Effects of Poverty Reduction Programme of Muhammadu Buhari Administration on Rural Communities in Emohua and Ahoada East Local Government Areas of Rivers State, Nigeria (2015-2023)

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Abstract: This study examined the impacts of Muhammadu Buhari's poverty reduction programmes on rural household sustainability with a focus on Emohua and Ahoada Local Government Areas rural areas of Rivers State. In line with the purpose of the study, four research questions were posed. The population of this study comprises three hundred and seventy (370) selected dwellers of rural households in Rivers State Nigeria, which were selected from two local government areas of Rivers State (which are Emohua and Ahoada East local government areas. The samples of this study are dwellers of the rural household; the market men and women, farmers and civil servants in the Area. This consists of 370 respondents chosen from the area. Also, the distribution of the questionnaire cut across both Male and Female respondents. Random sampling techniques through which all the respondents have an equal chance of being selected are used in this study. The questionnaire was a 4-point modified Likert-type scale. The instrument was validated. Also, test re-test method correlation was used to ascertain the reliability of the research instrument and the reliability coefficient was calculated to be 0.75 for the tests. Mean and ranking order statistical tools were used to answer the four research questions. The findings revealed the following; it is clear that the majority of the respondents disagreed that Muhammadu Buhari's poverty alleviation programmes have significant effects on the poverty indices of citizens in rural areas such as access to health care facilities, education and other amenities. Respondents also revealed that there exists no significant relationship between Poverty alleviation programmes and poverty reduction especially in rural areas.

Keywords: poverty, reduction, programme, Nigeria

1. Introduction

The description of Nigeria as a paradox by the World Bank [1] has continued to be confirmed by events and official statistics in the country. The paradox is that the poverty level in Nigeria contradicts the country's immense wealth. Among other things, the country is enormously endowed with human, agricultural, petroleum, gas, and large untapped solid mineral resources. Particularly worrisome is that the country earned over

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US$300 billion from one resource – petroleum – during the last three decades of the twentieth century. But rather than record remarkable progress in national socio-economic development, Nigeria retrogressed to become one of the 25 poorest countries at the threshold of the twenty-first century where she was among the richest 50 in the early-1970s.

Official statistics show that in 1980 the national (average) poverty incidence was 28.1 per of the population. The distribution of the incidence across the states of the federation showed a maximum of 49.5 per cent recorded for Plateau (and Nassarawa which was excised from Plateau). This meant that every state had a poverty incidence below 50 per cent. By 1985, the national (average) poverty incidence had risen to 46.3 per cent, with a maximum of 68.9 per cent recorded in Bauchi (and Gombe which was carved out of Bauchi). As of 1996, the national average stood at 65.6 per cent with Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara (all old Sokoto State) recording the highest incidence of 83.6 per cent; followed by Bauchi and Gombe with 83.5 per cent. As of 2000, the incidence of poverty was believed to have risen to 70 per cent at the national level. The increasing incidence of poverty, both within and among locations, was in spite of various resources and efforts exerted on poverty-related programmes and schemes in the country, thus suggesting that the programmes and schemes were ineffective and ineffectual. In light of the present government's deep concern for widespread and scourging poverty, this paper reviews previous and current initiatives at poverty alleviation/reduction in Nigeria and examines some pertinent issues on the way forward.

Poverty lines are therefore cut-off points separating the poor from the non-poor. There are two (2) main ways of setting the poor lines: Relative and Absolute. Most developing countries use an absolute line rather than a relative poverty line. In an absolute line, the poverty threshold is established as the income level at which households are able to purchase essential food and nonfood items, including social services. Poverty is freed in terms of a living standards indicator over the entire domain of the poverty comparison. Adawo [2] defines absolute poverty as "one which is freed in terms of living standard, and fixed over the entire domain of the poverty comparison" and a relative poverty line, varies over that domain, and is higher than the average standard of living.

