AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NATIONAL POVERTY ERADICATION PROGRAMME : EVIDENCE FROM BENUE STATE.

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Abstract

Public policy is expected to produce results that impact positively on the people. When this is not so, the correct thing to be done is to reassess the policy in all its facets in order to achieve the objectives of the policy. This paper assesses one of government's policy aimed at poverty reduction and reveals the inefficiency of the scheme as implemented. The paper is situated within the Keynesian theory which advocates the working of government to restore imbalances in the economy. It employed a questionnaire survey research design on beneficiaries. The data was analysed using descriptive statistical tools, a correlation matrix and a logistic regression to test the hypothesis that benefitting from NAPEP does not reduce the probability of being poor. The results showed among other things that, benefitting from NAPEP makes an individual 0.04 times less likely to be poor, and this is a very minimal contribution and a pointer to the ineffectiveness of the policy. The structure and modus operandi of NAPEP contribute largely to the ineffectiveness of the policy. The study recommends deliberateness in pursuing policy or else the expected results will continue to elude us.

1.0 Introduction

When the government embarks upon a policy which encompasses a system of courses of actions, regulatory measures, laws and funding priorities, it is making a statement about advancing the goals and objectives which it seeks to achieve. Public policy is usually set to address problems in areas of defence, national security, education, health, poverty and others. Public policy strives to advance the collective well-being; social, political and economic of a society.

According to Hall (2000), public policy may be distributive, regulatory or redistributive. Distributive policies allocate benefits to specific target groups or individuals while dividing the cost among the recipients e.g., government spending on highways and education. Regulatory policies establish legal guidelines and limits on the actions of individuals, agencies, corporations and society as a whole. Redistributive policies shift the allocation of resources among members of a society. Examples are medicare and social security.

Since independence, successive governments in Nigeria have embarked on several policy drives with the aim of improving major socio-economic indicators- literacy, unemployment, income inequality and human resource development, among others. With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) serving as a map for economic policy formulation, even more effort and resources are being channelled to poverty alleviation in both urban and rural areas in the country with increasing intensity as targets are set for the year 2015. The point is that the pursuit of better living conditions for a majority of Nigerians is an obligation the country owes its people and these MDGs have reiterated that in very clear terms. Thinking through these goals and the different programmes we have seen the Nigerian government introduce, and maybe experienced at different points and places in the country, they seem to have these objectives on their minds.

In Nigeria however, the experience has been a recurring disconnect between policy formulation and implementation as a result, the results of even brilliant policies have continually eluded us. The way that government does its business in Nigeria is clouded by insincerity and corruption. If we focus on programmes and policies aimed at poverty reduction via employment creation and financial empowerment in Nigeria the roll would include, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) established since 1986, Better Life programme in 1987, the Family Economic Advancement programme (FEAP) in 1997, the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) in 1999, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001 and most recently the Subsidy Removal Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) in 2012.

No doubt these policies have had a lot of resources committed to them over the years. In spite of these efforts, unemployment rate is at an all-time high of 23.9% in 2012 as against 21.1% in 2011, 19.7% in 2010, 11.8%, 5.8% and 5.3% in 2009, 2008 and 2007 respectively with a forecast for 2013 at 24.27% (NBS 2012). The rate of poverty is also not encouraging with about 60.9% of Nigerians living below the poverty line as at 2010, 54.7% in 2004 as against 60% in 2000, 34.1% in 1992. (NBS 2012). The status quo is a result of the interaction a myriad of factors which may be difficult to examine in their entirety. This paper assesses one of the policies already executed at an advanced stage; the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) for effectiveness and to examine some of the pitfalls of public policy, if any, with the view to providing a basis for improvement on future practice. The objectives of this paper therefore are to examine the projects of NAPEP, to assess the effectiveness of NAPEP on its beneficiaries and examine the limitations of NAPEP, if any.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

The Keynesian theory postulated by Keynes (1936) spearheaded a revolution in economic thinking questioning and overturning the classical economists' doctrine that the market would restore itself to full equilibrium after temporary shocks. Keynes advocated government intervention during times of economic turmoil. He believed that it was up to the government to bridge the gap between the economy's potential and its actual output during financial crisis even if it meant taking on debt. The argument is that during a downturn, we have a lot of idle resources, unemployed labour and underutilization of productive capacities. In Keynes view, when main pillars of the economy are failing; consumer spending, investment and net exports, the only pillar that is left to support the economy is the government. While debates continue about enacting Keynesian theory as policy, the truth is that Keynes highlighted a truth about how economies work that is as relevant today, as it was during the Great Depression. The Nigerian economy today is characterised by symptoms of turmoil which Keynes highlighted in the 19^{th} century and the onus lies with the government to ensure basic life sustenance of its people. This is the spirit behind the National Poverty Eradication Programme which began in 2001.

3.0 Public Policy in Perspective

The first stage of policy formulation is Agenda Setting; where a lot of people are talking about the problem or issue but nothing is done. These talks are attempts at transforming an issue into policy. The second and third stages are Formulation and Adoption and these are the stages where the legislation is drafted to back up the issue and adoption is when it is accepted as a legal matter for the state to pursue in earnest. Fourthly is the implementation stage and last but not the least is the Evaluation and feedback stage. It is at this stage that policy makers may find that costs of the policy have outweighed the estimates, some realities may have been overlooked or some groups are forgotten in the course of formulation and implementation. It is at this stage that the worth of the policy is known. These evaluations may show that a policy has worked well or it could call for a re-assessment of the problem and may require that the process be started all over again.

In the words of W. Michael as cited on Wikipedia "public policy is for the greater good", it follows therefore that government has to ensure that its policies are beneficial to its people. This can only happen when formulation and implementation are in sync. That is to say that while good evidence and due process are fundamental to good public policy, they do not guarantee results. Good policy is a result of Good politics and Bad rules produce Bad outcomes

The Institute for Government (2013) says that it undertook a major study into how policy is made in America. Using archival documents, their research identified the need to make the policy process more resilient to the pressures of the real world and also suggested that the government needed to find new ways of tackling systemic problems that policy makers face.

