

# **DIMENSION OF POVERTY IN NIGERIA: POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE**

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## **Abstract**

*Poverty is an insidious disease that incapacitates, depresses, and ultimately kills scores of people world-wide. Nigeria like many other developing countries in Africa has a large portion of its population living in abject poverty. Recently, the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics released a report claiming that about 100 million Nigerians are living below poverty level. Millions of Nigerians go to bed with empty stomach and different diseases are currently ravaging the country. Poverty in Nigeria is widespread and all-encompassing. Casual evidence of the growing intensity of poverty in the country can be glimpsed from rising incidence of mass unemployment, homelessness, diminished access to quality food and nutrition, health care and educational facilities and the rising incidence of street begging, among others. This paper links poverty with the institutionalization of corruption by the leaders who subvert the democratic structure and ethos of the state. Thus, they were rarely in a hurry to implement public policies that will reduce abject poverty, provide knowledge and unrestricted access to healthy living. In view of this, the paper conceptualizes poverty as a product of bad governance and adopts a holistic approach to alleviate or minimize poverty through good governance, since leadership is sacrosanct to national development.*

**Keywords:** Poverty, Governance, Accountability, Public Policy Implementation

Nigeria is a nation that is endowed with multifarious and multitudinous resources-both human and material. However, due to gross bad governance,

mismanagement, profligate spending, kleptomania and adverse policies of successive governments in Nigeria, these resources have not been optimally utilized; these resources have not been adequately channeled to profitable investments to bring about maximum economic benefits. As a result of the foregoing, Nigeria has been bedeviled with pervasive poverty. In this case, one can conveniently say that poverty in its present dimension is quite ironic. Economic growth, which is supposed to be a solution to the problems of poverty, appears not to be so in Nigeria. Poverty in Nigeria can be traced to lack of good governance and mismanagement arising from militarization of policy making with attendant inflexibility in policy evaluation and political blindness of usurping rulers. Therefore, good governance has become as imperative to poverty reduction as it has become to development more generally

Poverty in Nigeria has many indices. Nigeria is a country with over 140 million people therefore the dimension of mass poverty in Nigeria is both dreadful and shocking. Many citizens of Nigeria cannot afford to live a decent life. Several millions of Nigerians do not have the usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions. Only a few people are comfortable. The situation is made worse because of the absence of basic infrastructure of life. Yet, every election year the people receive promises from desperate politicians that they will be provided with basic needs of life. However, governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's social and economic resources for development. Good governance implies a capacity to turn public income into human development outcomes. It is an essential precondition for pro poor growth as it establishes the enabling regulatory, and legal framework essential for the sound functioning of land, labor, capital and other factor markets. Due to decades of mismanagement and poor governance in Nigeria, the nation is characterized by neglect of the social sector, fiscal and monetary policies, flawed growth policies pursued by the government tremendously increase the number of the poor population living below the poverty lines. Funds were not used judiciously to improve educational and health facilities, particularly in rural areas. No wage increase was made compatible with inflation and cost of living.

The policy for addressing poverty alleviation which began in 2003 proves to be unsystematic and ineffective. However, the main reason of poverty retaining in Nigeria is seen in bad governance, which comprises widespread corruption, non-transparency and non-accountability of public policy making and implementation, closeness of public authorities from citizens' participation and control. The fundamental objective of this paper is to contribute to the debate on the links between good governance and poverty reduction which have come to the fore in development literature and practice. The paper utilizes documentary analysis and, in particular, content analysis as a research method in order to examine current poverty reduction policy in Nigeria and the place of good governance in it. The paper recommends that governance indicators that refer to

transparent political systems, civil liberties and political freedom, tend to be conducive to poverty reduction in Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Framework of Poverty**

Poverty is the deprivation of food, shelter, money and clothing that occurs when people cannot satisfy their basic needs. Poverty can be understood simply as a lack of money, or more broadly in terms of barriers to everyday life. Poverty is still a serious issue facing the developing economies. According to the World Bank, the most pressing issue facing the developing countries is how to reduce poverty. Poverty amidst plenty is the world's greatest challenge. For more than two centuries the issue of poverty has attracted the attention of anthropologists, economists, sociologists, political philosophers and politicians. How people become poor and what should be done to improve their condition. Generally poverty is defined as the inability to meet basic needs as measured by income or consumption poverty and standards of living are closely linked. The conceptualization of the term poverty has been transformed with the changing time. Initially poverty was defined in pure economic terms as lack of food, clothing and shelter, it included education, environment and health. Poverty is understood as basic human deprivation.. Yet development is not limited to the provision of basic needs. It is related to the development of human beings.

