good roads, it becomes difficult for anti-poverty organisations to move into these communities and pass information to people, especially farmers."

The above respondent gave the example of the farmers of Nsukka in Nigeria. According to her, these rural farmers are thought to produce insufficient food probably due to lack of information. Farmers in this area lack access to information on how to improve their farming mechanisms and achieve a better yield from their farmlands. This might be due to poor road conditions, which might prevent agricultural extension workers from either the state or non-state agencies delivering such information and training. Therefore, the above respondent

explained that those communities where there are rivers without bridges can only be accessed by locally made boats, which pose danger to human life. This is a big challenge, as the respondent made it clear that no one would want to risk one's life going to such places. Hence, difficult terrain makes it impossible for intervention agencies to reach the farmers as well as the very vulnerable people. This study equally argues that lack of information could also be due to the absence of internet and other communication networks, which could deter these farmers from learning about alternative techniques, etc.

9.5.3 Cultural and religious barriers

It was observed by a respondent, Jude Uchem from a government organisation, that:

> *"…there are cultural inhibitions towards the eradication of observed lack among vulnerable communities*."

This present study reveals that, although government APOs such as, NOA claimed to be working with other non-state APOs in the eradication of poverty, cultural barriers present a major challenge.

Cultural barriers to the implementation of health programmes have remained a major challenge for APOs. For instance, implementers of immunization programmes, as discussed before, have confronted cultural and religious challenges in some Northern states where there is a majority of Muslims, many of whom are hostile to such programmes (see also Anger, 2010; Babalola and Umar, 2009). As a result of this, they deploy whatever means available to fight against it, especially through the use of 'Boko Haram'. They have, at one time or the other, killed and maimed some members of these agencies (This Day News Paper, 2011:14). This accounts for the reason why most people suffering from polio are from the North. The findings of Babalola and Umar (2009) on the level of immunization confirm that immunization level was low in Northern Nigeria, and as a result, most children in the North end up being deformed. These notions, based on culture or even religion, hamper the implementation of programmes in such vulnerable communities.

9.5.4 Stringent government policies

Some respondents, mainly from non-state APOs, identified stringent government conditions as one of the challenges being imposed on their organisations. These restrictions concerned sources of funding and ways such funds should be spent. For instance, Cyril Onukoba from a religious organisation noted:

> *"We face the challenges of meeting up with some of the government stringent conditions. The NGO sectors face the problem of persecution because of Government interference. For example, there is a money laundering act that the government has established through the EFCC[46] to monitor a possible funding of terrorist actions by NGOs."*

Terrorism has been a phenomenon affecting the world at large through violence, fear and intimidation (USDS, 2005). Acts of terrorism have today engulfed contemporary Nigerian society. It ranges from kidnapping and militancy by ND Militants (Emuedo and Emuedo, 2014), to bomb attacks and killings by the members of 'Boko Haram' (Elesin, 2013). These acts of terrorism have imparted severe hardship to Nigerians, and have greatly marred both the human and economic development of the nation (Zumve, 2013). For example, Oshewolo (2011:9) remarks that the rate of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Nigeria has reduced drastically when compared to other African countries like Ghana and Cameroon. Statistics reveal that FDI as a percentage of GDP fell from 8% between 1994 and 2003 to 2% between 2004 and 2011, and this is attributed to the unrest in the country created by the militant groups and 'Boko Haram' (Oshewolo, 2011:9). Similarly, most economic activities decreased, especially in the North, as people with investments there are relocating either to the South or East.

Therefore, the need for financial scrutiny is caused by the recent terrorism within the country, which made the country embark on tracking the sources of finance for terrorist groups. The above respondent explained that before money sent by

[46] The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is a law enforcement agency established in Nigeria in 2003. They are charged with the investigation of financial crimes such as money laundering and advance fee fraud. The establishment of this commission was as a result of the pressure from the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering that listed Nigeria as one of the countries not complying with the efforts of the international community in the fight against money laundering. The headquarters of the agency are located in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria.

international donors can be withdrawn and used for its primary purpose, EFCC scrutinizes the sources of funds. By doing this, EFCC creates further hurdles for some non-state APOs. This often causes delay in attending to the urgent poverty issues. For instance, Marg Uda from an NGO complained that:

> "…*most times, money may be available for particular projects, but to have access to the money and withdraw it for the project becomes a big nut to crack*."

Nevertheless, the respondent, Marg explained that government has been notified about this challenge, and efforts are being made to see that these non-state agencies may get the funds meant for them from international donors.

9.5.5 Stealing from the poor

Daniel Obi and Cyril Onukoba, both from religious organisations, listed *'stealing from the poor'* among the challenges that have been impeding successful implementation of anti-poverty programs in identified locations. This is a challenge to the implementation of APMs, which the literature reviewed in the previous sections has not dealt with (see for example, Narayan et al 2002, Alikpajiak and Pyke, 2003, Unwin, 2008; Hope, 2004). *'Stealing from the poor'* can be explained as an attitude exhibited by people trained to distribute intervention materials to the poor. It can be in the form of stealing food, intervention materials or empowerment kits meant for the poor. This mostly happens when the 'rich' steals from the 'poor'. According to Daniel:

> "…*some religious organisations usually hold get-together for the poor during festivities, to distribute food items in order for the poor to feel included in the social event. Such events include: Christmas and Easter celebration for the Christians and Eid al-Fitr for the Muslims*."

According to the above respondent, those with the role of distributing such items may circumvent the procedure by sharing out the goods, thereby reducing the impact the program is designed to have on the beneficiaries. This might lead to a shortage of intervention materials. The challenge here is that, if not properly

monitored, empowerment kits and intervention goods may be diverted and not get to the needy.

Arising from the above is the challenge of monitoring the intervention materials and implementation of empowerment programs. Respondent Cyril gave an example with an occurrence of a natural disaster. According to him:

> *"The flood issue in some South-Eastern states was a typical example. While the church and the NGOs ensured that items got to the victims because those things were monitored, Government agencies failed in ensuring that items get to the camps of the flood victims due to lack of monitoring."*

According to this respondent, while the privately oriented APOs like NGOs and churches are more favourably disposed to monitoring the full implementation of their interventions, government APOs often do not follow up on their schemes. The implication of this is that, while those who monitor are able to evaluate the limits of their interventions and review, those who do not monitor have a nebulous picture of the real situation among the poor.

People suffer natural disasters such as flooding, and may be displaced with their means of livelihood washed away. Relief is then sought from emergency agencies and from philanthropists. Such donations may, however, not get to those in need due to corruption amongst the staff of government APOs, who are to distribute the relief materials. To cover their inefficiency, those involved normally pay for media coverage of how the relief materials have been disbursed. For example, Umeh (2007) remarks how the media has been used by government and politicians to bring to public notice 'never-existed', unrealized and unexecuted projects, as a means of propaganda.

In view of the above, respondent Cyril explained that:

> "…*intervention materials for the poor, either in the form of food, projects or empowerment kits, ought to be monitored*."

Project monitoring, according to Lawal and Onohaeb (2010), offers the opportunity to correct anomalies or deviations, as well as helping to ascertain that the project is

conforming to the stated goals or objectives for which it was created (see also Idoro, 2012). Ibeto and Chinyeaka (2013), in their analysis of the monitoring of government projects, lament on the slow pace and lack of interest with which Nigerian government monitors its projects, which has indeed given rise to many abandoned and uncompleted projects. In other words, due to lack of monitoring, money meant for such projects is stolen away by those in charge of projects, leaving such projects uncompleted with a lingering effect of underdevelopment and poverty on the community or poor people, with which the project or intervention materials were meant to assist.

9.5.6 Nonchalant attitude of the poor/community

Challenges are not limited to APOs alone. This is one of the new findings of this present study, as most literature reviewed has specifically limited these challenges to APOs and not considered the nonchalant attitude of the poor or the community itself (see for example, Narayan et al 2002, Alikpajiak and Pyke, 2003, Unwin, 2008; Hope, 2004). The findings of this present study show that the nonchalant attitude of the poor that reduces their willingness to ask questions and fight for their rights, has kept many in poverty. For instance, Joseph Kedi from a religious organisation opined that:

> "…*people may remain in poverty for a long time because they seem not so concerned about government anti-poverty programmes, perhaps as a result of previous experiences as regards disappointments, lack of attention to their plights, and diversion of items on the part of government*."

According to the above respondent, lack of trust in government has made it difficult for many anti-poverty programmes to translate into meaningful social and economic development. The implication is that when materials designed to improve their lives get diverted without being questioned, then this action of diversion and misappropriation goes on unabated. However, this passive attitude of the poor may have been as a result of years of perennial neglect from the government or other institutions.

Looking at the current situation in the country, it might be argued that being passive

might not fully describe the attitude of some poor people, as well as some communities, as most of such neglected communities have taken to causing unrest. This has given rise to some ethnic movements such as Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), and its associated crises involving militancy and kidnapping of expatriates and top government officials. This is due to neglect from the government (see Salawu, 2010). Some of these neglects may include government inability to provide good roads, portable water, electricity, quality education, health care, etc.

There are other aspects of the community behaviour that affect poverty alleviation initiatives, such as a community's attitude towards any project or fund coming from the government. For instance, Peter Johnson from a government organisation revealed that:

> "…*community members are fond of negative attitude towards projects or funds coming from the government due to the belief that such funds do not need to be repaid since it is coming from the government*."

However, failure of this approach to effect positive changes in the social condition of the poor or the community may have made some non-state APOs redesign their empowerment programmes. This then, involves the granting of soft loans, for example, which must be repaid in order for others to benefit from it, as discussed in the previous sections.

In summary, the respondents in this section claim that APOs are not without some challenges. These challenges include: the problems of lack of financial sponsors, poor infrastructures, cultural inhibitions, inadequate monitoring, diversion of items meant for the poor, negative attitudes of the concerned community, and inability of NGOs to meet up with some of the government stringent conditions. However, the respondents believe that these problems are surmountable.

Given the above implications and challenges prevalent in the conceptualisations of poverty and implementations of APMs within and across various APOs, as well as with the poor, this present study argues for the need for change of attitude both

from APOs, the poor and the community at large. The next section, discusses this need for a change of attitude.

9.6 Need for a change of attitude

The need for a change of attitude as proposed by some participants in the FGDs and interviewees, from the poor, the community, as well as change in practices of different APOs is highlighted in this section. The specific areas of expected attitudinal change have to do with the orientations and manners of approach in conceptualizing poverty, and implementations of APMs. Consequently, this present study reveals that a change of attitude is needed from the following bodies:

9.6.1 Government

Participants from the communities and organisations, as well as academics interviewed by the researcher believed that the government needs to work in collaboration with the private sector and other APOs. It also needs to be accountable, make and implement policies that support poverty reduction campaigns, listen to people and make political posts less attractive. Specifically, Uzi Uzom, an acedemic, in accordance with other participants' opinions, stated that:

> *"The failure of government has to do with lack of governance transparency and good policy. I believe that if the government becomes active and responsive and people begin to hold them to account, they will begin to deliver on their services and promises in respect of poverty reduction in the country."*

Poor governance, which is rooted in a lack of transparency and inability to make and implement policies, has been adduced as one of the major failures of government in most African countries (Nyong'o, 2001). In bad governance, there are such issues as a lack of basic political order, absence of political legitimacy, an inability to enforce the rule of law, unavailability of opportunity for popular participation, inability to effectively formulate and review policies among others (see Nyong'o, 2001; Arogundade, et al; 2011; Ajulor, 2013). In Nigeria, for example, Nnoyelu (2013) remarks that the Nigerian inability to provide for its

growing population in terms of infrastructural facilities, such as clean water, power, roads, food, healthcare, employment, quality education, security, as well as its inability to control the recurring crises in the country, are the major signs of failure in its governance (see also Aluko, 2002; Ogbeidi, 2012; Ogundiya, 2010). Failure in governance is conspicuous in the levels of corruption in the country, such that "a regime that is tainted by corruption cannot effectively deliver goods and services to its people" (Nnonyelu, 2013 p. 103).