The American Civil Service watch admits that the quality of public policy advice is not always consistent or designed with implementation in mind. There must be a clear focus on designing policies that can be implemented in practice, drawing on a wider range of views and expertise. Policy makers must have the skills they need to do their jobs.

Jacobs (1992) uses archival evidence from American and British cabinets and argues that the development in both countries suggests that public opinion has a recoil effect with policy. This means that public opinion is like a strand test of the effectiveness of policy and should be taken seriously.

4.0 National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)

The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) was established in 2001 primarily to coordinate and monitor all poverty eradication activities in the country. It also has the secondary mandate of carrying out intervention programmes and projects where identifiable gaps exist. To deliver on these mandates, NAPEP has over the years developed and implemented schemes and programmes targeted at the eradication of absolute poverty while also monitoring and coordinating the poverty reduction efforts of other government ministries, departments and agencies. NAPEP has developed and nurtured a 'partnership' philosophy to deliver on its mandate. This philosophy is today the bedrock of all its programmes and schemes. This involves networking with a broad range of stakeholders aimed at mobilizing resources to complement budgetary provision for the eradication of absolute poverty in the country. This has led to the leveraging of financial resources from state and local governments, and the organized private sector for poverty reduction. Beyond financial resources, NAPEP networks with government and non-governmental organizations to harmonise poverty reduction activities of various stakeholders to bring about synergy in the efforts to eradicate poverty. The underlying objective of these partnerships is to engender mass economic participation at the grassroots through the provision of seed capital in the form of micro credit and training in order to catalyse the "sell-buy" process in rural poor communities and in some cases infrastructural facilities across Nigeria. Hence "partnerships that work" is an excerpt of the working collaborative efforts of NAPEP in the fight against poverty.

Because enormous resources had been committed by governments at different levels and by other stakeholders towards the improvement of the well- being of Nigerians since the colonial days without commensurate results, in 1999, the Administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo made poverty reduction the focal point of every government policy and Programme and gave birth to what is known today as NAPEP. The states took a cue from the Federal Government and replicated poverty reduction schemes and Programmes aimed at improving the well- being of the people.

The main assumption of NAPEP, simply put, is that more than half of the population of Nigeria are still unable to satisfy their needs owing to lack of income or opportunity to generate income and a lack of the means to change their situation largely due to:

1. inadequate access to employment opportunities;
2. inadequate physical assets such as land and capital and minimal access to credit by the under privileged even on a small scale; and
3. low endowment of human capital, natural resources and technological knowhow.

NAPEP, therefore, has the responsibility of ensuring that the wide range of poverty eradication activities are planned to tackle income poverty and these are coordinated in order to ensure policy continuity and sustainability of programmes.

4.1 Collaboration with Government and its Agencies

Apart from the collaboration with non-governmental stakeholders, the partnership philosophy of NAPEP has also been expressed through the collaboration with Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) at the three tiers of government. At the federal level NAPEP is collaborating with eighteen core poverty eradication ministries, agencies, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, via the National Coordination Committee (NCC) structure which is the coordinating organ for the efforts at the federal level. These agencies include the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN). NAPEP has struck a perfect partnership with the second tier of government through the instrumentality of the State Coordination Committee (SCC) and the State Poverty Eradication Committee (SPEC). Through these structures, the poverty reduction activities of the state government and the MDAs in the state are fully captured and properly documented. The beauty of this arrangement is the involvement of the top echelon of the state executive in the activities of the committees, particularly the SPEC. This has rubbed off positively on the partnership.

The prominent partnership platform at the third tier is the Local Government Monitoring Committee (LGMC), through which NAPEP interacts with the grassroots. Through this structure, relevant data on poverty eradication activities at the grassroots are gathered for presentation to the SCC, while intervention programmes are identified for joint implementation with relevant stakeholders. In addition to this, NAPEP embarks on Community Economic Sensitization Scheme (COMMESS) with the active collaboration of the Local Government Area Chairmen to mobilize, educate and sensitise the poor on options to create wealth.

While the overall mandate is the same for every state of the federation, a look at the national working documents and the state reports examined reveal that the actual programmes executed at different times may differ from state to state depending on how the needs are perceived by the committees and the funds that are allocated accordingly. It is on the basis of this that we will examine the programmes that NAPEP has embarked upon in Benue State since its inception in 2001. So far a total of ten (10) different programmes have been embarked upon by NAPEP in the state. We shall take a closer look at them in the order in which they were embarked upon.

i. Mandatory Attachment Programme (MAP)

MAP was designed in 2001 for graduates of tertiary institutions who were unemployed. These unemployed graduates were assigned to different tasks either in different ministries, schools (to teach) or some trade and they were given a monthly allowance of N 10,000 each. Under MAP, a total of 1,447 University and Polytechnic graduates from all the 23 local governments in Benue State benefited. It lasted for a brief period of two years. This programme was not sustained because of the huge financial implication. These resources were not yielding any return and so could not be sustained. It has since been scrapped.

ii. Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP)

CAP was also in place in 2001. It was a programme under the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES). It was targeted at 'school leavers'– graduates from primary and post-primary schools who were unemployed. Two groups of people were the major stakeholders for CAP; they were the trainers and trainees. The school leavers were attached to experts at different trades depending on their areas of interest. The experts that contributed to CAP in Benue State included hair dressers, barbers, caterers, electricians, welders, carpenters and tailors. The trainees were given monthly allowance of N 3,000 while they learnt the trade while the trainers were paid N 4,500 per trainee per month. The training lasted between six months and one year. Upon completion of training in Benue State, sewing machines were distributed to some participants who were selected at random via a ballot system. The decision to give out sewing machines alone must have arisen from the fact that most participants trained in tailoring. The monthly allowance to trainees was to help them save some money to enable them start their trades. We should note that the "trainer status" was lobbied for and a final selection was made by the SCC. CAP too was not sustainable because the financial implications were very high with no return on it whatsoever. It also lasted for only two years until 2003 and 2,893 youths from across the state benefited from the scheme.

iii. KEKENAPEP (Phases I and II)