1.1. Problem statement

To date, the poverty situation in Nigeria remains a paradox, at least from two perspectives. Firstly, poverty in Nigeria is a paradox because the poverty level appears as a contradiction considering the country's immense wealth. Secondly, the poverty situation has worsened despite the huge human and material resources that have been devoted to poverty reduction by successive governments in Nigeria with no substantial success achieved from such efforts. Nevertheless, since poverty remains a development issue, it has continued to capture the attention of both national governments and international development agencies for several decades. Indeed, since the mid–1980s, reducing poverty has become a major policy concern for governments and donor agencies in poverty–stricken countries, Nigeria inclusive.

Realizing that rural communities are always the worst hit by poverty, the focus of this study is on the various efforts in the form of policies and programmes put in place by the Muhammadu Buhari administration in order to reduce rural poverty in Nigeria with focus on Emohua and Ahoada East Local Government Areas of Rivers State 2015 - 2023.

1.2. Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the impacts of poverty reduction programmes on rural household sustainability in rural areas in Emohua and Ahoada East Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

Precisely, this study seeks to:

1) Determine the general impacts of Muhammadu Buhari's poverty reduction programme on the standard of Living of rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State

2) Ascertain the impacts of Muhammadu Buhari poverty reduction programmes on the health status of rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State

3) Ascertain the impacts of Muhammadu Buhari's poverty reduction program on education of rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State

4) Ascertain the impacts of Muhammadu Buhari's poverty reduction program on the financial status of rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State

1.3. Research questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1) What are the general impacts of the Muhammadu Buhari poverty reduction programme on the standard of living of rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State?

2) What are the impacts of Muhmmadu Buhari poverty reduction programmes on the health status of rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State?

3) What are the impacts of Muhammadu Buhari's poverty reduction programmes on the education of rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State?

4) What are the impacts of Muhammadu Buhari's poverty reduction program on the financial status of rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State?

1.4. Significance of the Study

Achieving significant results of the impact of poverty alleviation programme in rural sustainability in Nigeria, it is obvious from several studies that poverty reduction policies in Nigeria were sustained for a short period of time and thereafter failed. Several reasons may be attributed to this failure, reasons as poor maintenance culture on the part of citizens and government of public goods, the infectivity of the government towards providing basic infrastructure, corruption, ethnic and religious sentiments and many others. It therefore required that concerted efforts should be made by all stakeholders to contribute to the success of this all-important but elusive goal of reducing rural poverty. Scope of the Study. The research work looks at a particular aspect of poverty i.e. the Muhammadu Buhari poverty alleviation programme on rural household sustainability in Emohua and Ahoada Local Government Areas of Rivers State and Nigeria at large; it also focuses on some selected areas such as; the reduction of Tax, Infrastructure Facilities, Job opportunities and access to education.

2. Conceptual Review

2.1. Concept of Poverty

For any individual to stand and say that poverty has a frictionless or a universally sole definition, the person must be committing a blunder or is an ignoramus. This is because there is no sole or all-inclusive definition of poverty.

However, poverty can be viewed as a condition of financial incapacitation which prevents one from providing for one's own essential needs such as food, clean water, clothing, shelter, education and healthcare. A clear example of poverty can be seen in one poor man's statement in 1997. The poor man who was from Kenya said:

> Do not ask me what poverty is because you have met it
> outside me house. Look at the house and count the number

of holes. Look at my utensils and the clothes that I am
wearing. Look at everything and write what you see. What
you see is poverty [3].

In Vietnam in 1999, another poor man made a statement that depicted poverty. He
said:

In the evenings, eat sweet potatoes, sleep. In the mornings,
eat potatoes, work at lunch, and go without [3].

The United Nations, in its 2004 publication titled "Human Rights and Poverty
Reduction: A Conceptual Framework, 'defined poverty, with respect to human rights, as
"a denial or non-fulfilment of human rights." The rights, according to the organization,
include fundamental freedoms like "freedoms from hunger, disease and illiteracy." It
also looked at poverty as "low levels of capability (i.e. a person's freedom or
opportunities to achieve well-being)" and "the failure of basic capabilities, as Sen puts it,
to reach certain minimally acceptable levels" [4].