Following this line of thought, this present study argues that poor governance rooted in the failure of government to provide for the basic needs of the people, as well as unbridled corruption and diversion of intervention funds by government agencies, combine to regress development and sustain poverty in the country. For example, if participation is neglected in anti-poverty policy formulation and implementation, to the extent that the understanding of what constitutes poverty emanates from those occupying government offices alone and not those affected by poverty, then this has implications for policy formulation and implementation. The argument is that, a bottom-up approach may provide the conception of poverty as 'experienced' rather than as 'perceived'. Furthermore, since the understanding of the conception differs according to APOs, there may be need for synergy among them to tackle poverty effectively (Christoplos, 1995; Hoffman, 2011). This synergy should be present from the outset of programme design, implementation and monitoring. Hence, Uzi Uzom in conjunction with some respondents from the religious APOs expressed the view that there is need for a change of attitude from government on governance.

The findings of this study also reveal the culpability of the country's politicians in that it would be important for government to make political offices less attractive, so as to make people see the need to acquire survival skills and stand on their own, rather than depending on what is popularly called the *'national cake'*[47]. For example, Anthony Aku, a PhD male respondent and senior lecturer at a university

[47] The majority of Nigerian politicians have depended on the nation's resources as sources of their income and as such there is a rush to gain access to politics. So many people are abandoning their businesses for politics. There is a submission by one of the respondents Anthony Aku of how a young man who was doing well in poultry business abandoned the business and entered politics. Luck ran out of him, as he did not win the desired post and he ended up becoming so poor, that he could scarcely feed himself and his family.

remarked:

> *"Our politicians are not really helping matters because our own system of government has made the political seats very attractive, especially for young men. Seeing this as an easy avenue to make quick money has made them and their dependants to lose interest in hard work to earn a living."*

It may not be out of place to describe the democratic government as one that has widened the gap between the rich and the poor through the bogus allowances politicians earn. In the previous section, it has been argued that one quarter (about 25%) of the nation's budget go to the three arms of government, namely the executive, legislature, and judiciary. This might have led to the open display of affluence by Nigerian politicians, which have made many people jettison hard work to join politics in order to earn free money. However, this has its own consequences on the nation's development and the fight against poverty. For example, Anyanwu (2013) notes that, the progress being recorded in the fight against poverty seems to be progressing very slowly owing to wrong channelling of resources. The findings of this study however show a belief that properly channelled and un-diverted resources may bring about the desired impact on poverty.

In view of this, respondent Anthony, opined that:

> *"…a change in the constitution of the country, which would make political offices less attractive in terms of remuneration, should be collectively advocated at this point in time*."

According to the above respondent, a change in the constitution of the country might bring checks and balances in the behaviour of public office holders, and also punishment for those who divert public resources for personal use.

9.6.2 Community and Charter of Demands

There is also a call for a change in the community's and the people's attitude. The findings of this study reveal that one of the ways in which communities can ensure they are not neglected by the government and political office holders is the

development of a Community Charter of Demand (CCD). For instance, Vincent Eke from a religious organisation noted:

> *"We have told some of the communities to develop a Charter of Demand. The basic things the community needs are written there and whoever comes in to ask for their mandate is given this charter of demand. The person will read and sign, they will be given one copy, community will have the other copy."*

The CCD is a strategy employed by communities to commit political aspirants towards developing their communities. Charters of demand are not new, as they have been used by several institutions, companies, enterprises. Majury (2002) explains charters of demand as a list of demands prepared and submitted by the employees to the management of an institution, company or enterprise, requesting an improvement in salary and allowance pay, as well as other benefit and welfare schemes. This is normally followed by negotiations, and subsequently by a binding agreement between the management and the employees. Therefore, the above respondent explained that the charter of demands represents those areas of deprivation present in a particular community. With a charter of demands, communities hold leverage based on the 'political worthiness' of candidates. The community can ensure that candidates canvassing for votes are ready to meet the communities' demands should they get into office.

Further, sensitisation of communities by some of these APOs, especially the private APOs, might change the communities' attitude towards voting for people who do not know the history of their communities. For example, there is a trend in Nigeria for 'diasporas' to come to communities, brandish money and secure the people's vote, but neglect such communities when they get into office. These 'Diasporas' are people who for one reason or another have no full knowledge of the community where they come from. This might be as a result of where they were born or probably, they left the community when they were young and settled in the city. There is the fear that such people might not do well if elected to any post, so caution should be exercised in electing them into office.

To change this, non-state APOs such as JDPC claimed that they are beginning to advice communities on the need to vote for people they can exert influence on. This way, the person elected might help to change their social and economic conditions. This is later captured in what JDPC called Community Action Plan (CAP), entailing a guide to electoral behaviour of community members. According to Vincent Eke, a respondent from JDPC:

> *"…we also have what we call Community Action Plan (CAP); it is a kind of agreement where we have to come to a consensus on the things that guide them so that whoever they are voting in is the person who will alleviate their problems and not somebody who will elevate their problems."*

According to the above respondent, this agreement will help the community decide only to vote for people who can improve their situation. This is also part of what JDPC claimed it has imparted to the lives of the communities, in terms of information empowerment as to how they can change their attitude and situation. Additionally, some of the communities covered in this study, have been sensitized to negotiate with their political capital (numerical voting strength). For instance, some participants from Ajamgbadi, Ulakwo, Anyigba and Ikare-Akoko communities unanimously confirmed this sensitization programme. In particular, participants from Ajamgbadi community in Lagos state affirmed that:

> "…*in the recent times we have been receiving sensitisation programmes from some government and non-governmental organisations as regards our rights and issues that affect our lives in relation to poverty reduction*."

With this, the likelihood of changing the attitude of those in political offices increases, as they may see a new set of communities who now understand their basic rights to demand things that can change their living standards.

9.6.3 The Church and the influence of Pentecostalism

The conception of the poor and the rich has been proven to be greatly influenced by the church, particularly Pentecostalism, as was discussed previously. For example, participants from Eziagulu, Ajamgbadi, Umunede, Afaha-Eket, Otobi and Ulakwo communities were of the opinion that recognition of materialism in

churches may account for unbridled corruption, which trickles down and negatively affects the livelihood of other vulnerable people. Specifically, a female participant from Ulakwo community in Imo state, SE Nigeria said:

> *"Pentecostalism has destroyed our society today through their teachings on materialism and this has led so many people to all sorts of corrupt practices."*

According to these participants from the above mentioned communities, Pentecostalism has categorized poverty in Nigeria as an anathema from God, a condemnation from above, such that the church does not see poverty as an opportunity to identify with but as a crime. For example, Diala and Onah (2014) currently observe that some Pentecostal churches have fixed definite minimum offering that one is supposed to make to the church. Anyone who gives anything less does not merit occupying a seat in the church. This new approach has today instilled feelings of inferiority amongst the poor, who are mostly victims of this man-made rule. This has led many people to cultism, killing and other forms of social vices in order to amass wealth and be recognized. This wealth immediately merits them a title in the church such as Elder and Knight or a chieftaincy title in the community.

However, participants from Ulakwo, Eziagulu and Umunede communities unanimously and strongly condemn this attitude, and warn that communities and especially churches should investigate people's sources of wealth before giving them these titles. It is a popular belief in Nigeria that chieftaincy and some religious titles are for sale. This idea has given birth to what so many Nigerians now call 'naira chiefs'. This ideology according to Smith, (2012), has to a greater extent considered to be responsible for the many of the state of moral and social crisis within the country.

Therefore, participants from these communities strongly believed that there are people suffering and whose poverty is being deepened on a daily basis on account of the way such persons have made their wealth. Evidence abounds of how some owners of businesses and companies, as well as school proprietors, owe their workers several months' salaries, but keep on paying tithes and giving offerings in

the church at the expense of their workers, who have families to cater for (see Kitause and Achunike, 2013). Some indulge in internet fraud and cheat their business partners, and end up using such money to sow seeds[48] and give tithe offerings in the church (Achunike, 2007).

It might be argued here that, frequently, religious leaders and pastors are not aware of these acts, but indirectly, one may tend to believe that their teachings on materialism encourage these acts as well. Therefore, one of the participants from Ulakwo community stressed the need that:

> *"Churches need to verify their members' sources of wealth as this might help in reducing diversion of public funds and commonwealth."*

This present study therefore argues that Churches need to stress the importance of achievement through efforts and hard work, rather than prosperity without hard work. Equally, holiness of life has to be the priority for preachers. The understanding that 'you are holy because you are wealthy and powerful' also has to be reconsidered by these preachers.

Furthermore, some participants from Ikare-Akoko and Ajamgbadi communities reported that churches can make significant changes in the lives of the poor if they can empower them more by identifying with them. For instance, one of the participants from Ikare-Akoko community observed that:

> *"The church needs to give back to the poor, especially through subsidy and make them have a sense of belonging. For example, we will contribute our hard earned money to build a university in the name of the church and when the university begins operation, you discover that the poor will not benefit from the project."*

Inequality has also crept into churches. Today, it is a widely held opinion that most of these religious and Pentecostal leaders associate and identify more with the rich in contrast to the examples of Jesus Christ, who throughout His ministries, identified with the poor. For example, Iyayi (2013) contends that the attitude of

[48] Sowing of seed is a terminology used in some of these Pentecostal churches. Members are mandated to give as an offering the whole of their first month salary. This is then followed by the monthly tithe offering of 10% of their salaries.

some pastors does not encourage the poor to approach them. Again, there is the recent trend in which churches begin to ask members, including the poor, to contribute to build educational institutions, which are totally out of the reach of the poor at completion. Most primary and secondary schools, as well as some universities established by religious institutions, were built through contributions made by its members. However, notwithstanding their small contributions, the poor are denied access because they are not able to meet high tuition fees. It might be said then that, since education is a key to poverty alleviation, a waiver or another change in church policies for children of the poor may help towards empowering poor families.

In summary, the respondents in this section claim that transparency, good policy and hard work on the part of government officials will bring about the right change of attitude. The poor in a community should also have a collectively prepared and documented agreement as regards their actual needs before intervention programs from any APOs. The respondents are also of the view that APOs such as the religious ones should reciprocate, in relation to the efforts of their poor members, who contribute towards church development and other projects.

9.7 Concluding remarks

This chapter has delved into the existing relationship among various APOs, as well as the relationship between these organisations and the poor. Implications and challenges arising from the pluralism in the understanding of poverty and the implementation of APMs have also been highlighted. The findings of this present study have shown that there is a significant relationship between various conceptions of poverty by APOs and the APMs adopted. In other words, the ways these APOs conceive poverty also informed the methods or approaches they adopted to reduce poverty. The successful implementation of the APMs is dependent on the abilities of APOs to understand and conceptualize the needs of the poor. While findings of this present study show some areas of synergy amongst APOs in APMs, non-states APOs are often strained by the bottlenecks of government APOs. Political factors, cultural barriers, religious influences as well as

corruption, the nonchalant attitude of the poor, stringent government policies, and accessibility issues, are some of the factors and challenges affecting the implementation of anti-poverty programmes.