This refers to the popular green and white tricycles distributed by NAPEP to inspire and boost urban transport as well as create employment for the owner. It had high income generating potentials because it was economical in terms of fuel usage and general maintenance (reducing running costs), and increasing potential benefits. The actual value or cost of KEKENAPEP was N280,000. However, the federal government subsidized them and gave them to NAPEP to sell at either N180,000 (if down payments were made) or N 200,000 (at hire purchase with an initial deposit of N 80,000). In the first phase of the project, 46 KEKENAPEPs were distributed in Benue State. The state government had a poverty alleviation plan which coincided with the second phase of KEKENAPEP and so they made arrangements with the NAPEP headquarters directly and 54 KEKENAPEPs were given to the State government. We still see one or two of these tricycles on the roads in certain parts of the township; this means they are still in use up to date.

iv. Community Development Scheme (CDS)

CDS was embarked upon between 2003 and 2004. This programme was done in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). UNDP provided computers, scanners, printers and other computer accessories to set up computer training centres. The pieces of equipment provided were used to set up two (2) centres in Makurdi, the State capital. The Centres set up were in St. Joseph Technical College and Makurdi Community Secondary School, Wadata, Makurdi. These computer training centres helped to make secretaries in the Benue State Civil Service computer literate. Their training held at Makurdi Community Secondary School. The second centre was more open to practitioners of other trades-carpentry, plumbing, etc as five youths from each Local Government engaged in these trades were trained. In addition, fresh training was given to 20 youths per trade in carpentry, computer studies, metal work/welding, electrical/AC installation and refrigerator repairs. The programme ensured fair representation from each Local Government. It is not really clear what has become of these centres since they were handed over to the institutions that house them after the first round of training in 2004.

v. NAPEP Multi-partner Microfinance (MP-MF) Scheme

Developed in 2005, the MPMF scheme was another innovative approach by NAPEP to eradicate poverty. It was aimed at promoting savings and providing credit facilities to the poor. It was a unique partnership between NAPEP and some key stakeholders, including the state and local governments, the Central Bank, commercial banks, micro-finance institutions, cooperatives and other private companies for the provision of an enlarged pool of funds for on-lending to the poor. The poor are reached through the instrumentality of cooperatives and microfinance banks. In Benue State, a total of N38million has been disbursed in two phases, to about ten of such organizations. Some of these include:

1.	Asenge Thrift and Loans	N 10m	1st and 2nd phases
2.	Third Millennium Cooperative	N 2m	1st phase
3.	Blessed Hope Cooperative	N 4m	2nd phase
4.	Ito Community Micro Finance Bank	N 7m	2nd phase
5.	Otukpo Micro Finance Bank	N 3m	1st phase
6.	Zion Microfinance Bank	N 1m	2nd phase
7.	Otia Community Bam	N 2m	2nd phase
8.	Mbayion Community Bank	N 2m	2nd phase

These institutions were to make available the funds to aspiring entrepreneurs. Agricultural loans were to attract 9% interest while other commercial loans attracted 10%. The reason for the difference in interest was to encourage investments in agriculture. The recovery period placed on agricultural loans was longer to allow for planting and harvest seasons unlike commercial loans which required that refunds commence a few months after the loans were given. Over 50 cooperative groups have benefited from this credit scheme in the state. As far as refunds of these loans to NAPEP by the cooperatives that benefited are concerned, the Benue State SCC has expressed satisfaction so far.

vi. Farmers Empowerment Programme (FEP)

FEP was developed in 2006 and was targeted at farmers. The aim was to help boost agricultural output by increasing their ability to purchase necessary farm input. No returns were required from the rural farmers at the end of the harvest but it was expected that their general welfare would have been improved. Farmers from only three local governments namely, Katsina Ala, Ado and Makurdi Local Governments benefited from this scheme. They were selected at random. Each of the senatorial zones was represented and the farmers benefited from the N 4.5m disbursed on the Programme. Cassava and palm tree farmers were targeted by the FEP scheme.

vii. City Serve Orange Box for Recharge Card Production

The orange box is a machine that produces recharge numbers on telecom networks available in a city, NECO/WAEC and JAMB scratch cards. The box is worth N 50,000 but was given to beneficiaries at hire purchase for an initial deposit of N5, 000 for the balance to be paid back within a year. The machine was loaded with recharge cards worth N 5,000 for starters. The recharge value could be increased as the business expanded. Because of the high rates of telecom use in the state, the city serve had a lot of potential especially for rural areas with network coverage and limited access to "card dealers". A total of 320 boxes were distributed to mainly unemployed youth from across the state in July 2007.

viii. Promise Keepers (PKP)

This Programme was launched in 2006 in response to criticism by the religious sects on their neglect by NAPEP and government generally in poverty reduction efforts. The programme, therefore, targeted societies within the church, e.g. women and youth groups, Bible society, etc and relied on them to identify their members who needed to be assisted. This was also a non-profit scheme and although it is ongoing, it is not on a regular basis yet. A total of N 8.4m has been disbursed to several faith based organizations in Makurdi so far. Let us note that the faith based initiative has affected both Christians and Moslems alike.

ix. Village Economic Development Solutions (VEDS)

VEDS were developed in 2008 to empower rural farmers and entrepreneurs via cooperative societies in these areas. Ten (10) local governments benefited from the scheme to encourage fish, poultry and livestock farming as well as cassava farmers in the rural areas. Logo Ukum and Vandeikya from Zone A, Buruku, Makurdi, Guma, Gwer-West from Zone B and Oju, Otukpo and Okpokwu from Zone C benefited from the N200m disbursed on the Programme. The project required that beneficiaries be monitored to ensure that the funds were being used for the purposes they were made available for.

x. In Care of People (COPE)

This is the latest addition to the myriad of programmes launched in 2009. COPE was developed with the aim of breaking the intergenerational transfer of poverty and reducing vulnerability of the core poor in society against socio economic risks. In the COPE programme, grants are provided to qualified poor households on the condition that they engage in investment in the human capital development of their children or wards. It qualifies as Nigeria's first Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme. The conditions tied to COPE are primary school attendance and the utilization of public basic healthcare facilities. Cash provided by COPE first provides emergency assistance while the conditions promote longer-term investment in human capital development for breaking inter-generational poverty. In Benue State, (one of the first 12 pilot states in the first phase), 500 poor families (less privileged with orphans, widows and the disabled given priority) have been selected from the 23 local governments in the state. So far the emergency assistance they are receiving is in three categories. Monthly allowances of N 5,000, N 3,000 and N 1,500 were given to the families based on the number and school age of their children. This allowance is called the Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) so that the children can stay in school. On the longer-term strategy, the Poverty Reduction Accelerated Investment (PRAI) set aside a compulsory N 7,000 monthly for one year for each family which was given to them in bulk at the end of the year (i.e., N84,000) after they had been trained in a particular skill. The 500 benefiting families in Benue State have undergone their complete training and the cash disbursements have been made. The state SMEIDAN and NDE assisted in the training. A total of N 72m was set aside for the scheme.