According to the World Bank (1999), poverty is hunger, lack of shelter, being sick and not being able to go to school, not knowing how to read, not being able to speak properly, not having a job, fear for the future, losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water, powerlessness; and lack of representation and freedom. Sanyal (1991), and Schuberty (1994), also see poverty as either absolute or relative or both. Absolute poverty is that which could be applied at all times in all societies such as the level of income necessary for bare subsistence while relative poverty relates to the living standards of the poor to the standards that prevail elsewhere in the society in which they live.

Recent studies by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) advocate the use of Human Development Index (HDI). According to UNDP (1997, 1998), HDI combines three components in the measure of poverty: life expectancy at birth (longevity); educational attainment and improved standard of living determined by per capita income. The first relates to survival - Vulnerability to death at a relatively early age. The second relates to knowledge-being excluded from the world of reading and communication. The third relates to a decent living standard, in terms of overall economic provision (Courier, 1994, UNDP 1997, 1998).

In Mutiullah (2010), poverty is conceptualized as a phenomenon that exists at national, community and individual levels. At the national level, poverty represents a

state of general socio-economic underdevelopment arising from poor natural resource endowment, poor human resource endowment, low productivity, low and stagnating national income or gross domestic product, inadequate availability of social and infrastructural facilities and services, and a general inability to provide a minimally decent level of living for the ordinary citizens. At the community level, poverty is a state of general socio-economic deprivation arising from environmental and natural resource degradation, inadequate access to social services and basic infrastructure, inadequate local employment and income-generating opportunities, and general appearance of physical decay and wasting of community asset. At the household or individual level, poverty is the inability to gain access to basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, decent shelter, and so on, inability to fulfill basic economic and social obligation, and a general lack of esteem. Inadequate income to meet basic needs, lack of skill or opportunity for gainful employment, lack of access to productive assets and social constraints to self-improvement are some of the underlying factors in the incidence of poverty.

But riding a global overview, particularly on the crest of sociological researches driven by Wilkins (1984), poverty is termed the income of a community which in subdivision among families and kindred, is less than 40 per cent of the norm which manifests more in poor infrastructure, poor health, poor nutrition, poor self esteem, low hygienic standards, low intellectual development and lack of capacity to articulate social, economic and political environment and low per capita income. Poverty at this range can be defined as the inability to achieve a certain minimal standard of living. With the severe economic shocks that rocked the Nigerian economy during the early 1980s came real and perceived increases in the level of poverty in the country. Among the factors contributing to the shocks were declining prices of oil, the country's main export, and rises in real international interest rates that compounded the external debt. The major underlying reason, however, was domestic policy mistakes.

### **Poverty and Governance Nexus: Diversity of Patterns and Issues**

Nigeria has been relegated to the backwaters of under-development with poverty in the country steadily on the rise. Shortly after independence in 1960, according to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, about 15 per cent of the population was poor. This rose to 28 per cent in 1980. By 1985, it had risen to 46 per cent, dropping to 43 per cent in 1992. However, by 1996 the poverty incidence had gone up to 66 per cent before climbing further to the current rate of 92 per cent (NBS, 2011). This rise in poverty rate in the country has been inversely proportional to the petro-dollar wealth of the country; it seems Nigeria makes more money to get Nigerians poorer; the richer the country, the poorer the citizens. This is what has led some experts to submit that the country is steadily sliding from relative to absolute poverty. Relative poverty is a measure of income inequality. It is measured as the percentage of population with income less than

a fixed proportion of median income. Absolute poverty, however, is “a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services” (Olowu, 2002). It is therefore important to note that the poor are so because they have been excluded from opportunities to earn decent income, enjoy health care facilities, access educational facilities. It is this exclusion that leads to a debilitating lifestyle that underpins poverty. Moreover, the exclusion that causes poverty is precipitated by a number of factors such as official corruption, unfavourable government policies, poor investment in education, inability to access credit, government’s anti-poverty efforts etc.