However, accountability on the part of government officials, eschewing materialism on the side of the church, and having a charter of demands and community codes of action on the side of the community and the people, might enhance the livelihood of the vulnerable, irrespective of the strains in the processes of implementation. State and non-state APOs may need to focus more on the victims of poverty, rather than use their peculiar modes of operations and overlapping areas of activities to hamper APMs with implications for human and societal development.

The next chapter is the conclusion of the thesis and it focuses on the summary of the findings, emerging themes, contributions of the findings, research process and outcomes as well as future lines of inquiry.

10 General conclusion

10.1 Introduction

The problem of poverty is prevalent throughout the world, with an occurrence that cuts across ethnic groups, geographic borders, and socioeconomic and diverse backgrounds, especially in developing countries. Despite poverty being a major socio-economic problem worldwide and particularly in Nigeria, much is still expected to be known about the definitions of poverty as conceived by the poor who encounter incidences of poverty, as well as anti-poverty actors who design interventions to addressing the phenomenon.

Academic researchers, professionals, local and international agencies have an essential and critical role to play in relation to various levels of poverty definitions. They need to possess adequate knowledge in this area of poverty study in order to intervene in poverty situations. However, information on the understandings of poverty within countries with less developed economies is limited. In one of the past studies on the approach adapted to understanding poverty in Nigeria, it was found that issues of participation, power and VoP constitute important aspects of poverty study (see Narayan et al., 2000; Narayan and Petsche, 2002; Ayoola et al., 2001; Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, 2003).

Consequently, this study introduces Conceptual Pluralism Approach (CPA) as important in the contemporary study of poverty. The centrality of pluralism is that there is more than one reality, in contrast to monism or realism, which argues that there is only one reality (Stephen et al., 2006). It is in view of this that pluralism acknowledges the unavoidable reality of divergent and sometimes conflicting positions on issues and opinions. The central point of pluralism is that, “there can be more than one correct or true account of a given subject matter” (Maria, 2000 p. 1). Conceptual pluralism offers a chance for the researcher to move forward, to open new lines of enquiry, and to fruitfully re-explore old ones on a particular issue. Thus, this thesis describes a pluralistic definitional account of poverty.

While the problem of defining poverty is complex, the application of CPA for identifying its various definitions across the poor and anti-poverty actors, as well as the implications of this pluralism have been largely absent in the literature. CPA is an approach that helps poverty researchers understands the complex nature of poverty definition. In this way, CPA explores the similarities, differences, changes, implications as well as challenges in the understanding and conceptualisation of poverty. It does so from the viewpoint of the poor, and the various actors from within and across different anti-poverty organisations (APOs), who are involved in the fight against poverty. This approach discusses specific traditional, cultural and other non-material understandings of poverty to which other literature (for example Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, (2003); Ayoola et al (2001); Narayan and Petesch, (2002)) did not refer. Generally, CPA treats concepts as a set of different kinds of representational structures, meanings and approaches that are acquired and deployed under different circumstances and for different ends.

In view of the above, this thesis dwells on the various understandings of poverty by discussing the common themes, features and inherent differences in these definitions as conceived by the poor and actors of anti-poverty measures (APMs). These are based on their personal perceptions, experiences and understandings. This thesis has taken a CPA to the arguments of the poor and actors of APMs in relation to poverty definitions, perceived causes of poverty as well as the underlying dynamism and factors responsible for changes in the conceptualisation of poverty. The thesis also ascertains generally, divergent and interdependent understandings of the concept of poverty in relation to the Nigerian context, and shows the importance of CPA to poverty; why it is important in the study and debate on poverty, its implications for poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria, and how CPA can be used for a further understanding of the changes in conceptualizing and understanding poverty. This chapter then presents a summary of the main findings in accordance with the thesis' research questions, themes in poverty conceptualisation, and contributions of the findings to existing literature on poverty. In addition, it highlights the research process and the limitations of the study, and based on these limitations, draws the need for continued further research on conceptual pluralism as regards the understanding of poverty.

10.2 Summary of the main findings

The variation in the understandings of poverty, which further lends credence to the multidimensional, multifaceted nature and complexity of the concept of poverty has been emphasised by different authors (Narayan et al., 2000; Ayoola et al., 2001; Forno, 2008; Fusco and Dickes, 2008; Kurfi, 2009; Handley et al., 2009). This thesis found that, in the Nigerian case, these variations may result from the geographical areas where different actors come from, as well as the social, religious and cultural background of the actors involved in our sample. The variations could also be related to the philosophical orientations of the organisations that the respondents work with or the personal experiences of the participants. This study also revealed that there are notable similarities and differences in the understanding of poverty between the poor and the actors of APMs in the country.

Both the poor and the actors of APMs viewed poverty as lack of money. While the poor conceived poverty as lack of money to acquire basic needs of life, the actors of APMs used the word deprivation to connote it. This does not however indicate any significant difference in their conceptions. The monetary approach to the definition and conception of poverty seems to be the most commonly used. While some participants understand lack of money to be living without money, others perceive it as not having enough money for use in organizing parties and celebrations. This posits a challenge in determining how much money is needed for the poor to escape from poverty or how much money can one possess before one can be seen as not poor. For example, need of money may be subject to physical needs and these are subject to rapid change because of shifts in social activity and demand patterns. Nigerian environment seems to be characterised by complex and dynamic markets. It can thus be said that monetary needs may turn out to be socially determined in different ways.

Also, both the poor and the actors of APMs agreed that non-recognition of the poor's opinion is poverty and this was believed by the respondents to have largely characterised the Nigerian society. Given the significance of opinion in the design and implementation of public policy, and the desire of the majority of people to

seek opinion recognition, the inability to achieve this objective could be what the respondents described as poverty. Although there are various forms of domestic and foreign policies like socio-economic and security policies that may require public opinion, the respondents failed to be specific as regards areas where they expected the poor's opinion to be recognized. Nevertheless, it can be argued that if there is societal acceptability that the poor do exist, then their opinion should be recognized.

In addition, both the poor and the actors of APMs opined that poverty is marginalisation. While the village respondents perceived marginalisation as actual neglect of an individual who is of less quality or value and not rich within the society, the APM actors viewed personal or individual feelings of being marginalised as poverty. The perception of the respondents is viewed as a relatively deviation from the conception of marginalisation in the literature on countries experiencing marginalisation including Nigeria – a situation of being neglected in terms of infrastructural and human capital developments (See Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke 2003; Dercon, 2006). It is natural in a human society for the rich to associate with wealthy colleagues while the poor do the same among themselves. This may not constitute an act of marginalisation towards the latter in the real sense, because it is most likely for the poor to possess values or qualities that the rich are ready to pay for. For example, the poor who are highly talented in dancing may be invited to the gathering or occasion organized by the rich for a performance that will result in reasonable amount of money and recognition. Although characteristics of personal or community level of isolation and alienation are expressions of poverty argued by Ayoola et al (2001), the personal feelings and not characteristics of marginalisation were expressed by the respondents as poverty. Therefore, the concern is: can an individual have the feelings of being marginalised without corresponding physical evidences? The measurement of feelings in relation to poverty as marginalisation may prove difficult.

This thesis further shows that poverty could be understood as brain drain. Nigerians are found in almost all countries in Europe, America and Asia. This is often described as brain drain, especially when the majority of those migrating are

experts in various fields (National Population Commission, 2000). Most of the respondents have therefore come to conceptualize poverty on the basis of this phenomenon. The poor considered this as a welcome development since it would bring financial rewards to the family, and wished more of their family members could continue to migrate. On the other hand, the actors of APMs merely viewed this conceptualisation as an explanatory factor of poverty, since the costs of emigrated human capital, they argued, are higher than the financial benefits from the remittances. In other words, the actors of APMs were worried about human capital emigration while claiming that the value of the remittances itself was not large enough. The significantly negative impact of brain drain on the economy and human capital development of developing countries including Nigeria have been expressed by authors like Dodani and La Porte (2005), Agaptus (2011) and Muhammad et al. (2012). Although this argument, including the views of the respondents that poverty is a reason for brain drain, may be right and acceptable, the benefits of brain drain could outweigh the costs to Nigerian society.

A condition of absence of morals and lack of knowledge of God are considered as poverty by both the poor and APM actors mainly from religious organisations. The argument here is that if an individual is spiritually/morally poor, it is most likely he could be materially poor. Individuals who lack morals, according to the respondents exhibit attitudes of moral decadents. Respondents therefore associated lack of morality to poverty. However, it might be argued that the fact that one is morally poor may not make one to be financially poor. For example, social practices such as cultism, drugs abuse, gambling and indecent dressing, which depict immorality are being exhibited mostly by the rich youth. Similarly, respondents linked spiritual deficiency with lack of God's knowledge, and were of the opinion that such could lead to poverty. For these respondents, an individual who is poor in spirit is poor altogether. However, it can be argued that there are people who do not believe in the existence of a particular God, let alone having the fear or knowledge God, and who are very rich and living comfortably. Though past studies have argued that the issue of moral and spiritual poverty is present in some societies such as the US (see for example Durkheim, 1995; Chapra 2007; Osalor, 2012; Riwajanti, 2013) which may probably be attributed to personal negligence of the basic wisdom and

values; Nigerians' definition of poverty on the basis of morals and spiritual is associated with the belief that someone can be poor due to misfortune emanating from the unknown spirit or gods. If this opinion is held, then it becomes a challenging situation in the making of policies with which to fight such poverty in such a cultural milieu.

On the theme of peace and security, the central message of the World Bank report in relation to VoP is that legitimate institutions and governance should be strengthened to provide security to citizens, as one of the poor's major concerns is insecurity (see Narayan et al, 2000). This is different from the opinion of the respondents who were interested in personal financial capability in order to provide private security. Although a specific form of security was not mentioned by the respondents, their position of personal security might have been necessitated by the notions of general insecurity in the country; where it seems everyone is on his/her own in terms of providing security. The theme of security has also been argued as vital to the development of anti-poverty policies (Narayan et al (2000; Ayoola et al., 2001; Murray, 2003; Faleti, 2012). Generally, it has been established that there is a significant relationship between the absence of peace and feelings of insecurity and poverty conceptions in Nigeria. In other words, poverty is unanimously defined by the Nigerian poor as the absence of peace and security.

The respondents related lack of freedom to their inability or denial to express themselves, do jobs they are interested in, or mingle with associations of their choice. This theme is argued as relative because, for instance, the constitution of the country clearly specifies freedom in various areas including the ones mentioned by the respondents for all the citizens' enjoyment irrespective of financial status. However, in many contemporary capitalist societies, the challenge of societal status, power structures, consumption patterns and class position (Eastman et al., 1999), still determine who to mingle with, and the Nigerian society is not devoid of this ideology.

Above all, a situation whereby women are discriminated against and parents expose their children to hawking in lieu of education was conceived by the respondents as poverty. However, it can be argued that discriminating against

women on the basis of political appointment, as claimed by the APM actors may not necessarily be associated with poverty. There are number of women who are rich based on their individual businesses or positions occupied in the government as a result of their academic qualifications. But while the village respondents were concerned with issues like exclusion from property inheritance, without a mention of exclusion from political appointments; the APM actors emphasised discrimination against women on the basis of political opportunities.