5.0 Methodology

The study adopted a questionnaire survey research design. The population for the study is the beneficiaries of NAPEP's policies in Makurdi metropolis. The researcher embarked on a pre-field/ reconnaissance survey based on the information got about beneficiaries from the institution to find them. The details given by NAPEP seemed inadequate to find their beneficiaries. NAPEP officials had given details of the different programmes embarked upon and general locations (Local Governments) but there were challenges in identifying individual beneficiaries because of the nature of the records kept on them. The microfinance banks which were commissioned to disburse funds to the beneficiaries were also contacted but they said they had returned all records to the organization on completion. However, one farmers' group mentioned in Makurdi- the sugarcane farmers cooperative in North Bank and one community in Makurdi mentioned to have benefitted from the COPE scheme; Terwase Agbadu(a community from where most households were selected to participate from Makurdi LGA) were identified as beneficiaries. Since we know from literature, the areas of NAPEP's activities in terms of skills in which different types of training were conducted and members of these different trades and businesses can be found within Makurdi Township, except for cases where specific mention was made, we used that information to draw our sample.

Following this, a disproportionate sample (of elements having particular characteristics of interest to the researcher to ensure inclusion of specific elements; in this case benefitting from NAPEP's programmes) of 30 households was drawn from Terwase Agbadu, and 30 members of the sugarcane farmers' cooperative group in North Bank. A disproportionate stratified random sample (as the relative proportions of the strata in the sample may not correspond to their relative proportions in the populations, especially in our case where the entire population is not known) of 30 business entrepreneurs each whose groups are supposed to have members who have benefitted from the scheme was also drawn. The implication is that some strata may have to be assigned more weight and others less weight than their actual proportions in the population. It could also be interpreted that irrespective of their weights in the population, each stratum carries the same weight. The strata are tailors, carpenters, metal workers/ welders, recharge card operators, computer operators and AC/refrigerator repairers. The sample was made up of 30 tailors, 30 carpenters, 30 metal workers/ welders, 30 recharge card producers, 30 computer operators, 30 mechanics and 30 AC/ refrigerator repairers. This gives a total sample size of 270. Because this is concerned with NAPEP's coverage, only such enterprises established between 1999 and 2010 were studied. Descriptive tools, i.e., tables, and charts are used to present the data alongside discussions of the scenarios presented to give a general picture of the performances of the programmes. Secondly, the Logit Regression is employed to test the hypothesis that benefiting from NAPEP does not reduce the probability of being poor. Thirdly, a correlation matrix is used to make pair- wise correlations to investigate the effects that changes in the variables specified within the model have on each other in order to ascertain the magnitude and direction of the relationships among them. Finally, the Fish Bone Diagram is used to discuss the limitations of NAPEP.

5.1 The Logit Regression

The general form of the model to be estimated is;

$$\text{In}\left(\frac{P_i}{1-P_i}\right) = Z = a + \beta x_i + u_i$$

Z – denotes the dichotomic qualitative variable poor/non-poor in the study or poverty not reduced/poverty reduced;

x_i – denotes the characteristic vector(s) of a household.

µ - is the error term.

The study is concerned with the following $x_i s$:

x_{1i} -household income (INC_1)

x_{2i} -household's income from other sources ($INCS_1$)

x_{3i} - household benefits from NAPEP (BN)

x_{4i} - household has a major economic activity (MA_1)

x_{5i} - household size (HS_1); six or more

x_{6i} - nature of household headship (HH_1)

x_{7i} - source of water (SW_1); access to safe sources

x_{8i} - number of rooms in the house (NR_1); three or more

x_{9i} - School age children going to school (SAC_1); presence or absence

x_{10i} -Toilet facility (TF_1);adequate or not

x_{11i} - Distance to the nearest health facility (DHF_1); being 30 minutes away or more

The specific form of the model is therefore:

$$Z_i = INC_1\beta_1 + INCS_1\beta_2 + BN\beta_3 + MA_1\beta_4 + HS_1\beta_5 + HH_1\beta_6 + SW_1\beta_7 + NR_1\beta_8 + SAC_1\beta_9 + TF_1\beta_{10} + DHF_1\beta_{11} + \mu$$

6.0 Results and Discussions

6.1 The Activities of NAPEP on Beneficiaries

As indicated in the previous chapter, 30 questionnaires were allocated to each of the nine groups identified as having benefitted from the activities of NAPEP. Table 1 shows the distribution of the questionnaires by business type. (All the tables referred to are presented as appendix). Out of the 270 questionnaires administered, 220 were returned and/or valid. This represents 81.5% of the questionnaires while 50 or 18.5% of the questionnaires were either not returned or not properly filled and therefore were invalid. The crux of the investigation is about NAPEP's influence on different entrepreneurial groups in Makurdi and so we sought to investigate awareness levels about the interventions, participation and different interventions on businesses, if any and on the welfare/poverty status of the beneficiaries.

The level of awareness of the respondents regarding NAPEP's programmes is shown in Table 2. The information in the table indicates that 75.5 percent of respondents are not aware of any of NAPEP's programmes while 24.5% are.

Awareness is central to, but not the same as benefitting, i.e., it is possible to be aware of the programme and not participate or benefit from it. As a result we further sought clarification on participation and benefits to business endeavors as well as inquiring if there have been improvement in welfare as a result of these businesses which NAPEP helped to set up; the picture is presented in Table 3. We must make the point, however, that this inquiry can only be made on individuals and households that make up the 24.5 % (or 54 respondents), i.e. those who are aware of NAPEP's programmes.