Among several causal connections, Shaffer (2008) accentuate that inclusion of social, political and cultural capital into the analysis of poverty is reflected in the increasing importance of governance. He distinguishes particularly three important governance constituents - inclusiveness, lawfulness and accountability.

***Inclusiveness*** requires the governing structures to embrace a wide array of diverse interests in the society, including voice of the poor. The inclusion of marginalized communities is widely accepted as fundamental to sustainable development (McLennan and Ngoma, 2004). The inclusiveness concept considers deprivation and impoverishment as the effects of exclusion from decision-making process and seeks to correct this by empowering disenfranchised (Goudie, 1998). Thus, inclusiveness touches upon empowerment, participatory democracy, civil society organization and decentralization (Schneider, 1999). It is also close to social, political and cultural capital as well as to constituents of well-being and social deprivation, namely: agency, self-determination, dignity, self-respect and social integration (Shaffer, 2008). *Empowerment* is highlighted as the primary objective of changing the condition of the poor, initially with regard to the protection of their rights (Islam, 2005). Rowlands (1997) divides empowerment interventions into those which address internal and external sources of power. The internal source of power concerns internalized beliefs, norms and values which maintain subordination within a social hierarchy (Shaffer, 2008). Internal empowerment questions the validity of existing norms and beliefs and promotes awareness about opportunities regarded inconceivable before.

***Lawfulness***, in accordance with Shaffer (2008), requires governing structures to follow the rule of law and serve as guarantors of lawful civil conduct. It refers to issues of justice, conflict resolution, criminality, peace and security, social violence, human rights, etc. Additionally, it is closely linked to coercive, social and political capital and to constituents of well-being related to personal security (Anderson, 1999). He argues that perverse functioning of the legal system contributes to poverty and deprivation since it fails to protect the poor, discriminates against or remains inaccessible to poor groups.

In his article, the scholar draws on several mechanisms by which lawlessness and poverty reinforce each other. For example, corruption harms the poor since they are less able to afford extra charge demanded for service provision; the poor face a greater risk of losing their property by means of public or private theft; they are more vulnerable to arbitrary treatment, intimidation and humiliation by public officials; human rights abuses, official harassment, police abuse, etc. affect the poor who are less likely to have recourse to legal remedies, etc. Hence, lawlessness is an important constituent of deprivation and cause for impoverishment.

*Accountability*, according to Shaffer (2008), requires governing structures to be responsible for their actions as well as open to sanction in case of law violation (the author emphasizes also violation of inclusiveness and lawfulness principles). Thus, poverty remains in the impunity context, due to which the poor are not able to hold accountable state authorities at the helm (Jenkins and Goetz, 1999). Accountability is concerned with corruption, transparency, access to information and elections, etc. For example, corruption is a major obstacle for development in Nigeria, ‘creating a shadowy environment which protects the acts of wrongdoing and prevents the effective enforcement of sanctions’ (Azmat and Coghill, 2005). According to Schedler (1999), the process of ensuring accountability involves two components: answerability and enforcement. Answerability is the requirement upon public officials to make information about their activities available and to reason their actions. Enforcement, on its turn, is the ability to impose sanctions on political leaders and public officials who acts illegally or violates their public duties. Enforcement also requires the ability to give an authoritative pronouncement on which actions are legal and which are illegal. Generally, the key element of accountability is obeying the rule of law as well as the rule of reason (Schedler, 1999).

To summarize, Shepherd (2000) argues that it is difficult to demonstrate a general link between the narrow good government agenda and poverty reduction as well as between macro-economic management reforms and income poverty reduction in any convincing way. Nevertheless, it is widely accepted by academic world, that in the case of economic growth, complementary measures are required to ensure that growth generates employment; that real wages are able to increase; that resources are available for building human capital, before income poverty could be sustainably reduced (Shepherd, 2000).