The findings of this study revealed that there have been significant changes in poverty conceptualisation alongside the factors responsible for these changes in the country. For instance, things that were seen as valuable in the past like owning livestock and having many wives seem to be less relevant today. Owning livestock may still be important for rural folk, but this has been rendered mostly irrelevant for urban dwellers. Although people in urban areas do not deal in livestock today, they own industries and large commercial real estate. On the other hand, polygamy is out of fashion in almost everywhere except in Muslim dominated areas in the country (See for instance Elessin, 2013). These changes in the trends of polygamy in Nigeria are due to missionaries anti-polygamy position, premature death, inadequate resources to cater for the family, inability of the man to satisfy the sexual needs of the wives, inability of men to control the family, spiritual and physical attack, incessant quarrelling and bickering, personal stress, emotion and psychological disturbances, and loss of sense of security (Okorie, 1994:4; Aluko and Aransiola, 2003:181).

Other examples of changes pertain to material conditions. For instance, the quality of the dwelling and the use of means of transportation were factors being used to identifying a person as poor in the past. Due to the agrarian nature of most traditional societies in Nigeria, possession of basic things including shelter in large or small volume determined whether an individual was seen as rich or poor. Contemporarily, while an individual does not need to have abundance of housing units to be considered non-poor, an individual will be expected to acquire a large number of assets such as industries and huge capital before he can be deemed extremely rich in the country. This is connected with the system of capitalism that

characterizes modern Nigerian society. A possible explanation for this is that the country operates an economic system in which the means of production and distribution are for the most part privately owned and operated for private profit. There is massive possession and concentration of private capital which often results in power and influence. This by effect made people to conceptualize poverty as lack of high capital and ample assets. However, it can be argued that this is not enough to define poverty. For example, the “middle classes” also lack ample assets without being poor. Arguably too, there are no societies composed exclusively of either very wealthy or very poor people.

The study revealed poverty as reflection of both the poor state of Nigerian economy and the high rate of unemployment. This finding is premised on the argument of the FGDs’ participants and the APM actors that the country, in most cases, either designs wrong anti-poverty policies or implements poorly some seemingly good anti-poverty policies. That is, there is lack of policies geared towards industrialization and job creation despite a rapid increase in the country’s population and higher institutions’ graduates. This definition has largely continued to generate debates on the seriousness of the country as regards her efforts towards alleviating poverty via good policies. It is therefore inferable from this study’s findings that the respondents identify functional relationships between the state of Nigerian economy and unemployment with their understanding of poverty. Although this thesis underscores the fact that unemployment and poverty are universal phenomena and not necessarily a peculiar characteristic of any particular segment of the society, it argues that unemployment and poverty have direct link to economic challenges in the country. The wealth and employment generation sectors of the economy were not living up to the citizens’ expectations, perhaps, due to diversion of funds, thereby making poverty reduction difficult to achieve.

The research findings revealed some socio-political, religious, cultural and traditional practices prevalent in the Nigerian society, which contribute to various conceptions of poverty. This includes, to a large extent, a leaning toward religion and belief in cultural and traditional institutions as well as superstitions on the part of many Nigerians. For example, poverty is viewed as a vital condition that

“qualifies one for the kingdom of God” after death, and that if one is poor on earth, he will be rich in heaven. This could render the poor who hold on to this religious belief to be content with their poverty and limit their efforts at escaping it. Another instance is that poverty is linked to a curse from the gods. It is believed that this could continue to recycle within a family from one generation to another to the extent that it will be considered as their divine fate which they must live with. These are some of the beliefs and superstitions that the poor embrace, and on which they often base their definitions of poverty. Despite the amount of interventional efforts coming from the government and APOs, these religious, cultural and traditional beliefs and practices are still evolving and have metamorphosed to serve as definitions of poverty in the country. Like every other ethnic nationality, Nigeria has got its own religious and cultural attributes by which the ethnic nationality is known and identified. The inter-play of these cultural attributes such as religion or belief system, norms or rules of behavior, language, history and artifacts largely determine the nature and the level of poverty of the people. For example, people hold on to the belief that an individual or community may be naturally destined to be poor. But there were exceptional cases where few individuals would emerge very rich from such communities. It follows that if people would discard these beliefs and practices upon which their understandings of poverty are based, it would help them to escape from perpetual poverty.

The definitions of poverty presented by the poor and APM actors revealed some perceived causes of poverty in Nigeria. For instance, it was found from the respondents’ definitions of poverty that a high rate of illiteracy in the traditional Nigerian society resulted in protracted poverty. Although illiteracy as causal factor is important in the contemporary Nigerian society just like in the past, the focus on it has been reduced to some extent because of the values that are attached to education in the country today. Despite this reduction in the focus on illiteracy and increase in the values attached to education, the high cost of higher education, which many poor families could not afford, is a condition to worry about.

Equally, corruption was drawn from the definitions as a contemporary cause of poverty occasioned by poor political leadership and a culture of impunity. This

phenomenon was further considered among the factors responsible for the poor growth of the Nigerian economy, socio-economic stagnation and increase in poverty level. For instance, Nigeria scores high in the Corruption Perception Index and low in the Human Development Index in the recent times (see Bourne, 2015). This simply implies that, because the incidence of corruption is high, investment in citizens' welfare is low. Extreme poverty will be the end result of a society where the economy is poorly managed. The private sector, which has carried out capital projects on contract basis at national, state and local government levels in the country, cannot be exonerated as it has also been involved in corruption, either in the form of kickbacks, non-performance, or under-declaration of internal operations including profits.

From the definitions, over-population was also extracted as a cause of poverty in the country. Although simple economic arguments would suggest that rapid population growth aggravates poverty, the relationship between over-population and poverty is arguably conflicting. For example, despite the fact that over-population could bring about increase in workforce and productivity, it could also hold down returns to labour relative to capital and other factors of production, depressing wages and worsening the income distribution. Similarly, rapid population growth may be a consequence of advances in health, indicating broad-based welfare improvement in a society. But arguably, societies may be in an economic disorder that continued impoverishment coexists with virtually zero population growth. Though poverty is linkable to over-population-related factors like environmental changes, social instabilities and unemployment, this thesis argues that no pieces of theory could suffice to demonstrate a strong connection between over-population and poverty.

Above all, despite the visible level of poverty in rural areas, the migration of people to particularly urban areas in search of better living standards has seemingly compounded the situation of poverty. Rural-urban migration can be identified as a survival strategy utilized by the poor rural dwellers. For example, the rural-urban migrants send remittances to their relatives in the rural areas and these remittance-receiving households use the funds for various purposes like school fees and basic

items at home. However, rural-urban migration which pulls a lot of rural dwellers especially youths to the urban areas usually results in youth unavailability to help carry out house chores and assist their parents in their trade and profession. In particular, youth unavailability has resulted to lack of labour force to work on the farms, thereby leading to low agricultural produce and low standard of living in such areas.

This thesis revealed that actors from APOs studied have adopted different strategies with a view to reducing poverty in Nigeria. The measures used by these actors were found to have been informed by various conceptualisations of poverty. For instance, it is generally believed by the respondents that the majority of the poor in Nigeria are suffering from inadequate knowledge and vital information; even where the knowledge and information is scantily available, the poor often lack access to it and this is unanimously described as poverty. It has been argued that lack of access to information can make the poor to get impoverished the more (Britz, 2007; Harande, 2009; Blattman and Miguel, 2010; Stewart and Fitzgerald, 2000). In view of this, some private APOs claimed they have started providing information to the poor on technical budget and policy issues.

The findings of this thesis revealed the connection between the conception of poverty as lack of basic human needs, lack of access to finance and absence of empowerment. These informed the adoption of measures like seminars, trainings and workshops, as well as strategies of soft lending by APOs as means of enabling the poor, especially those who are mostly rural and small farmers. Furthermore, the findings showed that the motivation for church organisations to embark on programs of spiritual renewal and retreats, as well as the establishment of mission schools, was borne out of, amongst others, the understanding that the myriad of social problems compounding the phenomenon of poverty in the society might have emanated from lack of morals and spiritual poverty.

The actors of APM also employed the strategy of entrepreneurialism with a view to training the poor in economic activities or other forms of skill acquisition. This was based on the APM actors' understanding that the poor lack access to entrepreneurship skills with which they could move out of poverty. Poverty is also

understood by APM actors as the failure of Nigerian government to recognize and consider the opinions of the poor in the course of designing and implementing poverty reduction policies. It is in view of this that some actors of APMs adopted inclusive measures like direct intervention and consultations with the poor. However, based on the views of the participants from the FGDs, that funds meant for the poor are often embezzled by some of these APM actors, the claims of these APOs become worrisome and show, to some extent, that these APM actors might not really be interested in the poor. To a large extent, these actions of the APMs actors might end up creating poverty rather than fight the scourge of poverty.

Internal tension, understood as a disagreement or conflict within APOs in the understanding of poverty and the modalities for addressing needs of the poor as identified was found to have some implications for poverty reduction measures and efforts, especially in relation to authority, hierarchy and decision-making. For example, some correspondents stated that there were both the superior officers and field workers within an organization whose ideas and strategies regarding practical reduction of poverty were conflicting based on their different areas of duties. The methods of planning and executing organizations' programmes as designed by the superior officers may often run contrary to the approaches of the field workers who have had direct experience with the poor. This internal tension, however, varies from organisation to organisation. Indeed, conflicting strategies are not enough to explain internal tension within an APO. While internal tension in many organisations is linked to governing authority, planning approaches, opinions and poor management in literature (see Chritoplos, 1995; Carney, 1996; Thevenot, 2006; Anderson et al., 2007), this thesis specifically found from respondents, divergent personal/selfish interest on the part of superior officers, corruption in terms of funds diversion, and lack of trust among members of staff as factors fuelling internal tension within APOs in the country.

The study also found external tension between different APOs as a result of ownership structures and the underlying interests, conceptions as well as the modalities for the implementation of intervention which differ. For example, respondents remarked on conflict of interest between government and non-

governmental APOs, whereby the former often have a particular purpose and period regarding the implementation of anti-poverty programmes differing from the latter. The relationship between both groups, according to respondents, was also characterized by corruption, whereby government organisations demand financial inducements before support is given to non-governmental APOs towards a particular poverty alleviation programme. Though APM actors who are noted for engaging in voluntary services are not expected to be involved in this act, if this were the case, it could be argued that non-governmental APOs would find it difficult to render effective services towards poverty reduction in the country.

The above findings on conflicts and tensions resulting from the pluralism associated with the definitions of poverty confirm the findings on the pluralism of Agricultural Extension in Vietnam (Christoplos, 1995); the analysis on the pluralism in the understanding of Social Capital (Oyen, 2002); the study on the pluralism of the Forestry Concepts and Rural Development in America (Anderson et al. 2007); and the work on the pluralism of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in the United State of America (Hoffman, 2011); amongst others. These findings confirmed the certainty of conflicting opinions on some policies and decisions embedded in pluralism, which has become a challenge for many organisations and institutions. This is because there are visible different values and divergent perceptions by which the changes that characterize various interests and ideologies within organisations are described. These findings therefore revealed that there is need for the awareness of this pluralism since it would aid actors of APMs from various APOs to acknowledge and embrace the culture of collective responsibilities and functions. Although pluralism may be seemingly confusing, it was confirmed in the findings of the above authors that identification of common variables, functions and concerns is required so that different understandings and approaches used by various APOs might lead to a more effective way of managing these tensions.