From the table we see that out of the 54 respondents, 27 (50%) have benefitted while 50% have not. The nature of benefits is diverse in nature as we have seen from the review of the programmes already embarked upon. This investigation also showed that 11 (40.7%) of the beneficiaries got aid to set up their businesses while 16 (59.3%) did not. The aid received by this group of beneficiaries for setting up of businesses was considered sufficient by only 2 (18.2%) of the recipients while for the remaining 9 (81.8%), the aid was insufficient. This group still had to seek other means to establish themselves. Most of them received training and needed to find their own resources to establish the trades. Where items of equipment were given at subsidized rates, shops and other operational materials and tools were still sought. Discussion, in the course of the administration of the questionnaires, revealed that where grants were given, they were insufficient for take- off and in some other cases; they were diverted to tackle some pressing matters, as all that was needed to set up the business was not available at the time. Having made reference to the nature of NAPEP's intervention as being diverse, we sought to find out what the diversity entailed from the beneficiaries. Table 4 is a summary of the findings. NAPEP's major contribution to the economic activities of the entrepreneurs is in training and skills acquisition attested to by 51.6% of responses, followed by loans/micro credit (25.3%), grants (16.5%), and then Keke NAPEP (5.5%).

6.2 Effectiveness of NAPEP

In an attempt to examine the effectiveness of NAPEP's activities, a study of the impact of NAPEP on income and other welfare indicators of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike was carried out. This is in line with NAPEP's aim of tackling income poverty by improving incomes and earning opportunities. To effectively establish this impact, it is useful to first examine the income sources of the respondents, presented in Table 5 which shows that, the major trade is the source of income to 74.1% of the beneficiaries and 85.5% of the non-beneficiaries. The other sources are, however, not completely negligible. At any rate, it is safe to say that a viable business enterprise is extremely important to the welfare of the respondents seeing that it provides the main sustenance to

84% of them. To the 74% of NAPEP's beneficiaries, their main business enterprises being viable may not be unrelated to the benefits received, whether the skill training, grants or loans as the case may be. The picture that the table paints is that while it is not unusual to get support from family members or from other sources, the main source of income for the respondents is their business enterprise. The success and viability or otherwise of their business endeavors will influence their welfare. Having established that most respondents survive on their businesses, the study examines the incomes of all the entrepreneurs in the twelve months preceding the survey and the results are presented in Table 6. Majority of beneficiaries (63%) earned incomes less than N90, 000 per annum. Among the non-beneficiaries, however, majority (58.5%) earned incomes above N90, 000. This would place most of the non- beneficiaries above N 250 per day and most of the beneficiaries below it. The implication of the earned incomes from both categories is that the incomes of the non- beneficiaries are higher than those of beneficiaries. This may be a pointer to the fact that benefitting from NAPEP's activities is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for a business enterprise to thrive or flourish. It may also be an indicator of the possibility that their living conditions may have been the criterion for their selection, and in which case, the project has not helped them enough.

We must make a note at this point that it may be possible to query the accuracy of this income data, since people are not always willing to give out this kind of information. However, the researcher used average monthly expenditure profiles, also given by the respondents (which are more likely to present truer pictures) as a control and the results were a match in about 60% of the cases. Next, we sought to inquire, based on self- perception, the respondents' opinion on whether they were poor or non- poor. Table 7 gives the summary of the responses. A self- assessment may or may not be correct but is an indicator of a person's self- esteem and sense of achievement or success at a business venture. These perceptions are based on the ability to meet basic needs of feeding their families three times a day, sending children to good schools, having a roof over their heads and decent clothes to wear. Among the beneficiaries, 70.9% still consider themselves to be poor while 29.1% do not. Comparing this result with the results from the previous income analysis where about 60% were below and 40% above the poverty line, we see that the respondents feel worse than they actually are. We may infer from the foregoing that NAPEP's intervention has not improved the sense of well-being among the majority of her beneficiaries.

6.3 Test of Hypothesis

The null hypothesis set in the methodology section was tested using the logistic regression analysis. The model set out to test whether the probability of being poor reduces with benefiting from NAPEP. The results have are presented in Table 8. In addition to the table, the other results that the regression gave in describing the overall performance of the model are discussed. The beginning Block 0 classification that shows the classification accuracy of our dependent variable within our sample's variability is 75.9% correct. The Wald statistic of 52.994 shows that the outcomes, poor and non- poor in the beginning Block 0 are statistically different from each other, meaning that the number of people who are either poor or non- poor within our sampling variability are not equal. The omnibus tests of model coefficients are set to test the hypothesis of whether there is at least some predictive capacity in the regression equation. With a chi square value of 146.599, which is statistically significant, we can feel confident that the model has something to say. Still on the predictive capacity of the model, the test reports that the -2 Log likelihood, which works like the chi square but is considered more accurate for logistic regressions, is 96.336[a] and it rates the models performance highly. The more conventional R^2, the Nagelkerke R square is 0.728 while the Cox and Snell R square is 0.486. Even though within the logistic set up, they are regarded as pseudo R squares, their values are usually good indicators. Measured on two different scales, the results imply that the explanatory power of the model lies between 48.6 to 72.8 per cent. The Block 1 classification of the dependent variable from the sample on estimation increased from 75.9% to 98.6% meaning that we have increased the classification accuracy of the model by about 22 percentage points.

From the results, the coefficients on INC_2, BN, MA_2, HS_2 SAC_2 and TF_2 and DHF_2 have signs in accordance with the a priori expectation while $INCS_2$, HS_2, HH_2, SW_2 and NR_2 do not. Comparing beta coefficients with their standard errors, the coefficients on INC_2, $SAC_{,2}$ and SW_2 are significant while the rest are not. The coefficient on BN is -0.03, this can be interpreted to mean that benefitting from NAPEP reduces the probability of being poor by about 3%. More importantly, inspecting the odds ratio, we see that benefitting from NAPEP will make an individual 0.04 times less likely to be poor. The "smallness" of these values may not be unrelated to the insignificance of the variable but we will discuss this subsequently. The evidence from this sample leads us to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative that benefitting from NAPEP reduces the probability of being poor.