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), on the
other hand, noted that poverty could be defined in either relative or absolute terms.
Absolute poverty, it notes, "measures poverty in relation to the amount of money
necessary to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter" while relative poverty
has to do with "the economic status" of individuals. In relative terms, "people are poor
if they fall below-prevailing standards of living in a given societal context" [5].

According to World Bank [6], poverty refers to "shortage of food, lack of shelter,
being ill, and not being able to go to school, not being able to read, fear for the future, not
having a job, not being able to speak correctly, losing a child due to illness brought about
by dirty water, lack of representation, powerlessness, not being able to speak correctly
and inadequate freedom". In 2011, World Bank also defined poverty as "distinct
deprivation in the living condition which comprises multiple dimensions; these include
inability to have access to basic needs…" [7]. To the same financial institution again,
poverty means living on less than $1.90 a day [8]. Be that as it may, the condition of being
poor in the Nigerian context has to do with the following:

1) Households or individuals below the poverty line and whose incomes are
   insufficient to provide for their basic needs.
2) Households or individuals lack access to basic services, political contracts and other
   forms of support.
3) People who are in isolated rural areas lack essential infrastructure.
4) Female-headed households whose nutritional needs are not being met adequately.
5) Persons who have lost their jobs and are unable to find employment as a result of
   economic reforms.
6) Ethnic minorities are marginalized, deprived and persecuted economically, socially,
   culturally and politically [9].

2.2. Poverty reduction

Poverty reduction is all the methods, ways or techniques employed by government
and non-government organizations or wealthy individuals to reduce or eradicate poverty
from a collectivity. Poverty reduction in the best approach is an exercise in raising
people's capabilities or enhancing freedom [10].

2.3. Programme

This can be seen as a government intention of action meant to achieve a specific
result like the N-power programme of the Buhari administration in Nigeria designed to
reduce poverty to achieve a crime-free Nigeria. Again, the programme is the

government's plan of action [11]

2.4. Poverty alleviation programmes under the Buhari's regime 2015-2019

The philosophy methodology and delivery of Buhari's poverty alleviation programme was not structurally different from previous regimes, therefore, we shall list the programmes as follows:

1) School feeding programme with the following allocations [a] N300 billion=2016, N339 billion=2017, N338 billion =2018

2) N-Power in 2017, 162000 N-Power graduates were registered to be paid N30,000 monthly.

3) Conditional cash transfers scheme over 300000 households benefited from N5000 monthly cash transfer

4) Trader money by the end of October 2019 N19.6 billion has been disbursed to 1.95 million Nigerians who have been verified 2.57 million (vanguardngr.com; 2020).

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. The social contract

The theory of the social contract presents the State as a product of the mutual agreement of men, created with a definite purpose to sever certain social needs. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) are regarded as the main exponents of the social contract theory of the origin of the State. Some later thinkers such as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), John Rawls (1921-2002) and Robert Nozick (1938) made use of this theory to elaborate their systems of thought [12].

The social contract theory of the origin of the State implies that men, at a time in history, lived or would have lived without any recognized civil law (ie without the State). This stage of life pattern of men (when they lived without any form of organized civil law) is described as the 'state of nature. The state of nature denotes how men lived or would have lived without the authority of civil law, State or political control. At this stage, there is no industry and no systemic production. Men lived not only close to nature but they had to depend on the bounty of nature for their survival [13].

