



## POVERTY REDUCTION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS), 2015-2020

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<b>Received:</b> September 7 <sup>th</sup> 2021 <b>Accepted:</b> October 8 <sup>th</sup> 2021 <b>Published:</b> December 5 <sup>th</sup> 2021	This study examined the impact of SDGs on poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria (2015-2020). The specific objectives of the study are to examine the prospects of SDGs in Nigeria; to examine the SDGs performance on poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria; to investigate the challenges affecting SDGs on poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria; to proffer measures that can strengthen SDGs on poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria. The study adopted Elite Theory as its theoretical framework of analysis, while the study adopted secondary data as a method of data collection and analysis. The findings revealed that SDGs activities have not sufficiently reduced poverty and enhanced rural development in Nigeria. The study concluded that the Nigerian government did not put much effort to meet up SDGs targets as contained in the policy document within the five years of its existence in the country. The study thus recommends that Governments at all tiers should ensure the proper planning and execution of SDGs programmes and projects to enhance poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development Goals, Poverty, Poverty Reduction, Rural Development.

### INTRODUCTION

Researchers and practitioners have consistently been discussing the impact of poverty reduction programmes on rural development in Nigeria. This has prompted the search for alternative modes and mechanisms for poverty reduction that could bring about economic development. Over the past decade, interest in poverty reduction and rural development has grown significantly in various parts of Nigeria. In the country, government and rural representatives view poverty reduction programmes as important vehicles for rural economic development (Adejumo & Adejumo, 2016).

The advent of modern societies and the development of states or nations brought to the fore, the need for even development to reduce disparity and inequality, which are closely associated with poverty in the spatial context (Ajiye, 2017). This underscores the need for concerted efforts towards poverty reduction since the government alone cannot be relied upon for this. According to Amzat (2009), the rural area and the people have not fared well in what? The rural areas have continued to be backward and low in economic and social well-being over the years. Ezedinma (2016) also observed that the concentration of investment and government expenditure in the urban areas makes the rural areas to be neglected in development programmes.

The government at all levels made several policies and programmes to address the problems of rural poverty and inequality. Despite these efforts, the rise in the standard of living noticed in the advanced world has not trickled down favourably on the developing countries as a gap still exist between the haves and the have not. This phenomenon has led to constant review in approaches to poverty reduction programmes in the country. Some of the major poverty reduction programmes are World Bank Agricultural Development Projects, National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and among others (Ibadan, 2016).

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The timeline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ended in 2015. Given the deficiency of many countries in achieving the set goals, the international community through the vehicle of the United Nations and Heads of states of the 193 member nations, launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a new developmental strategy for 2030. This strategy which is otherwise known as Agenda 2030 is framed into 17 goals, with 169 targets

and 230 Indicators. They designed the agenda as a universal call for action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. At the heart of the 2030 agenda of SDG is poverty eradication with a renewed commitment to leave no one behind. The global goals of SDGs like that of MDGs are all laudable and adequately designed to improve the quality of people's lives globally (Igbuzo, 2017).

In Nigeria, SDGs policies were strengthened by the appointment of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs (OSSAP-SDGs), with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with a wide array of stakeholders that included line Ministries, Civil Society Organizations; organized Private Sector, the Academia; Development Partners; youth groups; women's organizations; persons with disabilities, as well as, Media Organizations (Oleribe, 2016). Though some of the activities of SDGs exist, the efficiency of SDGs in enhancing poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria from 2015-2020 has not been empirically examined and documented. It is against this backdrop, this study seeks to examine the impact of SDGs on poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria (2015-2020).

### Objectives of the Study

- i. To investigate the challenges affecting SDGs on poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria?
- ii. To examine the SDGs performance on poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria.
- iii. To examine the prospects of SDGs in Nigeria?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Concept of Poverty

Poverty has no precise definition but, in the simplest form, it refers to the inability of an individual to attain the minimum standard of living. It can also be defined as a social condition characterized by inadequate access to basic human needs (food and non – food) necessary for the sustenance of a socially acceptable minimum standard of living in a given society. Some of these basic determinants of wellbeing include adequate food, shelter, potable water, Healthcare, education and employment opportunities (Ibadan, 2016). Igbuzo (2017) conceptualized poverty as a function of education, health, child mortality and other demographic variables. Poverty to them is the availability or otherwise of the above parameters. In a nutshell poverty can be seen as a situation in which an individual is unable because of economic, social, political and psychological incapacitation, to provide himself and his family the barest necessities of life.