Arguing on the negative and positive consequences of pluralism, Stryker (2000:201) and Heimer (1999) clearly state that pluralism brings the potential for incoherency, fragmentation, goal-ambiguity, conflict and sometimes organisational

instability; thereby creating tensions among organisations or within organisations (see also Oyen, 2002; Anderson et al. 2007; Hoffman, 2011). However, Christoplos (1995:11) has argued positively that acquiring awareness of pluralism gives room to institutional actors to accept that it may be somewhat difficult for them to perform and co-ordinate all the functions and activities. He underlines the fact that, by acknowledging pluralism, a basis is created that provides avenues for bringing together actors from different institutions and organisations for discussions, co-ordinations and implementations (Christoplos, 1995:11). Hence, pluralism entails not an invitation to expand planning and implementation efforts, but an acknowledgement that our conceptions, definitions, plans and implementations are not the only ones in existence out there (Christoplos, 1995:12). He thus concludes that, the potential tensions and conflicts arising as a result of pluralism in concepts are likely to instigate individuals as well as actors at the collective level to develop the ability to manage these tensions and conflicts. However, the possibility of this in the case of Nigeria, where APOs accuse each other of following other objectives, especially organisational or personal objectives, other than the main objectives of helping the poor is worrisome. Further research might offer some possible solutions towards managing these tensions and conflicts resulting from the pluralism in the understanding of poverty and implementation of APMs in Nigeria.

This thesis gathered that APOs are usually confronted with various forms of intra- and inter- organisational challenges in the course of their operations relating to anti-poverty strategies or interactions with others regarding implementation of APMs. Most of these APOs are mainly the NGOs and religious organisations. The intra-organisational challenges, as reported by respondents, are dearth of finances, insufficient resources or lack of sponsors; poor information and infrastructural accessibility. For instance, some religious APOs complained of dearth of finances and sponsors as challenges mitigating their efforts towards poverty reduction. These claims, as it were, might not really be convincing as most of these religious APOs are owned by pastors, most of whom are known to be in the list of the richest men in Nigeria, and sometimes in West Africa and beyond (see for example, Essien, 2010; Iyayi, 2013). The argument here is that it would be ironical

if the owner of an APO is visibly rich, but claims it cannot function efficiently because of financial challenges.

On the other hand, the inter-organisational challenges include: cultural and religious barriers; stringent government policies and government interference and stealing of intervention materials meant for the poor. For instance, some organisations claimed they had in some occasions been confronted in the Northern part of the country during immunization programmes as a result of cultural and religious barriers. At some occasions, some government respondents claimed they have been attacked and some of their members killed by the “Boko Haram” sect who see this programme as (sinful) and as part of the Western culture which must be rejected (see for instance Walker, 2012). Therefore, while the understanding of immunization was seen in the Northern part as anti-cultural and anti-religious activities, the other parts of the country especially the Eastern and Western parts conceived it as values to their health. Arguably, though there was a likelihood of some co-existing “reverse causality” such that the rise in poverty might have added extra fuel to the outburst of political violence, and this explains the reason for the rise in poverty in the Northern part of the country. This might alter the concept of poverty in this part of the country. However, this thesis might not make such a conclusion as two zones (North-East and North-West) in this part of the country were not included in this study due to ‘Boko Haram’ crisis.

10.3 Dominant themes in poverty conceptualisations among the respondents

One of the most common themes in the conceptualisation of poverty among the respondents is lack of social amenities. This is often the case in a number of countries described by past literature as suffering from extreme poverty (see for instance Narayan et al., 1999; Narayan et al., 2000; Narayan and Petesch, 2002; Unwin, 2008; WDR, 2000/2001; Hope, 2004). It follows that Nigeria, though richly blessed with huge biodiversity and natural resources, is not unique in this situation.

Another common theme is the neglect of the poor’s participation in programs aimed at them. The strategies relating to the design and execution of anti-poverty

programmes are often carried out without consulting with the potential beneficiaries to be part of the processes. In other words, there is lack of recognition or respect for the poor in Nigeria (See Narayan et al., 2000; Forno, 2008; Handley et al. 2009) and poverty is generally conceived on this basis. This lack of participation has often resulted in the implementation of anti-poverty activities which have failed to address or reduce poverty in the country. Although many of the poverty reduction strategies adopted in the country over the years since independence have yielded little results (CBN, 2009; Ekpe, 2011; Uchendu, 2012; CBN, 2014), neglect of the poor's participation in program and policies could not be argued in this thesis as the sole factors responsible for the failure.

Discrimination is also highlighted across respondents as a common definition of poverty in Nigeria, but in different forms. For instance, respondents see the gap between the rich and the poor in the country, especially when it comes to social activities as becoming wide and visible. This situation seemingly prevents the poor from participating in profitable activities which may not only give them recognition but reduce their poverty level. This form of discrimination has been argued across respondents to be visible in terms of social exclusion which may prevent a particular group of people from engaging fully in the socio-cultural, economic and political life of the society (see also Narayan, 1999; Adato et al., 2006; UN, 2010; Ogundipe and Edewor, 2012).

Specifically, poverty was conceived across the respondents along class discrimination, gender discrimination, social isolation of women and insensitivity to children (see also Eastman et al., 1999; Ayoola, 2001; Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke, 2003 UNICEF, 2007; UNDP, 2009; Holmes and Jones, 2010). For example, the issue of gender has particularly characterised Nigerian society and was found as an explanatory theme for poverty. This may be noticed in a situation where females are denied educational opportunity or married as "full time" house wives. This is partly supported in past studies where it is argued that poverty can be defined on the basis of gender, culture, age, race, and ethnicity (Narayan et al., 2000; UN, 2010). Although there are different forms of discrimination, a situation whereby women were denied access to education was a general practice embraced

amongst almost all the tribes in Nigeria. The result of this is poverty accumulation, especially on the part of women. However, discrimination with regard to property inheritance seems not to be common, as there is an instance from the respondents which holds that females do have the right to inherit the property of their fathers in some tribes in Nigeria.

10.4 Contribution of the findings

This study complements other approaches on poverty study in Nigeria, especially in relation to other research with participatory approaches conducted by Narayan et al. (1999); Narayan et al. (2000); Ayoola et al. (2001); Narayan and Petesch (2002); Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke (2003); and WDR (2000/2001). The data in this thesis are interpreted in the light of the “Conceptual Plurality Approach” (CPA). This methodological perspective describes the concept of poverty from the trajectories of the poor and the APM actors, and captures how the principal definitions of poverty are identified, by bringing together the “voices of the poor” with the “voices of the APM actors”.

This thesis contributes to the broader literature on poverty by employing CPA in order to overcome some limits in past studies on poverty, exploring the pluralism regarding the understanding of poverty from the poor and APM actors, and examining the implications of this pluralism to the efforts at alleviating poverty. Equally, CPA is used in this thesis with a view to extracting the similarities and differences in the definitions of poverty as found across the respondents.

The different ways in which people describe poverty are present in the literature, especially in relation to Nigeria (See for instance Narayan et al. 1999; Narayan et al. 2000; Ayoola et al. 2001; Narayan and Petesch 2002; Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke 2003; and WDR 2000/2001). However, there is very little discussion of the historical changes underpinning the understanding of poverty as well as factors responsible for these changes in this literature. Hence, this thesis fills this gap by discussing these historical changes and the factors responsible for them as revealed by the poor and APM actors, in the Nigerian context.

The thesis finds that, indeed, the understanding of poverty in the country has evolved from what it used to be “in the olden days”. For instance, the inability to possess large hectares of farm lands, abundant livestock, many wives and children that was used to define poverty in the past is no longer characteristic of the concept today. Likewise, capitalism and education have changed people’s definition of poverty. In other words, CPA added to the study of poverty and brought to limelight this dynamism in the local experiences, perceptions, understanding and conceptualisation of poverty from the voices of the poor, and APM actors within a particular society.

Additionally, this study contributes to the literature with its revelation of the implications of this pluralism for poverty reduction efforts; specifically, in the form of conflicts of interest and ideologies, which exist among the different organizations as well as within a particular organization. It also investigates the possibilities of addressing these conflicts and tensions.

Traditional, cultural and non-material understandings of poverty are another contribution made by CPA to the understanding of poverty in Nigeria. For instance, cultural practices, especially “OSU” as well as widowhood practices and child marriage, which were not situated as conceptual explanations of poverty in the past literature, (see for example Narayan et al. 1999; Narayan et al. 2000; Ayoola et al. 2001; Narayan and Petesch 2002; Ali-Akpajiak and Pyke 2003; WDR, 2000/2001), have been revealed by this study as poverty definitions in Nigeria. Similarly, historical or generational poverty from the perspective of ancestral curses is notable and contributory to the existing literature on the conception of poverty.

In addition, the moral and spiritual dimension of poverty is also added to the literature as ways to conceptualize poverty in Nigeria. This is an additional dimension to the existing conceptions of poverty. Interestingly, this was reckoned by respondents as one of the major sources of economic poverty and every other form of social problems. Although moral poverty was premised on attitudinal factors such as robbery, dishonesty, violence and other social vices, this thesis gathered from respondents that this situation is visible not only in the poor’s attitudes but also in the rich’s especially in a country like Nigeria. For example,

wealthy people such as politicians can be dishonest, engage in “robbery” via embezzlement of public funds while some children from non-poor families might belong to cultist groups in schools thereby causing violence. However convincing these assumptions may be, one thing is obvious: not all APM actors are religious, as it is the case globally. Hence, it might not easily be accepted that lack of morals or spiritual poverty is the major source of economic poverty and other forms of social problems. The implication of this can be the outright rejection of designing and implementing policies with which to encounter these moral/spiritual lapses. In other words, government or Western/international NGOs could find it challenging to build their ant-poverty programmes on the claim/belief that poverty is as a result of ancestral curses, disobedient to God/gods, spiritual forces, amongst others.

10.5 Review of research process and outcomes

This thesis is an exploratory study and it employed FGDs and interviews. The opinions on the understanding of poverty from a considerable number of poor people and APM actors across the different geo-political zones and APOs in Nigeria were gathered; and documents on policies concerning poverty were referenced. The researcher had a successful experience during the fieldwork, especially in terms of a robust relationship and cooperation enjoyed in the course of the interviews with individual persons, government, private and religious organizations as well as FGDs across the four geo-political zones. The respondents gave quality answers in accordance with the survey questions. This is made possible perhaps by virtue of the poor’s adulthood, adequate knowledge of their societal history and familiarity with their environments as well as the APM actors’ level of education, years of operational experience and field interaction with the poor.

However, the thesis was not without some limitations. For instance, in the course of data collection, it was not easy for the researcher to travel to different zones in the country due to insecurity, mainly from ‘Boko Haram’ in the far North, and ‘kidnapping’ in the Niger Delta areas. Gaining access to Muslim communities was a real setback. Besides, there was the setback caused by lack of finance as some

participants demanded incentives, especially from NGOs, before they could grant interviews. In the absence of incentives for those who demanded them, a few of the potential participants declined while the rest yielded to the researcher's persuasion and friendly attitude and offered as much information as they could. It was not a different story from FGDs, as a small minority of participants, upon learning that there would not be monetary incentives, decided to bow out or remained without contributing much. Above all, it was a significant task travelling to most of the villages due to deplorable roads. The villages are in the remote areas and the researcher opted for bicycle as a means of transportation which was not considered safe enough.

10.6 Future lines of inquiry

The various definitions of poverty revealed across the poor and APM actors in this thesis could be analysed by future study with a view to deducing strategies for policy formulation and measures for poverty reduction. Future study could also examine the implication of various challenges confronting APM actors on anti-poverty policies and implementation. This becomes necessary in order to avoid policy summersault as a result of inter and intra-organisational problems.

Besides, a quantitative assessment could be employed in future study to triangulate "voices of the poor" and the "voices of the APM actors" with other data sources in order to find how different conditions relate to people's perceptions, definitions, opinions, and concerns on the issue of poverty. In addition, triangulations of factors constituting the definitions of poverty across the respondents could be carried out with a view to testing the veracity of the respondents' views. Most importantly, the significant relationship between government and non-governmental APOs could be studied in the future, so as to know whether the relationship is antithetical or beneficial to poverty reduction efforts. The allegation of intra-corruption or inter-corruption revealed as characterising the relationship between both groups could be probed in particular.