Examining the other variables in the equation, the coefficient of income from other sources ($INCS_2$) carrying a positive sign is explained in terms of the fact that, a household depending on other sources like family members and friends who are well to do are depending on an irregular and uncertain source. This could leave individuals and households in a bad shape when such support is not forthcoming. The unstandardised beta weight carrying a negative sign on MA_2 is an indication that income from a viable enterprise is more likely to reduce poverty than depending on income from other sources which are largely unreliable and irregular. In fact, inspecting the odds ratios shows that depending on other sources makes one 1.3 times more likely to be poor, while having a viable enterprise makes one 0.9 times less likely to be poor. The beta weights on HH_2 confirm that larger households are more likely to be poorer, in this case, 1.1 times more. Households with school age children in school are also more likely to be poor because of the expenses incurred; most respondents prefer private schools to the redundant but free public schools, and it makes a household 1.2 times more likely to be poor. The odds ratios on households having a good toilet system (TF_2) within a house and living in an area where one is at most 30 minutes from a health facility (DHF_2), suggest that such households are 0.92 and 0.79 times less likely to be poor. On the other hand, having access to safe water sources (SW_2) defies our a priori expectation. This may not be unconnected with the fact that within the study area, water shortages pose a serious challenge to most households regardless of their locations or income levels.

Further analysis was carried out by constructing a correlation matrix to help us analyse the relationship between benefitting from NAPEP and incomes and other socioeconomic characteristics that help us describe living standards. The matrix of correlation helps us to concentrate on the effects of benefitting from NAPEP on the other variables in a pair- wise manner to help us strengthen conclusions on the effectiveness of NAPEP. Benefitting from NAPEP (BN) has a very weak negative/ inverse correlation with income (INC_2), income from other sources ($INCS_2$) and, having a major economic enterprise (MA_2). We may therefore infer that, NAPEP's activities have not affected incomes or enterprises positively and as such, the multiplier transmission to provision of improved water sources (SW_2), toilet (TF_2) and health facilities (DHF_2) as well as getting school children to school is missing (SAC_2). This is also reflected in the very weak negative/inverse correlations with them. This is to say that the intervention has not been able to produce the expected changes in the incomes of even the beneficiaries as intended by the programme. The results we have seen, give us room to question the success of the scheme as its objectives have not been achieved among beneficiaries.

When income is sufficient to provide better living conditions, better water sources, bigger houses with more rooms can be afforded and better sewage will likely be used which will improve hygienic conditions. The location of residence is also likely to be more urban with greater access to medicare when the need arises. One of the objectives of NAPEP is to eradicate poverty and the strategy is to create income earning opportunities and giving out loans, micro credit, grants and aid to participants. The intention is to create incomes that will give access to basic sustenance goods and services. Incomes therefore, are not an end in themselves and so until an income is sufficient to provide the basic goods, a person is still poor. This may be a basis to judge the performance of NAPEP.

6.4 Assessing the Effectiveness of the Institution

In an attempt to deepen our understanding of the operations of the institution, we conducted an interview with the state Secretary, Mr. Matthias on the 15th of September, 2011 in his office between 12:30 and 1:30. This interview was meant to enhance discussions on the effectiveness of the institution. The interview covered several areas and the general assessment is presented.

6.4.1 Programme Design/Budgeting/Selection of Beneficiaries

The nature, time and size of the programmes implemented by NAPEP in Benue State are a result of National Policy from its Headquarters in Abuja, i.e. none of the programmes implemented in the state are initiatives of the state chapter. The amount of resources earmarked for each programme is also decided and allocated from the headquarters and disbursed to the states. It is possible for states to influence the amount of funds that they receive on either all or some specific programmes if, and only if, they provide some counterpart funding to NAPEP. This counterpart funding is, however, not compulsory but without it, whatever is allocated to the state has to be accepted. It is interesting to note that within the state, the contribution of counterpart funds by any local government can increase the number of beneficiaries from the area. In the most recently concluded scheme, In Care of People (COPE), the interview revealed that while 9 of the 10 participating local government areas in the state had 50 participants each, Oju Local Government Area had 62 because the local government provided some counterpart funding on the programme.

On the usage of the funds for the programmes strictly, the state representative interviewed stated strongly that the funds to be disbursed to the beneficiaries are not diverted at all. The budget always includes a separate allocation as overhead and monitoring allowances to cater for office logistics and the members of staff involved on any of the programmes and reiterated that they were satisfied with the allocations to them. However, the selection of the beneficiaries, he claimed, is usually done at the Local Government level and the names are sent to them. The Local Government Committee is made up of the Education Officer, the Social Welfare Officer, Councilors representing the different areas and District Heads. After the number of beneficiaries per Local Government to be included on a particular scheme is agreed upon, this committee raises the number required. On the issue of whether any interests are pursued in the selection process, either of top government officials or any stake holder, he could not completely dispute it as there were only general guidelines handed to them, and screening at the point of implementation was just to verify identities.

6.4.2 Programme Implementation and Monitoring

The selected participants assemble in the state capital for training or any other programme and then disbursements are made, depending on what each programme mandates them to do. The organization employs the use of financial institutions to make these payments especially the microfinance banks since their entry into the sector. The details of payments per beneficiary are kept, i.e., his name and local government but no other address is kept. This means that it is almost impossible to use the records kept (which are for rendering accounts solely) to do any monitoring. When asked about why more details are not kept of beneficiaries, he said that their main objective was accountability to the Centre (i.e. the head office), to make sure that funds given for specific purposes were properly accounted for as having been used for what they were intended. The state representative could only hope that the individuals had kept the instructions and advice given to them on what the funds were meant for or that they were using the skills which had been imparted to them. Where the intervention required that equipment be handed over to participants as in CAP, Keke NAPEP and the Orange Box City serve, these items of equipment were given out at subsidized rates. The researcher sought to find out if the organization could guarantee that the equipment were in use and had not been sold or even broken down, the representative confirmed that this was no longer necessary as the equipment had been paid for, even though at a subsidized rate and an individual could do as he pleased with his property. With regard to the just concluded COPE Scheme where the

Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) was given for 12 months until March 2010 and then the Poverty Reduction Accelerated Investment (PRAI) of N84, 000 disbursed to each participant to improve on their existing businesses after the SMEIDAN training in December, 2010, there is no way to find out if these funds have been or are being used according to the instructions on training and to what extent, because the BIG and the PRAI are grants to the individuals/households.