4. Method

The study employed both primary and secondary methods of data collection. The survey research design was adopted in this study The approach was used because it provided the researcher the opportunity to sample the opinions of a large representative of the sample of the population. The population of this study comprises three hundred and seventy (370) selected dwellers of rural households in Rivers State Nigeria, which were selected from two local government areas of Rivers State (which are Emohua and Ahoada East local government areas. The samples of this study are dwellers of the rural household; the market men and women, farmers and civil servants in the Area. This consists of 370 respondents chosen from the area. Also, the distribution of the questionnaire cut across both Male and Female respondents. Random sampling techniques through which all the respondents have an equal chance of being selected are used in this study. The Marital Status falls between either single, married or divorced. In this wise, all the participants selected were selected through random sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Effects of Poverty Reduction Programmes of the Federal Government of Nigeria on Rural Communities in Rivers State" (EPRPFGNRCRS). The secondary data were obtained from written and documentary sources such as journals, books, newspapers, reports etc. and were analysed with the use of the content analytical model. It was a 15-item questionnaire

structured into two sections (A&B). Section A deals with the personal data of the respondents while Section B seek to obtain information on the effects of poverty reduction programmes of the federal government of Nigeria on rural communities in Rivers State. The response options range from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

A structured questionnaire that was used to obtain information for the study. The instrument was validated using face and content validity. The reliability index of the instrument was 0.75. In carrying out this research work, mean and rank order statistical methods were used in relation to the items of factors studied. The conclusion will be taken based on the calculated mean scores. A criterion mean is determined as follows:

SA   = 4

A   = 3

D   = 2

SD   = 1

This $$\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.5 \tag{1}$$

Hence, the sum of the mean divided by the total number of respondents this 2.5 becomes the criterion mean, here negative and positive responses are determined. Any item that has a mean score which is below 2.5 was regarded as negative and therefore rejected any time from 2.5 and above was regarded as positive and therefore accepted.

Table 1; Response Rate

No. of Administered Questionnaire	No. of Returned Questionnaire	Percentage(s) (%)
370	370	100

Table 1 shows that 370 copies of questionnaire were administered to male and female residents of Rivers State, out of which 370 copies representing 100% of the valid questionnaire were returned.

Table 2. Respondents' demography by occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage(s)
Civil service	120	32
Farming	80	20
Business	90	28
Trading	60	18
Unemployed/house wife	20	2
Total	**370**	**100**

Table 3. Respondents' demography by level of education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage(s)
No Formal Education	40	-
Primary School	60	
Secondary Education	70	30
Tertiary Education	200	60
Total	**370**	**100**

Table 4. Respondents' demography by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage(s)
Male	220	65
Female	150	35
Total	**370**	**100**

The results from Table 2 show that 120(32%) of the respondents were civil servants, 80 (20%) of the respondents were into farming, 90(28%) of the respondents were into business, 60(18%) of the respondents were into trading and 20(2%) of the respondents were unemployed/housewives. This shows that most of the respondents are civil servants.

On the other hand, Table 3 shows that 0(0%) of the respondents have no formal education, 18(5%) of the respondents have gone through primary education, 111(33%) of the respondents have gone through secondary education, while 210(62%) of the respondents have gone through tertiary education. Similarly, Table 4 shows that 220 of the respondents were male, while 150 of the respondents were female. This shows that most of the respondents are males.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Research Question One: What are the general impacts of Muhammadu Buhari's poverty reduction programmes on the living standard of Rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada LGA of Rivers State?

Table 5. Responses on the general impacts of Muhammadu Buhari poverty reduction programmes on the Standard of Living of Rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
1	The poverty alleviation programme has equipped us with the knowledge and competencies to afford process and maintain good nutrition	31 (124)	80 (240)	94 (188)	165 (165)	370 (717)	1.94	Rejected
2	The Muhammadu Buhari poverty alleviation programmes impacted positively on our ability to secure decent houses	65 (260)	80 (240)	180 (360)	45 (45)	370 (905)	2.44	Rejected
3	Muhammadu Buhari poverty alleviation programme provided money to take care of some of my needs	190 (760)	92 (276)	52 (104)	36 (36)	370 (1176)	3.18	Accepted
4	Muhammadu Buhari poverty alleviation programme improved my standard of living	27 (108)	43 (129)	75 (150)	225 (225)	370 (612)	1.65	Rejected
5	The agencies have helped in creating	41 (164)	50 (150)	92 (184)	187 (187)	370 (685)	1.85	Rejected