Although this study revealed the linkages between poverty and its causal factors, further research is needed to identify the full evidence of these linkages, as well as establish how these causal factors relate to the issues of pluralism in the

understanding of poverty. The findings of this study also revealed significant changes in poverty conceptualisation including the factors responsible for these changes across time in the country. Further research could also be needed to confirm these changes as they are vital to understanding the dynamism of poverty conceptualisations.

Generally, this thesis may not constitute a definite answer to the question of the conceptual pluralism of poverty. There is need for further research in related areas. For instance, this is a single-country case study, Nigeria with selected zones; basically for the purpose of limited time and resources of a PhD thesis. Future research should cover the unvisited area(s) in the country; namely, the northern region. It is understandable that they are mainly Muslim, and one of the themes that emerged is religion, spiritual poverty, folk rituals and beliefs, among others. But due to the coverage problems, much about Muslim views, Muslim NGOs, Muslim clergy, folk rituals among the mainly Hausa population, and how these relate to poverty conceptualisations, definitions and reduction strategies remain unknown. This is important in order to establish a valid generalization across the country.

Above all, debates on the conceptual pluralism in the understanding of poverty and the implications of this pluralism on poverty reduction efforts should be explored and expanded extensively in the literature by poverty scholars. Specifically, these implications in the forms of external and internal tensions discovered by this thesis, which exist among the different organizations as well as within a particular organization, could be investigated further. Further research might offer some more robust possible solutions towards managing these tensions and conflicts resulting from the pluralism in the understanding of poverty and implementation of APMs in Nigeria.

10.7 Conclusion

This study has presented an exploratory view on the conceptual pluralism in the understanding of poverty and its implications for poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria. In doing this, it explores different conceptions of poverty, highlighting the

differences and similarities, the characteristics of a poor and non-poor person as well as the different understanding concerning the causes and factors contributing to poverty. The changes and underlying drivers in the conceptualisations of poverty are also noted. In discussing the activities of the APOs, the study links their conceptualisation of poverty with measures and strategies adopted to combat poverty. The implications and challenges of this pluralism of poverty are also highlighted, while a change of attitude both from the people, community and APOs is advocated.

In conclusion, a pluralism of concepts exists both within institutions and among individuals on a daily basis. Pluralism is acknowledged as a growing reality at the local, national and international levels, where there are different organisations and institutions with divergent opinions and logics (Hoffman, 2011). The reason for pluralism in the understanding of poverty might be based on an appreciable range of political, economic, and social interests shown by different actors, groups and stakeholders. Therefore, these potential tensions and conflicts arising as from conceptual pluralism are likely to instigate individuals as well as actors at the collective level to develop the ability to manage these conflicts. In this way, it becomes crucial for individuals and collective actors to be knowledgeable about their institutions as well as their environments. (Stark, 2009:33).

Irrespective of the potentials of incoherency, fragmentation, goal-ambiguity, conflicts and sometimes organisational instabilities that pluralism of concepts tends to foster (Stryker, 2000; Heimer, 1999), there is still need to assimilate these differences and tensions and work together towards combating the challenges of poverty.

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Appendix 1: Research Ethics Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

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Louis Nwabueze Ezeilo

LUBS

University of Leeds

Leeds, LS2 9JT

AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee

University of Leeds

25 November 2016

Dear Louis

Title of study: **Conceptual Pluralism in the understanding of Poverty: A case study of Nigeria.**

Ethics reference: **AREA 11-218 Amendment May 2013**

I am pleased to inform you that your amendment to the research application list above has been reviewed by the Chair of the ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	*Version*	*Date*
AREA 11-218 AMENDMENT FORM 2.doc	2	14/05/13
AREA 11-218 Amendment May 2013 OLD ETHIS APPLICATION FORM.docx	1	14/05/13

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any further amendments to the original research as submitted at date of this approval, including changes to recruitment methodology. All changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at

http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/info/71/good_research_practice/105/managing_your_approved_project/3.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited. There is a checklist listing examples of documents to be kept which is available at

http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/info/71/good_research_practice/105/managing_your_approved_project/4.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Blaikie

Senior Research Ethics Administrator, Research & Innovation Service

On behalf of Dr Emma Cave, Chair, AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee

CC: Student's supervisor(s)

Appendix 2: Research themes and questions for FGDs

Below are the questions for the FGDs which have been formulated following the developed themes.

1.1 General understandings of poverty

The following research questions will be addressing the above theme:

- What are the different understandings of poverty in Nigeria and in which ways and to what extent are there similarities and differences in this understanding between the poor and the actors of APMs from within and across the different APOs?

In answering the above research question under this theme, we have designed the following sub-questions for:

1. We talk about poverty every day and we hear that over the news in televisions and radios. What actually do you understand by the word poverty?
2. Could you give us your own local understandings of poverty?
3. In what ways do we experience poverty?

Other questions include:

- Who is a poor person?
- What characterizes a poor person?
- When would you call someone a poor person?
- Who is a non-poor and what characterizes a non-poor person?

1.2 Patterns of and trends in the understandings of poverty and poverty reduction

Below is the research question that will be addressing the above themes:

- How have these various understandings of poverty in Nigeria changed across time and why?

The following sub-questions will be used in addressing the above research question and theme:

4. Are there changes in the way your parents or grandparents understood/perceived poverty from your understanding of poverty today?

5. Looking back to your early years, would you explain the difference between the way poverty was understood then and the way it is understood now?
6. Why these changes in the understandings and what have necessitated them?

1.3 Factors underpinning various understandings of poverty/dimensions and causes of poverty in Nigeria

The following research questions will be addressing the above themes:

- What are the core dimensions and causes of poverty that could be deduced from these various understandings of poverty in Nigeria?
- What are the various socio-economic factors, political factors, religious and cultural beliefs that contribute to these conceptions and understandings of poverty in Nigeria and are these factors variant over time?

The following sub-questions will be used here:

7. What dimensions of poverty are locally significant to an understanding of poverty in your community?
8. What are the causes of poverty and its subsequent effects based on your various understandings of poverty?
9. How does poverty make life difficult/impart on your life?
10. What in your understanding are the socio-economic factors, political factors, cultural factors and other factors including religious beliefs that explain and shape a particular understanding of poverty?
11. Are these factors the same or have they changed across time and how have these changes affected the understandings of poverty?

1.4 Poverty measures and its linkages with poverty concepts

Under this theme, we will be addressing the following research questions:

- What are the linkages between poverty conceptualisations and the accompanying strategies and policies for its reduction and to what extent are these concepts of poverty informing the measures used by the actors of APMs in Nigeria.
- Are there changes across time in the ways actors (government and non-government) incorporate a particular concept of poverty in drafting policies

and strategies for poverty reduction and what have necessitated these changes?

Basically this theme concerns mostly the actors of APMs and as such we have only few questions here for the FGDs:

12. What opportunities, freedoms and empowerment do you think you are given by the government and other private organisations to be able to achieve what you want to achieve and in developing your ability to be able to do or be what you want to be so as to live a minimum acceptable level of life?
13. Could you tell us of the institutional arrangements, the programs and strategies you are aware of, that the government and private institutions as well as religious organisations offer via their agencies responsible for poverty alleviation to address the issues of these basic needs, education, infrastructural services, empowerment, support of the ability to be or do what people want to do or be, and what impacts have these policies had in the peoples life either as individuals or communities?

The above questions are simplified as follow:

- How do the government, private and religious organisations relate and treat the poor and what is their thinking about the poor?
- Do they do something to address the concerns of the poor?
- What sorts of help do they render you to alleviate your difficulties, concerns and problems against poverty?

14. How assessable to the poor are the services provided by the government and other agencies responsible for poverty reduction?

1.5 Actors and the people

Under this theme, we will mainly be finding out the relationship between the various actors and the people whom they aim to help. Thus, the following questions will be used here:

15. Which actors or institutions do you value most and why?
16. If you are called up today to advice these organisations on its policy on poverty alleviation, what will your advice be on how the government and

other actors can improve its efforts in the fight against poverty putting into considerations the various understandings of poverty we have discussed?

1.6 Other probing questions

The following additional questions are added in case time permits and may also be used as probing questions:

17. Having thus come this far in our discussion, how do you assess the efforts and the relationship between the poor and the government organisation and other private and religious organisations in response to poverty and its alleviation in the last few years?
18. Tell us about your greatest joys and disappointments with regard to these organisations and their policies for poverty alleviation and how would you like to be helped?
19. Thank you for your time. Do you think we are missing anything? Is there anything that you came wanting to say that you did not get a chance to say?

Appendix 3: Research themes and questions for interviews

Below are the questions for interviews which have been formulated following the developed themes. These questions will be used for all the actors on APMs and other individuals interviewed.

1.1 General understandings of poverty

The following research questions will be addressing the above theme:

- What are the different understandings of poverty in Nigeria and in which ways and to what extent are there similarities and differences in this understanding between the poor and the actors of anti-poverty measures from within and across the different anti-poverty organisations?

The following questions will be used in addressing the above research question and theme:

1. We talk about poverty every day and we hear that over the news in televisions and radios. With your experiences so far in your work and with your colleague, what actually do you understand by the word poverty?
   - What is a poor person and what is the difference between a poor person and a non-poor person?
2. Poverty is today considered by a lot of people to be multi-dimensional. What do you think are the alternative understandings that contribute to this multi-dimensionality?
   - How do the actors (NGOs, Churches, Government, donors) understand poverty?
   - How do other actors understand poverty?
3. To what extent do you think there are differences in the way the poor understand poverty from the way you do and what do you think are the differences?
   - Does everyone in the government, your organisation understand poverty in the same way?
   - What are the differences between your organisation (Government, NGOs, Churches) and donors with regard to the understanding of poverty

- How does your (government, NGOs, church) understanding of poverty differ from the donors understanding of poverty?
- In your organisation how does your understanding of poverty differ from the directors/those in charge in the understandings of poverty

1.2 Patterns of and trends in the understandings of poverty and poverty reduction

Below is the research question that will be addressing the above themes:

- How have these various understandings of poverty in Nigeria changed across time and why?

The following sub-questions will be used under this theme to address the above research questions:

4. According to your experience and to the best of your knowledge, how have these understandings of poverty which you (Govt., NGOs, and Church) have explained changed across time?
5. Why do you think these changes happen in the understandings of poverty and what have necessitated them?
6. If we change the ways we measure and understand poverty, could these affect the APMs in Nigeria?

1.3 Factors underpinning various understandings of poverty/dimensions and causes of poverty in Nigeria

The following research questions will be addressing the above themes:

- What are the core dimensions and causes of poverty that could be deduced from these various understandings of poverty in Nigeria?
- What are the various socio-economic factors, political factors, religious and cultural beliefs that contribute to these conceptions and understandings of poverty in Nigeria and are these factors variant over time?

The following questions will be used here:

7. What are the causes of poverty and its subsequent effects based on your various understandings of poverty?

8. What in your understanding are the socio-economic factors, political factors, cultural factors and other factors including religious beliefs that explain and shape a particular understanding of poverty?
9. Are these factors the same or have they changed across time and how have these changes affected the understandings of poverty?

1.4 Poverty measures and its linkages with poverty concepts

Under this theme, we will be addressing the following research questions:

- What are the linkages between poverty conceptualisations and the accompanying strategies and policies for its reduction and to what extent are these concepts of poverty informing the measures used by the actors of APMs in Nigeria.
- Are there changes across time in the ways actors (government and non-government) incorporate a particular concept of poverty in drafting policies and strategies for poverty reduction and what have necessitated these changes?