According to Igbuzor (2015), poverty is pervasive where the majority of the population lives at or below income levels sufficient to meet their basic needs, and the available resources even where equally distributed, are barely sufficient to meet the basic needs of the population. Gore in Obeidi (2012) reiterates that pervasive poverty leads to environmental degradation, as people have to eat into the environmental capital stock to survive. When this happens, the productivity of key assets on which livelihood depends is greatly undermined.

As observed by Oleribe (2016) with mass poverty there tend to be a general loss of confidence in the constituted authority thereby generating disrespect and rendering government policies ineffective; political apathy among contending forces; and social disillusion concerning what the societal objectives are and people's responsibilities towards the attainment of these objectives.

### Concept of Rural Development

The meaning of development has evolved from its earlier narrow conceptualization with economic growth expressed in aggregate economic indicator of GNP to a more broad-based conceptualization as a multidimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty (Sabou, 2020). Rural development is an action that helps people to recognize and develop their ability and potential and organize themselves to respond to problems and needs which they share. It supports the establishment of strong rural community development agencies that control and use assets to promote social justice and help improve the quality of community life. It also enables the community and other public agencies to work together to improve the quality of government (Otigba, 2016).

According to Winjobi (2017), the concept of rural development should be viewed as a holistic concept, which recognizes the complexity and inter-relatedness of the many variables which influence the quality of life in rural areas, it is a complex process, which involves the interaction of economic, social, political, cultural, technological and other situational factors. Hence for the actualization of the concept, these factors have to be integrated with local government policies and plans with the objectives of improving the quality of life of the people in the rural sector.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopted elite theory as the theoretical framework of our analysis. The theory was developed and popularized by Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), Gaetano Mosca (1858–1941), and Robert Michels (1876–1936). Elite theory is a theory that describes the power relationship in contemporary society. The theory asserts that a small clique (minority group) composed of members of the political class and the policymaking network hold the most power in a state and they exert substantial power over policy decisions (Awojobi, 2014). Vergara (2013) posits that the elite is a small powerful group that controls a large amount of power. Pareto in Awojobi (2014) emphasized the psychological and knowledgeable power that the political elite has obtained and he considers them to be the governing elite. The political elite is a cabinet of people that control the reins of government (Vergara 2013).

Elite theory opposes pluralism, a tradition that assumes that all individuals, or at least the multitude of social groups, have equal power and balance each other out in contributing to democratic political outcomes representing the emergent, aggregate will of society. The elite theory argues either that democracy is a utopian folly, as it is traditionally viewed in the conservative Italian tradition, or that democracy is not realizable within capitalism, as is the view of the more Marxist-compatible contemporary elite theory permutation (Gonzalez, 2009).

Applying elite theory in this study shows that elites are a few powerful individuals that are in charge of implementing SDGs policies which are meant to enhance poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria. The masses and the poor for whom the SDGs programmes are meant are not adequately consulted and are not allowed to take an active part in issues that affect them. In the country, the only negligible elite who finds their way into positions of authority put policies in place for the people. As such, the SDGs programmes on poverty reduction and rural development remain fundamentally defective either in policy conception or their implementation. The consequence is widespread poverty and rural underdevelopment in Nigeria while the negligible cabal amasses the wealth of the country for selfish interest.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study is based on a qualitative method. Therefore, the researcher used the secondary method of data collection. Secondary data refer to data that is collected by someone other than the user. Secondary sources comprise textbooks, academic journals, and internet materials, magazines, newspapers, conference/seminar papers, "archival" materials and unpublished projects, dissertations and thesis. Secondary sources of data were considered quite useful in this research study, especially for exploratory purposes.