	employment and this improved the general standard of life in our area						

Criterion mean = 2.5; n=370

Table 5 reveals that items 1, 2, 4 and 5 were rejected by all the respondents as the general impacts of Muhammadu Buhari poverty reduction programmes on the Standard of Living of Rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State because their mean values were below the criterion mean of 2.50. However, item 3 was accepted by the respondents because their mean values were above the criterion mean. The mean values of items 1,2, 4 and 5 were 1.94, 2.44, 1.65, and 1.85 respectively, while the mean value for item 3 was 3.18.

5.2. Research Question Two: What are the Impacts of Muhammadu Buhari Poverty Reduction Programmes on the Health Status of Rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada LGA of Rivers State?

Table 6: Responses on the impact of Muhammadu Buhari poverty reduction programmes on the Health Status of rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
6	It provides an easy way to seek, receive and pay for treatment in the health centres	196 (784)	67 (201)	94 (188)	13 (13)	370 (1186)	3.21	Accepted
7	I regularly do medical check-ups through provision from Muhammadu Buhari poverty alleviation programme	31 (124)	80 (240)	94 (188)	165 (165)	370 (717)	1.94	Rejected
8	The Muhammadu Buhari poverty alleviation programme did not address any nutritional needs	199 (796)	96 (288)	58 (116)	17 (17)	370 (1217)	3.29	Accepted
9	We are now aware that decent accommodation can enhance the state of our health	206 (824)	93 (279)	39 (78)	32 (32)	370 (1213)	3.28	Accepted

Criterion mean = 2.5; n=370

Table 6 shows that items 6, 8 and 9 were accepted as the impact of Muhammadu Buhari poverty reduction programmes on the Health Status of the rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State because the mean values of the accepted items were above the criterion mean of 2.50, but only item 7 was rejected by the respondents. The mean values of items 6, 8 and 9 were 3.21, 3.29, and 3.28 respectively, while the mean value for item 7 was 1.94. The impact of poverty reduction programmes on the Health Status of rural dwellers in Rivers State includes the following: It provides an easy way to seek, receive and pay for treatment in the health centres; the poverty alleviation programme did not address any nutritional needs; and we are now aware that

Central Asian Journal of Social Sciences and History **2024**, *5(2)*, 32–43.

40

decent accommodation can enhance the state of our health.

5.3. Research Question Three: What are the Impacts of Muhammadu Buhari Poverty Reduction Programmes on the Education of the Rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State?

Table 7. Responses on the impacts of poverty reduction programmes on the Education of the rural dwellers in Rivers State

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
10	There are public primary schools in our community which were built by Muhammadu Buhari's poverty alleviation programme	196 (784)	67 (201)	94 (188)	13 (13)	370 (1186)	3.31	Accepted
11	It is now easy to put our children in school	199 (796)	96 (288)	58 (116)	17 (17)	370 (1217)	3.30	Accepted
12	Muhammadu Buhari Poverty Alleviation programme enabled me to pay for my children school fees easily	65 (260)	80 (240)	180 (360)	45 (45)	370 (905)	2.44	Rejected

Criterion mean = 2.5; n=370

From Table 7, it can be observed that items 10 and 11 were accepted as the impact of poverty reduction programmes on the Education of the rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada LGA of Rivers State because the mean values of the accepted items were above the criterion mean of 2.50, but only item 12 was rejected by the respondents. The mean values of items 10 and 11 were 3.31, and 3.30, respectively, while the mean value for item 12 was 2.44. The impact of poverty reduction programmes on the Education of rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State is that there are public primary schools in our community which were built by the poverty alleviation programme; and that it is now easy to put our children in school.