The following questions are used here:

10. What are the various strategies and APMs being advocated by your organisation as means of addressing poverty challenges?
11. To what extent are your activities and efforts on APMs stemming from the understandings of poverty?

- What are the links between the understandings of poverty and the activities of the APMs?

12. What dimensions of poverty are not taken into consideration when drawing out these anti-poverty measures and why?
13. What is the motivation/justification behind using as priorities a particular concept of poverty to address poverty reduction in Nigeria?
14. How long does activity of a particular concept of poverty lasts before another one is introduced and what accounts for these changes?

1.5 Challenges faced by the various actors of anti-poverty measures

The following questions are used addressing the above themes:

- What implications do you think these various meanings of poverty might tend to pose within and across the various APOs and how do these implications if any affect the implementations of APMs?
- What are the major challenges faced in the implementations of APMs by various actors as a result of the various understandings and conceptions of poverty within their own and in their interactions with others?
- What are the difficulties involved when one concept of poverty changes and a new concept is adopted towards poverty reduction in Nigeria?

The following questions are considered appropriate here:

15. Could you briefly discuss with me the tensions/conflicts/difficulties that may likely exist in the ways your organisation as an actor of APMs understand poverty, as well as other actors in other organisations?
- What are the tensions in the understanding of poverty and its activities among the various actors and within your own organisation?
- Do you talk and discuss about these differences within your organisation/team?

16. What are the difficulties you encounter when one concept of poverty changes and a new one adopted towards poverty reduction in Nigeria?
17. What accounts for these tensions/difficulties/conflicts?
18. To the best of your knowledge could you explain to me if these tensions/conflicts have remained the same or whether they have varied or changed across time?
19. How do you assess the impacts of these tensions/conflicts on APMs in Nigeria?
20. Could these tensions/conflicts in anti-poverty measures be addressed or not and how?
21. Think of all we have said today and tell me what your challenges and difficulties are in the course of implementations of APMs due to these differences between the way you/policy makers understand poverty and the way the poor understand poverty?

1.6 Actors and the people

Under this theme, we will mainly be probing into the relationship between the various actors and the people whom they aim to help. Thus, the following questions will be used here:

22. How does your organisation involve or plan/seek to involve the poor in the rural areas as active partners in policies and programmes that affect poverty and its alleviation?

1.7 Specific questions

1.7.1 Government organisations

1. How would you, in your opinion, assess the efforts of the private and religious organisations as regards poverty alleviation in Nigeria in the last few years?

2. Your organisation I believe is working together with private and religious organisations with regard to poverty alleviation. How would you describe such a relationship?

3. Is there any other thing you would want me to know or any document you would want me to have so as to complement all that you have said to me and probably offers more opportunity for me to learn more?

1.7.2 Religious organisations

1. How would you, in your opinion, assess the efforts of the government and private organisations as regards poverty alleviation in Nigeria in the last few years?

2. The church as a religious organisation, I believe, is working together with government and private organisations with regard to poverty alleviation. How would you describe such a relationship?

3. If you are given the chance to advise the government organisations and other NGOs, what will your advice be and how will you want them to address the issues of poverty and its alleviation?

4. Is there any other thing you would want me to know or any document you would want me to have so as to complement all that you have said to me and probably offers more opportunity for me to learn more?

1.7.3 Private organisations

1. How would you, in your opinion, assess the efforts of the government and religious organisations as regards poverty alleviation in Nigeria in the last few years?

2. Your organisation I believe is working together with government and religious organisations with regard to poverty alleviation. How would you describe such a relationship?

3. If you are given a chance to advise the government organisations and other NGOs as well as religious organizations, what will your advice be and how will you want them to address the issues of poverty and its alleviation?

4. Is there any other thing you would want me to know or any document you would want me to have so as to complement all that you have said to me and probably offers more opportunity for me to learn more?

Appendix 4: Brief introduction before FGDs

Good morning/afternoon/evening and welcome to our FGD meeting. I thank you for your decision in joining this meeting to discuss some relevant issues on poverty. My name is Louis Ezeilo, a student of the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom. I am conducting this meeting to help me in the investigation about the understandings and meanings of poverty in Nigeria and its implications for poverty reduction. I would want you to feel free and tell us what your views, thoughts and opinions are about the issue we are about discussing. I am conducting the same meeting in all the four geopolitical zones and regions in Nigeria.

Let me state clearly that there are no wrong or right answers and feel free to voice your opinions even if it differs from other people's opinions. The more different opinions we obtain the better for us. We are also interested in both positive and negative answers as these will also help us in our investigations.

I would want also to bring to your notice the issue of confidentiality and anonymity so that you feel free to let us know your opinions. I once again assure you of complete confidentiality. Nevertheless, ensuring confidentiality does not include information that is criminal in nature" for such will be reported to the appropriate authority. We also want to let you know that we are recording our discussion and as part of the confidentiality spoken about, the report will not feature anybody's name or any name attached to a comment. You will remain anonymous. I am doing this just to help us make adequate reports since I will not be able to write all that is said down and I will not want to miss out any vital information you will be providing me. The duration for this meeting will be 1 to 2 hours long.

Therefore, before we start I will want to suggest something that may be of help to all of us here and make our discussion more productive. I will want everybody who wants to talk to speak out and avoid talking when someone else is talking so that we can have a proper record of what is being said. We will endeavour not to criticize others but will try to respect others' ideas.

I am here not to participate in the discussion but to ask questions and listen to your contributions. There are name cards on each table to allow us remember each other's name. I will go round now and try to look at your names but still want you to

remember that your names will not be used for anything whatsoever in making our final reports.

Finally before we begin I will like to get your consent on all that we have explained to you so that there is no room for compulsion because participation is voluntary as we explained to you on the first day we met with you all.

We will now begin and when you want to say something, please do well to tell us your name and what you do. Thank you once more and we hope we are going to make out something today from our meeting.

Appendix 5: Consent Form for FGD

Consent to participate in FGDs and interviews on the Conceptual pluralism in the understanding of poverty: A case study of Nigeria.

	Initials will be added here.
I confirm that I have read or that it has been read to me and that I understand the information sheet/letter dated 20/06/2013 explaining the above research project and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. (Contact no: 08036743825)	
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. I agree that direct quotations from me may be published as long as am not identifiable from the quotations.	
I understand that the researcher has an ethical duty to reveal to	

relevant authorities information that a participant or other is at risk of serious harm.	
I agree to respect the confidences of other participants and that once outside this focus group setting, that I should not reveal the identities of other participants nor indicate who made specific comments during the discussion.	
I agree for the data collected from me to be used in relevant future research.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	Louis N Ezeilo
Signature	
Date*	

Appendix 6: Invitation for FGD

Dear.....

I want to thank you for your acceptance of our invitation to participate in the FGDs organized to take place on 20/06/2013 at the community hall near Lomu Primary School, Ogbom. As you were informed, I will be having a discussion on your understanding on the meanings of poverty and its implications for poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria. This is to help us gain insight into the various meanings and understanding of poverty and what differences are there in these meanings/understandings.

Again may I remind you that participation is strictly voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any point in time? The issue of confidentiality will be duly respected when analyzing the results making sure that peoples' name are not used. Hence we will rely on anonymity while analyzing our findings and results. The discussion will last for only 1-2 hours and will consists of six to ten people from your community. I myself will be leading the discussion and if you have any further questions with regard to the directions to the focus group or will not be able to attend, please do not hesitate to call me on this no (08036743825).

Sincerely,

Louis Ezeilo

Researcher and moderator

Appendix 7: Invitation for interview

Dear.....

I want to thank you for your acceptance of our invitation to participate in the interview organized to take place on 30/06/2013 in your office as agreed. As you were informed, I will be having a discussion on your understanding on the meanings of poverty and its implications for poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria. The interviews will also be a discussion on how far the various governments have responded to the issue of poverty in Nigeria and how they have incorporated other meanings/understandings of poverty in the formation of their various strategies and policies for poverty reduction in Nigeria.

May I quickly remind you that participation is strictly voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any point in time. The issue of confidentiality will be duly respected when analyzing the results making sure that peoples' name are not used. Hence we will rely on anonymity while analyzing our findings and results. The interview will last for only 50– 60 minutes.

I myself will be leading the discussion and if you have any further questions with regard to the interview schedule or will not be able to attend, please do not hesitate to call me on this no (08036743825).

Sincerely,

Louis Ezeilo

Researcher and moderator

Appendix 8: Participant information sheet for FGD and interviews

Title of the research: Conceptual pluralism in the understanding of poverty: A Case study of Nigeria.

Dear……..…..

1. Introduction

You have been invited to take part in a research project via participation in the FGDs and interviews. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. On the other hand, if this sheet is being read to you, please make sure you take time to think about it and discuss it with others as well if you wish.

Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

2. Purpose of the research

The purpose of the research is to investigate on the different understanding and meanings of poverty in Nigeria and its implications for poverty reduction efforts.

3. Why I have been asked to participate

You have been chosen to participate in this project because we think/assume that you are faced by the challenges of poverty or because of your role in the poverty alleviation programme. You are not the only one selected for this interview or FGDs. Some other persons are also selected from other APOs and from other communities respectively.

4. Questions and withdrawal

Participation is entirely voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form on the day of the meeting) and you can still withdraw at any time. Our contact details are given here in case of withdrawal or in case you have any questions; 08036743825

The participation involves just a FGD and nothing more and the research will ensure that no cost is involved on your side for participating.

5. How is my confidentiality protected

No identifiable quotations will be made use of in the course of the reports and publications. Even though direct quotations will be used but it will be used in such a way that the person who made it cannot be identified by someone either within or outside the FGDs. This is to ensure confidentiality and also that participants are not identified.

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. This is subject to the condition that; should you reveal that you or another identified person has been exposed to or is at risk of serious danger/harm, the information may be passed to relevant authorities.

Participants are advised to respect each other's privacy and anonymity. Hence I should solicit that once outside this focus group setting, that no one should reveal the identities of other participants nor indicate who made specific comments during the discussion.

The audio voice recordings of your activities made during the research will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

6. Benefits

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will enrich our understanding of poverty as well as help us know how the APOs understand poverty. The information sheet and the consent form will be given to you for your keep. Thank you for taking time to go through this sheet and we hope that the FGDs for this research become a success.

NB: The participant information sheet was written in normal English language but was explained using Pidgin English in the case of participants for the FGDs since most of them would understand the 'pidgin' English more than the normal English. Parts of what are in the information sheet are some of the points that also informed our introduction on the day of the FGDs.

Appendix 9: Selection of communities/locations and participants for FGDs

The researcher contacted a volunteer person who assisted us. He got the contact details of the community leaders through the volunteer person and contacted them in person. He explained to them in details the intended group discussions with the members of their communities and the purpose and duration of the meeting. He requested that the community leaders organize and tell us the day to come to see the communities. On invitation from them, the researcher met in person and verbally explained his intentions to them.

The volunteer person together with the community leaders and the participants assisted the researcher with regard to the selection of locations. As is usual with every focus group, the researcher selected a quiet and comfortable place for the meeting free from distractions and interruptions; a place accessible to the community. The places mostly were rooms or town or village halls with adequate air flow. In all of this, the safety of the participants was put into consideration. Hence a safe and secure environment was always considered and chosen through a good collaboration with the community leaders, volunteer person and the participants.