The study made use of the contributions and submissions of various scholars to evaluate and determine the findings of the research. As such a good number of works on SDGs role in poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria was sampled and criticised. This study aimed to examine the prospects of SDGs in Nigeria; the SDGs performance on poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria; the SDGs performance on poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria; the challenges affecting SDGs on poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria; the measures that can strengthen SDGs on poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria. A general survey of the literature was carried out to harness the current state of scholarly submissions on SDGs role in poverty reduction and rural development.

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **The Challenges Affecting SDGs towards Poverty Reduction and Rural Development in Nigeria**

Although the Nigerian Government claims it did well in meeting the SDGs targets in promoting rural development, it also acknowledges that the progress was slow (Okpe & Abu, 2020). The slow pace of achievement of SDGs can be attributed to several challenges, according to Omotola (2020), corruption, inadequate and unreliable data system, political violence, the poor notion of governance, lack of synergy, mismatched expenditure and lack of quality control are challenges affecting SDGs performance towards enhancing poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria.

Internal official corruption and embezzlement (or mismanagement) of funds has been identified as the greatest (combined) threat to SDGs in Nigeria because funds accessed from international donors and debt forgiveness packages do not reach their SDG destinations, but end up in private pockets. There has equally been the problem of accountability and transparency in the delivery of SDGs projects to the people. No meaningful progress can be attained in any development programme under the situation of corruption and lack of accountability. The country has a very high index rating on the international (world) corruption index. Official corruption is on the increase as those in the corridors of power have significantly abused, misused, misdirected and misapplied funds meant for the public good. Most of the implementing agencies of the MDGs scheme have not provided detailed accounts of funds budgeted for the SDGs scheme and what has been achieved. Corruption has been the bane of abandonment of most SDGs projects by contractors and implementing ministries of such projects. What is seen on the ground are mere sketchy paperwork of achievements. Lack of transparency permeates all aspects of public sector management in Nigeria, which has resulted in weaknesses in the planning and budgeting process, especially for SDGs projects (Okpe & Abu, 2020).

On the other hand, political violence is one of the major problems affecting SDGs performance towards poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria. Political violence such as the post-election violence in 2015 and 2019, the Niger Delta insurgency, the terrorism of Boko Haram, Banditry activities, inter-ethnic conflicts, and intra/inter-community conflicts have driven out investments, destroyed infrastructure and human lives, and created instability that has not only worsened poverty and inequality especially rural areas but also put national development at risk (Omotola, 2020).

The problem of data is another challenge affecting SDGs performance towards enhancing poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria. As reported by Ovwasa (2020), the federal government has admitted that the efforts by the country to meet the SDGs by 2030 were being undermined by the lack of adequate data on the various interventionist programmes at all levels of government. Without adequate data, how do we evaluate performance and make further planning? No doubt, data is a huge challenge. In the report of the Centre for Democracy and Development (2019), accurate and timely statistical figures including gender-disaggregated data must be in place for effective economic development planning to take place in Nigeria.

Lack of political will and poor governance is another challenge affecting SDGs performance towards enhancing poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria. There is a lack of political will on the part of the government in all tiers to execute and evaluate projects with effective parameters to measure the achievement of each of the goals. This has to do with issues of poor governance on the part of most Nigerian leaders, who have not adopted appropriate development approaches or models to end poverty and hunger. There have been faulty responses to the issues of food security and agricultural development. Most of these inappropriate measures have not targeted the poorest of the poor (Yisau, 2020).

Lack of synergy is a challenge affecting SDGs performance towards enhancing poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria. There has been no coherent policy, process or institutional framework that coordinates all related activities of MDGs project implementation between the various tiers of government in the country. Though offices of Special Assistants on MDGs are established at the Federal and States levels, there is a complete lack of supervision and coordination in terms of MDGs project implementation (Omotola, 2020).

Mismatched Expenditure on SDGs activities is a challenge affecting SDGs performance towards enhancing poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria. Too much emphasis is placed on public expenditure on the so-called SDG-related activities, which has led to a wide gap between the large public expenditure and real achievements. In most National and States budgets, there have been poor provisions for critical areas such as agriculture, health, education etc. In extreme situations, budgetary provisions do not approximate what is implemented on SDGs projects (Okpe & Abu, 2020).