5.4. Research Question Four: What are the Impacts of Muhammadu Buhari's Poverty Reduction programmes on the Financial Status of Rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State?

Table 8. Responses on the impacts of poverty reduction programmes on the financial status of rural dwellers in Rivers State

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remark
13	Muhammadu Buhari Poverty Alleviation Programme increased the rate of my savings	31 (124)	80 (240)	94 (188)	165 (165)	370 (717)	1.94	Rejected
14	We enjoyed better access to soft loans given by the	65 (260)	80 (240)	180 (360)	45 (45)	370 (905)	2.44	Rejected

Central Asian Journal of Social Sciences and History **2024**, *5(2)*, 32–43.

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	government							
15	Muhammadu Buhari poverty alleviation programme helped in training many people on crafts and trade so they are self-reliant	41 (164)	50 (150)	92 (184)	187 (187)	370 (685)	1.85	Rejected

Criterion mean = 2.5; n=370

Table 8 shows that all the items were rejected by all the respondents as the impacts of Muhammadu Buhari poverty reduction programmes on the financial status of rural dwellers in Emohua and Ahoada East LGA of Rivers State, because their mean values were below the criterion mean of 2.50. The mean values of items 13, 14 and 15 were 1.94, 2.44 and 1.85 respectively.

5.5. Discussion

From the data collected in the course of this study, it is clear that the majority of the respondents disagreed that Muhammadu Buhari's poverty alleviation programmes have significant effects on the poverty indices of citizens in rural areas such as access to healthcare facilities, education and other amenities. Respondents also revealed that there exists no significant relationship between the Poverty alleviation programme and poverty reduction especially in rural areas. This is in line with the findings of Guntur [14], in which it was revealed that peasants' farmers and rural dwellers' means of livelihood have not encountered significant change with little effort unlike those in urban areas whose lives depend on sophisticated material. Respondents also agreed that poverty can be a result of inadequate resources, lack of power to participate in the design of development programmes and inadequate access to assistance for those living at in-margin. This implies that there is a general loss of confidence in a society stricken by poverty and this renders government policies ineffective. This is contrary to the findings of Guntur [14], who in his findings agreed that causes of poverty include and not limited to inadequate resources, and the inability to participate in development programmes as participation in a development programme in a way develops any individual. The majority also agreed that poverty results in increasing the fragility and vulnerability of members of society to external influences this finding is also in agreement with Olaolu, et al. [15] who pointed out that poverty might be a result of external influence, according to them if one is confined to internal need without looking at what is happening globally the need will be limited. This can be the reason poverty alleviation programmes is having a significant impact on rural dwellers.

Furthermore, the finding also reveals that poverty makes production remain largely subsistence due to the lack of capital needed for expansion. Labour becomes an incentive and marginal productivity remains low. This finding is contrary to the finding of Oladeji and Abiola [16] in which it revealed that poverty might not necessarily mean subsistence production as one may be producing on a small scale and enough for him as taste and dependence add to the poverty level of the individual.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there is poverty in rural areas as in urban. It was also established that there were poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria including rural areas in parts of Rivers State. The programmes have not produced significant impacts on dwellers in rural areas. Olaolu et al. [15] opines that this is the result of rural dwellers who were not all that exposed to outside influence.

6.2. Recommendations

This research recommends that poverty alleviation programme should include skill acquisition for the inhabitants of the area in which they intend to establish the programme, which includes;

1) The government should help people-based, grassroots; house-to-house programmes be re-evaluated and re-engineered to have a better impact on their lives.

2) The government should continue to provide infrastructure such as the building of classrooms, health centres, good roads, electricity, housing, community town halls, pipe-borne water, etc

3) The government should supply necessary inputs that can improve people's livelihood, and productivity and increase their wealth (income) these inputs can be in the form of fertilizers, farming machines, improved seeds, training programmes, skill acquisition programmes, and credit facilities among others, since the majority of the people are farmers.

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