### **Past Attempts to Alleviate Poverty in Nigeria**

Poverty as a social menace has gradually found its way back into the front-burner of contemporary intellectual and policy discourse aimed at enhancing individual and collective development. Past governments have engaged in the past time of glorifying poverty alleviation on the pages of newspapers and news conferences

but have failed to deliver. The earliest poverty alleviation programmes were the 1972 Gen. Yakubu Gowon's *National Accelerated Food Production Programme* (NAFPP) and the *Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank* (NACB), entirely devoted to funding agriculture. The NAFPP turned out to be a colossal waste and nothing was achieved. There was the much publicized *Operation Feed the Nation* (OFN) in 1976 by the then military strong-man, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, which expended much money and effort in getting ill - prepared university undergraduates to go to the rural areas to teach the peasants farmers how to farm. A kind of teaching an old dog a new trick. A theoretical farming graduate teaching a farmer, who makes his/her living out of farming, how to farm. The scheme's only success was in creating awareness of food shortage and the need to tackle the problem.

The 1979 Shehu Shagari's *Green Revolution Programme* (GRP) had the twin objectives of curtailing food importation while boosting crop and fibre production. The overall objective was big (mechanized) farming. Many senior civil and military officers, both in and out of office, used their access to the state to the advantage of the wide range of facilities committed to the Green Revolution. These bureaucrats - cum - farmers were also joined by many private businessmen. Some new-breed farmers were only interested in getting Certificate of Occupancy for large tracks of land. The land can then be used for speculative purposes, for example, as collateral for securing loans. When the programme ended in 1983, 2 billion naira tax payers' money was wasted. That is more than two hundred billion naira in today's exchange rate.

Buhari's government introduced the *Go Back to Land Programme* with variations. But like its predecessors, it fizzled out and died. There is a belief that one of the major reasons for the failure of all these agricultural/poverty reduction programmes was that they were based on "faulty philosophy". The belief is that food programmes such as the Gen. Gowon's National Accelerated Food Production Programme; the Gen. Obasanjo's Operation Feed the Nation; the Shehu Shagari's Green Revolution, and the Gen. Buhari's *Go Back to Land Programme* "failed because of the far-fetched objectives of making farmers out of all Nigerians, and that no country attains self-sufficiency in food by seeking to turn all its citizens into farmers, that farming should be left for those whose business it is to farm" (Maduagwu, 2007). In 1986 Gen. Babangida established the *Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure* (DFRRI) for rural development. This was meant to provide feeder roads, electricity, and potable water and toilet facilities for the rural dwellers. The projects gulped N1.9b (about N80 billion today's value) without Nigerians benefiting from them (Olowu, 2002). Various projects were set up for

poverty alleviation purposes. Amongst them, are the Peoples Bank of Nigeria and the Community Bank of Nigeria. Neither did these financial institutions lived up to their expectations, nor did they actualized their aims and purposes.

In 1993 Abacha and his wife found a gold - mine in the business of pretending to care for the poor. The Family Support Programme and the Family Economic Advancement Programme were set up. The Nigerian poor, again, were taking for a ride. According to the Tell magazine of 3rd August, 1998 "FSP gulped over N10 billion of tax payers money at a time her husband, Abacha, was retrenching hapless civil servants nation-wide".

In fourth republic, Olusegun Obasanjo administration came up with *National Poverty Alleviation Programme* to address the menace of poverty in Nigeria. Unfortunately, for poverty to reduce, it becomes more exacerbated among Nigerians. Some analysts believed that the programme was not targeted at the real poor Nigerians and this explain the reasons why little success was recorded from gigantic resources spent on poverty eradication of Obasanjo administration.

The present administration is once again embarking on another attempt to alleviate poverty through wealth creation as encapsulated in the *Seven-Point Agenda*. That was at the inception of Yar'Adua/Jonathan government, however with the demise of President Umaru Yar'Adua, little or nothing has been done to implement *Seven-Point Agenda*. The major reason to explain why the past poverty alleviation attempts failed in Nigeria is simply poor administration and lack of good governance.

### **Alleviating Poverty through Good Governance in Nigeria**

Governance refers broadly to the exercise of power through a country's economic, social, and political institutions in which institutions represent the organizational rules and routines, formal laws, and informal norms that together shape the incentives of public policy-makers, overseers, and providers of public services. Governance in Nigeria dates back to the colonial period. However, good governance is a much recent and novel idea of democratic governance that found expression in the detailed provisions of the 1979 Constitution that contained the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy. Good governance became the reducible criteria for assessment of government under the 1999 Constitution, due to the negative effect of military rule, the activities of civil society and the pressures of international financial institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and UNDP.