Selection was done to include people who have similar background and challenging characteristics and in this case, people who are poor and are facing the challenges of poverty. This was to make discussions easier and make people free to talk with each other. A total of eight FGDs were organized, two each from the four out of six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Two zones where there were currently ‘Boko Haram’ crisis were excluded. The researcher selected not more than 10 participants and no fewer than 6 participants for him to get a good group discussion. This has been seen as the ideal set for every focus groups discussion (Morgan and Krueger, 1998). This was to give all participants opportunity to contribute without having to compete or struggle to talk. Nevertheless the researcher tried recruiting more participants than the desired size of the group because of the difficulty in obtaining a 100% attendance. In all, I had 62 participants for the FGDs.

The selection was strictly on a voluntary basis and was facilitated through a meeting that was organized by the community leaders in the various places selected. Access to the community leaders was facilitated through the help of personal volunteer friends in some of the regions. Hence, I met the community leaders in person and had audience with each of them and tried to arrange with their help the best way to get volunteers to participate in the FGDs. I did not allow the community leaders to do the selection by themselves, lest, they select those they wanted. I was always at the meeting to see that the selection was voluntary and not mandatory or influenced by the community leaders. I did during the first meeting, set out in detail the purpose, importance and duration of the FGDs when selecting and notifying participants. Equally, I explained to them how the issue of confidentiality will be dealt with; that all the information given to the researcher will be treated with confidentiality and their names anonymized. I also told them that they were free to withdraw at any point in time during the research process and that my contact details were to be given to them in case of such withdrawals or any other matter that may warrant them contacting me. I explained to them why they were selected and why it was important that they should attend.

Date and time was also discussed during the meeting and opportunity was given to them to decide on the date and time that best suited them. I did not choose any date and time for them so as to avoid running into conflict with any existing community activities or functions, work hours among others. 2-5 days were given to the participants to decide whether they wanted to participate or not.

It was after the meeting and the selection that I sent out invitation to the participants I had selected and who had agreed to participate. The invitation was written in a letter head and in this case, the university letter head. It had the address (location), date, time, purpose, importance, duration among others. Since it is going to be an official document, I told them that the invitation will not be written in Pidgin English but in normal English language. The researcher then advised some of them that could not read the normal English language to ask any member of their family to help them read the invitation and explain again the content therein when they received the invitation.

Appendix 10: Selection of organisations and participants for the interviews

The study targeted three different organisations, namely: the government, private (NGOs) and religious organisations, that have the official duty of combating poverty in Nigeria, as well as academics that have done works on poverty. The rationale for selecting these different groups of organisations and people is to seek more into the different understandings of poverty and how these differing perspectives have helped in the combating of poverty.

The researcher selected either the directors or deputy directors. There were occasions where staff of some organisations were involved especially where the director or deputy director is new. The rationale behind selecting these people is that these people are deemed knowledgeable in the activities of the organisation and also have deeper information about the organisation and their activities regarding interactions within their own, and with the poor and other agencies. The researcher first contacted the organisations through their contact details, and informed them that they had been selected for an interview and requested for the contact details of the directors or the deputy directors. The researcher wrote to either of the two for permission to research in their organisation, with the accompanying letter from the researcher's supervisors. On invitation from either the directors or deputy directors, the researcher went and met with them in person, and verbally explained the purpose of the interview.

2-5 days were given to the respondents to decide whether they wanted to participate or not. The entire invitation included the date, time, place of the interview which was entirely at the discretion of the participants because of their schedule in offices. In other words, they were allowed to determine the most convenient time and place for the interview. The researcher tried to persuade the participants to allow the meeting point to be at their office as this will help in case there are needs to make reference to any documents. The main purpose of the interview was also included in the letter of invitation and the need for participation. The researcher also included the approximate time the interview will take to be about 40 to 60 minutes.

One week before the interview, participants were reminded again of the scheduled interview, and finally, a day before the actual interview, the researcher reminded them again and confirmed the time and place. We included our contact details in the invitation letter in case any of the participants wishes to contact us for withdrawal or for any reason. Five people were interviewed from five government organisations, eleven people from four religious organisations, four people from four private organisations and two academics. The disparity in numbers was a result of availability from the original numbers of people scheduled to be interviewed. Some excused themselves that they were on official duties and as such would not be able to honour the invitation again. Some did not show up at all. In all, 15 interviews were done, which involved 22 people. There were some organisations that more than one person was interviewed and that brought the numbers of those interviewed to 22. Most of these interviews also covered the four out of the six geo-political zones for reasons bordering on security. The states covered depend mainly on where the organisations are based. Interviews were then held in the following states: Abuja municipal, Lagos, Ondo, Anambra, Benue, Abia and Imo states. Most interviews were held in Lagos and Abuja municipal since most of these organisations have their headquarters in Lagos and the FCT, Abuja.

Appendix 11: Dates and identification of respondents interviewed

Respondents ID	Gender	Educational Qualification	Organization Affiliation	Position/Status	Location	Days And Date For The Interviews
UZI UZOM	F	PhD	ACADEMIC	RETIRED LECTURER, ANAMBRA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION	ONITSHA	Thursday, July 25th 2013
AKU ANTHONY	M	PhD	ACADEMIC	SENIOR LECTURE AT IMO STATE UNIVERSITY	OWERRI	Monday, July 8th 2013
DANIEL OBI	M	PhD	RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION (JDPC)	DIRECTOR OF JDPC	ONITSHA	Wednesday, June 26th 2013
VINCENT EKE	M	MSc	RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION (JDPC)	SECRETARY OF JDPC	ONITSHA	Wednesday, June 26th 2013
KENNETH OKOLI	M	BSC	RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION (JDPC)	STAFF	ONITSHA	Wednesday, June 26th 2013
ORAZULIKE ANN	F	WASC	RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION (JDPC)	STAFF	ONITSHA	Wednesday, June 26th 2013
ONUKOBA CYRIL	M	PHD	RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION (NIGER WELFARE ASSOCIATION) (NWA)	DIRECTOR/MANAGER OF NWA	ONITSHA	Tuesday, July 30th 2013
PATIENCE ODEH	F	BSc	RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION (NIGER WELFARE ASSOCIATION) (NWA)	STAFF OF NWA	ONITSHA	Tuesday, July 30th 2013
EVARISTUS ODAM	M	PhD	RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION (CARITS)	DIRECTOR OF CARITAS	ABUJA	Tuesday, September 17th 2013
MARIA OPA	F	BSc	RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION (CARITAS)	STAFF	ABUJA	Tuesday, September 17th 2013
JOSEPH KEDI	M	BSc	RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION CARITAS)	STAFF	ABUJA	Tuesday, September 17th 2013
NNODIM GRACE	F	BSc	RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION (EMANUEL CHARITY)	OPERATIONAL MANAGER	LAGOS	Tuesday, August 6th 2013
KEMI FASHOLA	M	WASC	RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION (EMANUEL CHARITY)	STAFF	LAGOS	Tuesday, August 6th 2013
IGWE RITA	F	BSc	(NGO) OUTREACH FOUNDATION (OF)	DEPUTY DIRECTOR	LAGOS	Thursday, August 15th 2013
GRACE OLAYE	F	BSc	(NGO) TOTAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION (THO)	DIRECTOR	LAGOS	Wednesday, August 21st 2013
TINA ARIGO	F	BA	(NGO) ADAIFE	FOUNDER/DIRECTOR	NNEWI	Friday, October 11th 2013
MARG UDA	F	MSc	(NGO) YOUTH REFORMATION AND AWARENESS CENTRE (YRAC)	FOUNDER/DIRECTOR	ABUJA	Friday, September 27th 2013
JUDE UCHEM	M	PhD	GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION (NATIONAL ORIENTATION AGENCY) NOA	BRANCH DIRECTOR/MANAGER	ASABA	Thursday, October 17th 2013
PETER JOHNSON	M	MSc	GOVT. ORGANIZATION (NAPEP)	STAFF	MARKURDI	Monday, September 9th 2013

NURU EDET	M	BSc	GOVT. ORGANIZATION (SURE-P)	STAFF	ABUJA	Monday, September 23rd 2013
GLADYS ODENIGBO	F	BSc	GOVT. ORGANIZATION (IMO RESCUE MISSION)	SECRETARY	OWERRI	Thursday, July 4th 2013
FATIMA HUSSENI	F	BA	GOVT. ORGANIZATION (BETTER LIFE PROGRAMME (BLP)	STAFF	ABUJA	Monday, September 30th 2013

In all, 22 interviews were carried out, involving representatives from 5 government organisations, 4 religious organisations, 4 private organisations and 2 academics.

Appendix 12: Dates and identification of FGDs communities and Participants

FGD Communities	States	Geo-Political Zones	No Of Participants	Occupations	No. Of Males	No. Of Females	Days And Date Of FGDs
ULAKWO	IMO	SOUTH-EAST	6	4 FARMERS AND 2 PETTY TRADERS	3	3	Saturday, July 13th 2013
EZIAGULU	ANAMBRA	SOUTH-EAST	6	5 FARMERS AND 1 PETTY TRADERS	NIL	6	Saturday, June 29th 2013
IKARE-AKOKO	ONDO	SOUTH-WEST	12	10 PETTY TRADER AND 2 CIVIL SERVANTS	8	4	Sunday, August 11th 2013
AJAMGBADI	LAGOS	SOUTH- WEST	12	2 KINDERGATEN TEACHERS, 3 PETTY TRADERS AND 7 FARMERS	5	7	Saturday, August 17th 2013
OTOBI	BENUE	NORTH CENTRAL	9	3 FISHERMEN, 1 PETTY TRADER AND 5 FARMERS	6	3	Saturday, 31st August 2013
ANYIGBA	KOGI	NORTH CENTRAL	6	3 FARMERS, 1 PETTY TRADER AND 2 FISHERMEN	3	3	Saturday, September 14th 2013
AFAHA EKET	AKWA-IBOM	SOUTH-SOUTH	5	ALL FARMERS	3	2	Saturday, October 26th 2013
UMUNEDE	DELTA	SOUTH-SOUTH	6	3 FARMERS AND 3 PETTY TRADERS	3	3	Saturday, October 13th 2013

In all, eight FGDs were conducted which involved 62 participants form the different geo-political zones.

Appendix 13: Letter of introduction

Leeds University Business School

Maurice Keyworth Building
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT

W www.leeds.ac.uk/lubs

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam

Louis Ezeilo's visit

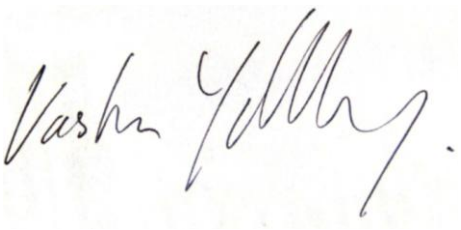
I write in support of Louis Nwabueze Ezeilo's request to organize focus group discussions in your community. Louis is a student at the University of Leeds (Leeds, LS2 9JT, United Kingdom). He is currently preparing a PhD in the Economics Division of Leeds University Business School under my supervision and that of Dr Jorg Wiegratz and Professor Malcom sawyer.

These focus group discussions form part of Louis's research for his doctoral thesis on the different understandings of poverty in Nigeria. He will explain to you the detail of the meetings he would like to organize. The University of Leeds is fully aware of the research and has approved his fieldwork plan, which includes these meetings.

I would be very grateful if you would provide him with assistance in conducting this part of his research, which is critical for the success of his thesis.

I should add that the information collected in the course of these focus groups will be treated in strict confidence and used solely for the purposes of Louis's research, in accordance with the University's policy on the protection and management of research data.

Yours sincerely



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