6.4.3 Reports

Reports are presented at the end of each programme. The contents of reports include a listing of the beneficiaries' signing or thumb printing on collection of the funds received on each programme as compiled from disbursing financial houses. They are spiral bound and submitted to the head office where the funds came from. These reports are not usually publicized; they are confidential materials of the government.

In terms of achieving the objectives of the institution, NAPEP was mandated to carry out intervention programmes where identifiable gaps exist in order to tackle income poverty in a continuous and sustainable manner. The evidence from this sample shows that there are income and entrepreneurship gaps that require filling among unemployed graduates and school leavers, farmers, religious groups, the old and vulnerable in society and among rural dwellers and these have been correctly identified by NAPEP. There is also not enough evidence from this sample to say that efforts directed at the targeted have been successful because of the insignificance of impacts on livelihoods and incomes of beneficiaries so far. In terms of the partnerships, only the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) is mentioned to have conducted the trainings and microfinance banks which disbursed the funds. The continuation and sustainability intended is also lacking as none of the programmes is on- going in the state since COPE's disbursements were concluded in 2010.

6.5 Limitations of NAPEP

The limitations of the scheme were also examined and the results are presented next in a fish bone diagram for clarity as Figure 1.

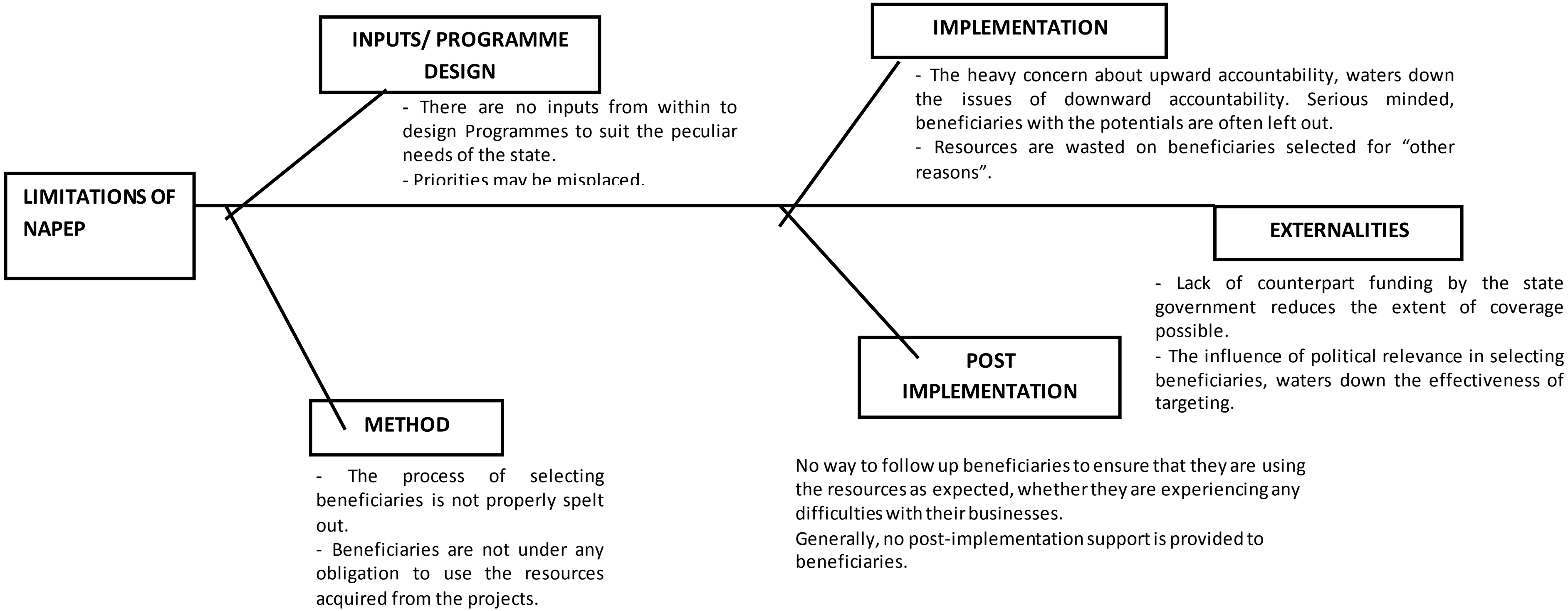

Figure 1: Fish- Bone Diagram showing the Limitations of NAPEP

7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The analysis on NAPEP showed that benefitting from NAPEP has the potential to reduce the probability of being poor but it does not have a positive correlation with income. This does not conform to our a priori expectation. In spite of the fact that NAPEP's activities targeted economic and livelihood activities of its beneficiaries, benefitting from NAPEP did not show a positive correlation with income which is the main index of poverty in its case. This relationship, in turn, affected the other variables that help us to define improved living standards of households and individuals negatively. The inability to capture exactly how much the programme contributed to the welfare states of the beneficiaries, contributes to the controversy. The objective of improving incomes among the beneficiaries has not been achieved so far. While there may be isolated success stories, the programme design and implementation has within it the elements that hinder its own success. The welfare status of beneficiaries of NAPEP's interventions cannot be wholly ascribed to NAPEP because of the inadequacy of the contributions that NAPEP has made so far. The nature of the project designs does not allow for any local inputs on what would be a better project to implement in the State based on the prevailing circumstances. Governments' involvement at the State level is very discouraging. The fact that no counterpart funding is given is an indictment on its commitment to ventures that can improve the welfare of its people. The nature of implementation is shoddy and lopsided, monitoring is intentionally absent and this has led to a waste of the resources that have been put into these interventions. Accountability is only upward, mainly for the purpose of having books piled up and for the staff to keep their jobs. There is no downward accountability provided for and that is why there are no follow up mechanisms. The access to records of NAPEP is very restricted. This may imply a lack of confidence in the quality of the jobs that they do in the state.