Lack of quality control: The problems of quality control as it affects SDGs in Nigeria are issues of faulty conception, monitoring and actualization of SDGs in various states, Local Government Areas and communities. Quality control strategies should be applied in the execution of SDGs related projects. Most of the projects implemented under the SDGs are substandard, thereby putting the sustainability of the projects in jeopardy (Okpe & Abu, 2020).

### **The SDGs Performance on Poverty Reduction and Rural Development in Nigeria**

Reports are showing that SDGs performance has not sufficiently reduced poverty and enhanced rural development in Nigeria. The mid-point Assessment Report (2020) shows that among every ten Nigerians living in rural areas, seven were still living in poverty. Their findings further show that poverty in rural areas is rated at 56.6% in 2015 and 84.6% in 2020 (Chukwuemeka, 2020). According to Ovwasa (2020), 70% of the over 200 million Nigerians currently live below the poverty line of one dollar per day. The rapid urbanization, put at over 5 per cent per annum, exerts severe pressure on ailing infrastructure in the rural areas. Nigeria is further ranked as one of the twenty-five poorest nations in the world. This further intensifies the unemployment rate in the country. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2020), the unemployment rate in the rural areas of the country rose from about 52 of 100 working-age people in 2015 to 75 in 2020.

On ending hunger, achieving food security and promoting sustainable agriculture; the report shows that there is no remarkable progress made since 2015-2020. For instance, the Nigeria hunger statistics in rural areas increased from 13.40% in 2015 to 67.52%, while agricultural production in rural areas declined from 78.3% in 2015 to 38.12% in 2020. In the same vein, reports show that there is no remarkable growth in the Nigerian economy since 2015-2020. For example, the economic GDP growth declined from 63.26% in 2015 to 41.34% in 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

On all health-related SDGs Nigeria is currently off-track and total government spending on health has remained below 5 per cent – one of the lowest rates in Africa. The infant mortality rate rose from 81 per 1000 live births in the year 2015 to 110 per 1000 live births in 2020, which is farther away from the global target of 30 per 1000 live births in 2030. The maternal mortality in 2020 shows that in the rural areas, it was, 828 deaths per 100,000 live births, and 53, deaths per 100,000 live births in urban areas. The report further revealed that approximately two-thirds of all Nigerian women and three-quarters of the rural women deliver outside health facilities and without medically skilled attendants present (The Nigerian Observer, 2020). On malaria and tuberculosis, the report shows that remarkable progress has been made since 2015 till date. For instance, the prevalence rate of malaria declined from 2,024 per 100,000 in 2017 to 1, 158 in 2020. The Roll Back malaria initiative contributed to the success. This notwithstanding, malaria accounted for 60% of out-patients and an annual average of 300,000 deaths (The Nigerian Observer, 2020). Despite the remarkable success recorded in the area of malaria prevalence, the situation is not encouraging in the area of tuberculosis, which remains a public health problem in the country. Although it also declined from 16 per 100,000 in 2017 to 7 per 100,000 in 2019; as of 2020, Nigeria remained among the 22 high burden countries in the world and first in Africa. The provision of health facilities is still grossly inadequate (Chukwuemeka, 2020).

In terms of infrastructural development, the mid-point Assessment Report of SDGs in rural areas of Nigeria (2020) indicated that infrastructure development such as roads, bridges, hospitals, schools and markets increase from 15.6% in 2015 to 28.6% in 2020 against the target of 90% by 2030. With regards to potable water supply in the country suffers from limited investment in infrastructure and poor management, the report indicated that the proportion of people with access to safe drinking water declined from 54.0% in 2015 to 41.5% in 2020. In the same vein, the report shows that the proportion of the population with access to basic sanitation dropped from 42.9% in 2016 to 38% in 2020 (The Nigerian Observer, 2020).

On gender parity of SDGs, NBS (2020) report that Nigeria has not achieved gender parity targets at primary and secondary education levels in the rural areas. For instance, gender parity in education in rural areas declined from 62.7% in 2015 to 40.34% in 2020. According to Okpe and Abu (2020) about one million Nigerian girls in the rural areas

were given out for forced and exploitative labour, of which 18 per cent work in dangerous environments after school hours. Generally, on education, over thirty million poor Nigerian children of school age in rural areas were reported to be out of school in 2020 (Omotola, 2020). For example, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2020) indicate that the number of school dropouts in rural areas increase from 42.1% in 2015 to 84.7% in 2020.