The above highlighted characteristics of good governance were glaringly deficient in governance under the different successive administrations, both military and civilian, that governed Nigeria from 1966 till date. Hence it can be affirmed that good



governance as an element of constitutional government is in its infancy in Nigeria constitutional history and development. Good governance has been acknowledged as the term that symbolizes the paradigm shift of the role of governments. There has definitely been a paradigm shift in the role of government under the 1999 constitutional democracy of President Olusegun Obasanjo and the challenges poses by abject poverty in Nigeria's status as an oil producing nation (member of OPEC) with enormous revenue generation capacity from oil and non-oil exports, woefully contrasts with its decaying infrastructural and institutional development. The effects of years of dictatorial and corrupt governance by successive military administration are glaringly manifest in the poor state of development in all the sectors of the nation's life, especially the level of poverty and low quality of life of its people.

Today, when good governance is advocated in Nigeria as a necessary ingredient for reducing widespread poverty, these questions mentioned above are compounded. Almost by definition our administrative institutions are weak, vulnerable, and very imperfect; the public organizations are bereft of resources and are usually badly managed; those who work for government are generally poorly trained and motivated. Frequently, the legitimacy of Nigerian government, even under democracy, is questionable; the commitments to transformative change are often undermined by political discord; the civil societies may be disenfranchised, deeply divided, and ill equipped to participate effectively in politics. These deplorable conditions make good governance difficult and thereby frustrate poverty reduction policy.

The question now is what can we do in the face of these problems to ensure good governance and reduce poverty? To start with, good governance should be perceived as *a system where everyone especially the poor and needy get a fair share of public resources*. The disadvantaged and poor people acknowledged that resources for the poor in the form of *Vulnerable Group Feeding, Test Relief and other food aid* is still a reflection of good and humane governance. As a way of providing livelihood for the poor, it is believe by the authors of this paper that a good and fair governance system would create more opportunities through the introduction of soft credit, investment opportunities and more training and skill development for generating employment of the poor people, particularly women and disadvantaged groups. Good governance is also perceived as assurance of better health and educational support for the vast majority of the people i.e. the poor. More importantly is the honesty and integrity of leadership which is the cornerstone of good governance. Good governance is a cultural and political condition where the elected leaders and officials would be accessible during the most critical needs and that the scope for participation of the "poor" and "disadvantaged" in the governmental affairs especially in the grassroots level is critically important in ensuring better governance and poverty reduction

Based on the observations and analysis made above on managing poverty with good governance, it appears that there are some conceptual distortion and missing ingredients in understanding and analyzing the concept of good governance in poverty reduction. First, sharp income inequalities and intense distributional conflicts diminish the utility of a democratic process and governance to alleviate poverty. This leads to political instability and creation of room for abuse of power by a selected privileged minority. Second, concentration of power in the hands of political elite has created room for violating the rights of the poor. Third, absence of internal democracy in the political parties creates platform for individuals to become more important than the policies resulting in erosion of popular confidence in political system. Criminalization and commercialization of politics close the door of politics for the common man. Fourth, with ignorance and pervasive poverty, democracy often locks the poor into a patron-client relationship with their political representatives. Self-serving politicians abuse the ignorance of the electorates and make them perpetually dependent on them for any social and economic services. All these missing ingredients exacerbate poverty in Nigeria.

### **Concluding Remark**

Combating poverty in Nigeria has become a *sine qua non* for Nigeria's socio-economic and political development; otherwise the essence of government will become meaningless to the existence of the Nigerian citizenry. Presently poverty has become a cancerous growth that has gone from being benign to malignant in the Nigerian society, it is therefore necessary to rethink about the governmental practices to evolve means to effectively reduce, curtail and alleviate poverty, so that it will not terminate the development and existence of the Nigerian nation state.