Public policy has to be deliberate and that means that the lapses on policy implementation and monitoring which have been revealed have to be avoided completely. When Skills are acquired and mobilized and they are not utilised or they used in the wrong way, resources are wasted. It is important that targeting be done properly when the policy is redistributive or else the essence could be lost. Following from these concluding remarks, the following recommendations are made;

i. The structure of NAPEP, from the stage of Programme design through to post implementation, needs to be improved upon. The improvements should reflect deliberate efforts at ensuring successful programmes rather than just submitting reports to the headquarters.

ii. Governments' commitment to these poverty reduction programmes and other welfare policies needs to be re-awakened. The import of counterpart funding to programme selection and execution should motivate it to make financial commitment. This is because the welfare of the citizen is primarily a state function and while other institutions may participate, government should not be seen to be leaving its responsibilities to others.

iii. Baseline studies for poverty reduction programmes are extremely vital to measure progress. Where progress and viability are the intentions, a "before-assessment" is vital. Data generating bodies in the state need to be re-awakened, retrained and repositioned to embark upon such studies in the future before implementation of policy.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: Distribution of Returned Questionnaires by Business Type

Type of Business Engaged in	Quest. Given out	Quest. Returned/Valid
Carpenters	30	18
Computer Operators	30	17
Households in Terwase Agbadu	30	25
Mechanics/Electricians	30	30
Recharge Card Dealers	30	29
Refrigerator/AC Repairers	30	27
Sugar Cane Producers	30	20
Tailors	30	30
Welders /Fabricators	30	24
TOTAL	**270**	**220**

Source: *Field Survey, 2011.*

Table 2: Awareness about any of NAPEPs Programmes by Business Type

Type of Businesses Engaged in	Aware		Not Aware		Total	
	No.	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**
Carpenters	4	22.2	14	77.8	18	100
Computer Operators	3	17.6	14	82.4	17	100
Households in Terwase Agbadu	7	28.0	18	72.0	25	100
Mechanics/Electrician	9	30.0	21	70.0	30	100
Recharge Card Dealers	6	20.7	23	79.3	29	100
Refrigerator/AC Repairers	8	29.6	19	70.4	27	100
Sugar Cane Producers	4	20.0	16	80.0	20	100
Tailors	8	26.7	22	73.3	30	100
Welders/Fabricators	5	20.8	19	79.2	24	100
TOTALS	**54**	**24.5**	**166**	**75.5**	**220**	**100**

Source: *Field Survey, 2011*

Table 3: Distribution of NAPEP's Beneficiaries by Business Type

Type of Businesses	**Benefitted**	
	Yes	**No**
Carpenters	1	3
Computer Operators	0	3
Households in Terwase Agbadu	5	7
Mechanics/Electricians	2	7
Recharge Card Dealers	4	2
Refrigerator/AC Repairers	3	5
Sugar Cane Producers	3	1
Tailors	5	3
Welders/Frabricators	4	1
Total No	**27**	**27**
Total %	**50**	**50**

Source: *Field Survey, 2011*

Table 4: Most Common/Popular NAPEP Intervention by Business Type

Type of Business Engaged In	Skills Training Acquisition	Grants	Loans/ Microcredit	Keke NAPEP	Others	Total
Carpenters	5	0	3	0	0	8
Computer Operators	2	0	-	1	-	3
Household in Terwase Agbadu	0	5	1	0	0	6
Mechanics/Electricians	3	3	3	1	0	10
Recharge Card Dealers	8	0	3	1	0	12
Refrigerator/AC Repairers	8	3	3	2	1	17
Sugar Cane Producers	2	1	1	0	0	4
Tailors	13	3	6	0	0	22
Welders/Fabricators	6	0	3	0	0	9
Total No.	**47**	**15**	**23**	**5**	**1**	**91**
Total %	**51.6**	**16.5**	**25.3**	**5.5**	**1.1**	**100.0**

Source: *Author's compilation from Field Survey, 2011*

Table 5: Sources of Income for the Households, including NAPEP Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries

Sources	Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries		Total	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**
Major trade	20	74.1	165	85.5	185	84.0
Support from family members	3	11.1	20	10.4	23	10.5
Other	4	14.8	8	4.1	12	5.5
Total	**27**	**100.0**	**193**	**100.0**	**220**	**100.0**

Source: *Field Survey, 2011*

Table 6 : Distribution of Annual Income among NAPEP Beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in the previous twelve months

Ra' nge of Income	Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
< 30,000	1	3.7	7	3.6	8	3.6
30,000 – 59, 999	1	3.7	13	6.7	14	6.1
60,000 – 89,999	15	55.5	63	32.6	78	35.5
90,000 – 120,000	2	7.4	50	25.9	52	23.6
> 120,000	8	29.6	60	31.1	68	30.9
Total	**27**	**100.0**	**193**	**100.0**	**220**	**100.0**

Source: *Field Survey, 2011*

Table 7: Self- perception by Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries on whether they are poor or non- poor.

Perception	Beneficiaries		Non-Beneficiaries		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Poor	19	70.9	89	46.3	108	49.9
Non-Poor	8	29.1	104	53.7	112	50.9
Total	**27**	**100.0**	**193**	**100.0**	**220**	**100.0**

Source: *Field Survey, 2011*

Table 8: Results of the Logistic Regression on the Model

Variables	**Coefficient**	**SE**	**Sig**	**Exp (B)**
Constant	-5.729	6.892	0.009	0.030
INC_2	-0.230	0.000	0.000	0.680
$INCS_2$	0.249	0.320	0.437	1.282
BN	-0.030	0.639	0.591	0.040
MA_2	-0.008	0.112	0.946	0.992
HS_2	0.029	0.582	0.960	1.030
HH_2	0.075	0.731	0.918	1.078
SW_2	0.264	0.240	0.271	1.302
NR_2	0.012	0.233	0.958	1.012
SAC_2	0.193	0.218	0.376	1.212
TF_2	-0.079	0.237	0.738	0.924
DHF_2	-0.236	0.212	0.267	0.790

Source: *Doki (2012)*