The area in which Nigeria did well according to the report is the last goal, which is to develop a global partnership for sustainable development. The country is actively participating in several regional initiatives such as the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). The country also belongs to several bilateral and multilateral trade pacts such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Economic Community of West African Countries (ECOWAS) and the African Caribbean pacific–European economic partnership Agreement (ACP-EU-EPA) (Omotola, 2020). Since global partnership hinges significantly on information flows, key indicators relating to ICT were also assessed. The UNDP (2020) report shows that Tele-density in the country has expanded from 0.73% in 2015 to 15.72% in 2018 and 27.41% in 2020, which is above the international telecommunications union (ITU) minimum standard of 1:100. In terms of the use of the internet, the 2019 UNDP report shows that the population of Nigerians in the rural areas using the internet rose from 0.68 in every 1000 persons in 2015 to 38.1 in 2019. Even at that, internet access is still very low in the country relative to other similar countries (The Nigerian Observer, 2020).

In a nutshell, it is obvious from the various reports and glancing through the successes or otherwise achieved in Nigeria, the country was slow in some goals particularly goals 6 and 9, the situation is worse in goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8. However, there was remarkable improvement in goal 17. But, it is disheartening to discover that the Nigerian government did not put much effort to meet up SDGs targets as contained in the policy document within the five years of its existence in the country.

**The Prospects of SDGs in Nigeria**

In trying to highlight the prospects of SDGs towards poverty reduction and rural development in Nigeria, it is pertinent to have a glance at what the SDGs stands for. The UN Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015 at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice especially in rural areas, and tackle climate change by 2030. The SDGs is the successor global development programme that replaced the MDGs (Chukwuemeka, 2020). In September 2015, Heads of State adopted the Agenda for sustainable development. This Agenda charts out a universal holistic framework to help set the world on a path towards sustainable development, by addressing economic development, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and good governance. This vision, which was endorsed by 193 Nations in New York, is expected to guide nations, International organizations, the private sector, civil society and governments in all countries and at all levels in the shared pursuit of a healthier world and a better tomorrow (Vincent, 2017). The table below depicts what the goals are:

**Table 1: The Sustainable Development Goals**

Goal 1: Poverty	<b>End poverty in all its forms everywhere</b>
Goal 2: Food	End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
Goal 3: Health	Ensure healthy lives and promote well being for all at all levels.
Goal 4: Education	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
Goal 5: Women	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
Goal 6: Water	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
Goal 7: Energy	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
Goal 8: Economy	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work.
Goal9:Infrastructure	Build resident infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
Goal 10 Inequality	Reduce inequality within and among countries.
Goal 11 Habitation	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal12:Consumption	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
Goal 13: Climate	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact.
Goal 14: Marine	The ecosystem conserves and sustainably uses the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
Goal 15: Ecosystem	Protect, restore and sustainably use of terrestrial ecosystem, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and a half and revere land degradation.
Goal 16: Institutions	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
Goal17:Sustainability	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Source: Sustainable Development Goals (2020)