However, it is therefore suggested that good governance is what we need to effectively combat abject penury in our country. Government should not presume that they know what will benefit the poor better than the poor themselves. Poverty Alleviation Projects should be embarked upon because the people need them, not because some contractors (who stands to profit from the projects) are pushing for them. If development is about people, it cannot happen without the participation of the people. However, to reduce poverty through good governance, good governance should be understood according to how people perceive it. It should be judged in terms of its relevance to the need of the people and its success should be assessed on the basis of how it affects the advancement of human development in its broadest sense.

### **Recommendations**

Following are some of the recommendations that could be addressed at various levels to create a condition of pro-poor and responsive governance:

### **Reforming Public Delivery System at Local Level**

The most direct channel through which governance affects poverty in Nigeria is via its impact on service delivery. Poverty reduction depends on improvements in the quality and accessibility to poor people of basic education, health, water and other social and infrastructure services. Policy and programme intervention therefore should be made in relation to poor people's livelihoods, resources, knowledge and rights. At the grass roots levels of programme management attempts should be made for the poor to: a) facilitate the access to resources; b) help to strengthen the basis of livelihoods; c) expand their knowledge base; d) help exercise social and political rights; e) investment in human capital to enable greater participation; f) provide access to productive assets, and g) empowerment through mobilizing their talents in community development projects.

### **Local Level Planning and Citizens' Participation**

Planning and resource allocation at the local level in Nigeria is in general non-transparent, where decisions generally are skewed in favour of those who directly or indirectly belong to the power structure. What is imperative at this stage is to create a condition and develop mechanism for assured participation of the poor and disadvantaged in local level planning. The voice of the poor in particular can improve public performance. At the micro-level, these include: a) fostering participation of community in the governance through promoting and strengthening of people's organisation and community based organizations and institutionalizing community participation.

### **Reorientation of Bureaucracy with New Public Management**

Our bureaucratic system should be reoriented to improve quality by giving public servants broad discretion in running their programs and holding them accountable for results to their respective hierarchy as well as to the clientele. Public Administration system needs to be recast in the light of the philosophy and approaches of NPM framework. The bureaucratic leadership should endeavour to promote good governance. It is therefore axiomatic to say that in a heterogeneous society with many groups and interests is likely to produce more conflicts than homogeneous one if poverty is exacerbating. It is as a result of this that the government of Nigeria should govern on the basic principles of fairness, equity, justice and without bias and prejudice.

The public service as the principal vehicle through which the promise of a better life can be accomplished, must naturally be the centre-piece of public attention and, therefore, its transformation is a major policy imperative of new policy framework defining the role of the public service to be put in place must lay considerable emphasis on a public service which is:

1. more responsive and relevant to the needs of citizens

2. more efficient and effective in the use of public resources
3. and more representative of the diversity and needs of all, especially the most disadvantaged sectors of the society.

### **NGOs in Promoting Pro Poor Governance**

Outsourcing of many government activities to NGOs can help reduce the burden of mis-governance . Awareness campaigns through NGOs can play important roles in making citizens conscious of their rights and duties. NGOs can put pressure on government and political parties to agree to initiate administrative, electoral and political reforms and creating a base for active participation of the poor and disadvantaged. The NGOs and civil society organisations should develop their future advocacy and program activities in following areas: 1) advocacy for implementing the pro-poor pledges of the government; 2) local and national level social mobilization for more debate and discussion on pro-poor issues in Parliament; 3) creating awareness among different poor groups and strengthening their capacity to mediate their demands from local areas; and 4) developing tools and techniques for local NGOs and civil society to monitor the role of government in poverty reduction.

### **Strategic Intervention**

Governance has justifiably emerged as the most critical issue at the interface of democracy and development. One of the strongest policy windows to address poverty is to opt for comprehensive decentralization. Local government and local elected bodies should be given the core responsibilities to address poverty and related development initiatives and challenges. The critical areas of governance that affect poverty are: 1) lack of service-delivery particularly in the areas of health and education; 2) rampant corruption and leakage in targeted programmes; 3) inaccessibility to justice; 4) lack of regulatory support to the informal and unorganised sectors of the economy where a majority of the poor pursue their livelihoods; and 5) High risk of income erosion threatens the poor due to various forms of insecurity and improper application of power.

In order to address such governance issues, the grass roots based local government need to strengthen and become active.

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