**Table 2: The Sustainable Development Goals and Targets**

SDGs	Target
Goal 1	<b>The goal has seven targets:</b> Eradication of extreme poverty; Reduction of all poverty by half; Implementation of social protection systems; Ensuring equal rights to ownership, basic services, technology and economic resources; and the building of resilience to environmental, economic and social disasters; mobilization of resources to end poverty; and the establishment of poverty eradication policy frameworks at all levels.
Goal 2	<b>The goal has eight targets:</b> Ending hunger and improving access to food; Ending all forms of malnutrition; Agricultural productivity; Sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices; Genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals; Investments, research and technology; Addressing trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets and; Food commodity markets and their derivatives
Goal 3	<b>The goal has thirteen targets:</b> Reduction of maternal mortality; Ending all preventable deaths under 5 years of age; Fight communicable diseases; Ensure reduction of mortality from non-communicable diseases and promote mental health; Prevent and treat substance abuse; Reduce road injuries and deaths; Grant universal access to sexual and reproductive care, family planning and education; Achieve universal health coverage; Reduce illnesses and deaths from hazardous chemicals and pollution; Implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control; Support research, development and universal access to affordable vaccines and medicines; Increase health financing and support health workforce in developing countries; and Improve early warning systems for global health risks.
Goal 4	<b>The goal has ten targets:</b> Free primary and secondary education; Equal access to quality pre-primary education; Affordable technical, vocational and higher education; Increased number of people with relevant skills for financial success; Elimination of all discrimination in education; Universal literacy and numeracy; Education for sustainable development and global citizenship; Build and upgrade inclusive and safe schools; Expand higher education scholarships for developing countries; and Increase the supply of qualified teachers in developing countries.
Goal 5	<b>The goal has five targets:</b> Ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere; Ending violence and exploitation of women and girls; eliminating harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation; the Increasing value of unpaid care and promoting shared domestic responsibilities; Ensuring full participation of women in leadership and decision-making; Ensuring access to universal reproductive rights and health; Fostering equal rights to economic resources, property ownership and financial services for women; Promoting empowerment of women through technology; and Adopting, strengthening policies and enforcing legislation for gender equality.
Goal 6	<b>The goal has eight targets:</b> Safe and affordable drinking water; End open defecation and provide access to sanitation and hygiene; Improve water quality, wastewater treatment and safe reuse; Increase water-use efficiency and ensure freshwater supplies, Implement IWRM, protect and restore water-related ecosystems; Expand water and sanitation support to developing countries, and Support local engagement in water and sanitation management.
Goal 7	<b>The goal has five targets:</b> Universal access to modern energy; Increase the global percentage of renewable energy; Double the improvement in energy efficiency; Promote access to research, technology and investments in clean energy; and Expand and upgrade energy services for developing countries.
Goal 8	<b>The goal has twelve targets:</b> Sustainable economic growth; Diversify, innovate and upgrade for economic productivity; Promote policies to support job creation and growing enterprises; Improve resource efficiency in consumption and production; Full employment and decent work with equal pay; Promote youth employment, education and training; End modern slavery, trafficking, and child labour; Protect labour rights and promote safe working environments; Promote beneficial and sustainable tourism; Universal access to banking, insurance and financial services; Increase aid for trade support, and develop a global youth employment strategy.
Goal 9	<b>The goal has eight targets:</b> Develop sustainable, resilient and inclusive infrastructures; Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization; Increase

	access to financial services and markets; Upgrade all industries and infrastructures for sustainability; Enhance research and upgrade industrial technologies. Facilitate sustainable infrastructure development for developing countries; Support domestic technology development and industrial diversification; and Universal access to information and communications technology.
Goal 10	<b>The goal has ten targets:</b> Reduce income inequalities; Promote universal social, economic and political inclusion; Ensure equal opportunities and end discrimination; Adopt fiscal and social policies that promote equality; Improved regulation of global financial markets and institutions; Enhanced representation for developing countries in financial institutions; Responsible and well-managed migration policies; Special and differential treatment for developing countries; Encourage development assistance and investment in the least developed countries, and Reduce transaction costs for migrant remittances.
Goal 11	<b>The goal has ten targets:</b> Safe and affordable housing, affordable and sustainable transport systems; Inclusive and sustainable urbanization; Protect the world's cultural and natural heritage; Reduce the adverse effects of natural disasters; Reduce the environmental impacts of cities; Provide access to safe and inclusive green and public spaces; Strong national and regional development planning; Implement policies for inclusion, resource efficiency and disaster risk reduction; and Support least developed countries in the sustainable and resilient building.
Goal 12	<b>The goal has eleven targets:</b> Implement the 10-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns; Achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources; Reducing by half the per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels; Achieving the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle; Reducing waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse; Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices; Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable; Ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development; Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity; Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts; and Remove market distortions, like fossil-fuel subsidies, that encourage wasteful consumption
Goal 13	<b>The goal has five targets:</b> Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related disasters; Integrate climate change measures into policies and planning; Build knowledge and capacity to meet climate change; Implement the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and Promote mechanisms to raise capacity for planning and management.
Goal 14	<b>The goal has ten targets:</b> Reduce marine pollution; Protect and restore ecosystems; Reduce ocean acidification; sustainable fishing; conserve coastal and marine areas; End subsidies contributing to overfishing; Increase the economic benefits from the sustainable use of marine resources; Increase scientific knowledge, research and technology for ocean health; Support small scale fishers, and Implement and enforce international sea law
Goal 15	<b>The goal has nine targets:</b> Conserve and restore terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems; End deforestation and restore degraded forests; End desertification and restore degraded land; Ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, protect biodiversity and natural habitats; Protect access to genetic resources and fair sharing of the benefits; Eliminate poaching and trafficking of protected species; Prevent invasive alien species on land and in water ecosystems; Integrate ecosystem and biodiversity in governmental planning; Increase financial resources to conserve and sustainably use ecosystem and biodiversity; Finance and incentivize sustainable forest management; combat global poaching and trafficking.
Goal 16	<b>The goal has ten targets:</b> Reduce violence; Protect children from abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence; Promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice; Combat organized crime and illicit financial and arms flows, substantially reduce corruption and bribery; Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions; Ensure responsive, inclusive and representative decision-making; strengthen the participation in global governance; Provide universal legal identity; Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms; Strengthen national institutions to prevent violence and combat crime and terrorism; Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies

Goal 17	<b>The goal has nineteen targets:</b> to assure that countries and organizations cooperate instead of competing; Develop multi-stakeholder partnerships to share knowledge; Expertise Technology; Financial support is seen as critical to the overall success of the SDGs; The goal encompasses improving north-south and South-South cooperation, and public-private partnerships which involve civil societies are specifically mentioned.
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Source: Sustainable Development Goals (2020)

It glaring from the above that the SDGs are all-encompassing goals that touch on all spheres of human life, which if met would no doubt go a long way in bettering human life by reducing poverty and enhancing rural development in all its ramifications. However, the realization of these goals in the developing societies may prove relatively difficult because basic infrastructure like railways, roads, information technologies, sanitation, electric power and water remains scarce in many developing countries, Nigeria inclusive. About 2.6 billion people in the developing world are facing difficulties in accessing electricity full time (Ezedinma, 2016).

The 169 targets accompanying the 17 SDGs, whilst global in nature and universal in application, also take into account different national realities, capacities, levels of development and respect for national policies and priorities. The SDGs are no doubt consistent with Nigeria's current national aspirations of achieving inclusive growth (Udoma, 2016).

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is disheartening to discover that the Nigerian government did not put much effort to meet up SDGs targets as contained in the policy document within the five years of its existence in the country. Statistics reveal that from 2015 to 2020, Nigerians (especially in the rural areas) do not have access to safe drinking water, primary health care and the rate of unemployment, poverty and hunger is increasing daily. This paints an abnormal picture of the failure of SDGs as a poverty reduction and rural development policy. This failure can be attributed to a high level of insecurity, poor governance, inadequate and unreliable data system, corruption, lack of synergy, mismatched expenditure and lack of quality control in the country. The researcher, therefore, recommends as following:

- i. To achieve the SDGs, governments must be efficient, transparent, and accountable. Good governments manage bureaucracies efficiently, adhere to the rule of law, control corruption, protect civil and political rights, and remain accountable to their citizens.
- ii. Issues of massive corruption and embezzlement of public funds should be tackled with more vigour in line with the UN initiatives on corruption. This will create more confidence and interest on the part of donor countries, and also make funds available for SDGs related programmes.
- iii. Governments at all tiers should ensure the proper planning and execution of people-oriented programmes and projects. There is a need for quality and focused approaches to drive efficiently the demand-driven infrastructure of the local people.
- iv. To reduce/eradicate extreme poverty in the country, government and donor organizations should build up an effective data bank that would enable it to identify poor communities, as well as initiate measures to open the areas and give them access to social facilities and amenities.
- v. Improvement in achieving universal primary education can further be realized through sustained implementation of UBE and by enhancing the capacity of the Ministry of Education.
- vi. Concerning the health-based goals, there is an urgent need to strengthen the implementation of the Roll Back Malaria initiative and the prevention of new diseases. The challenges of inadequate primary health care facilities, shortage of trained personnel and inadequate resource allocation need to be dealt with in the rural areas of Nigeria.

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