

Poverty Crises and Implication for Effectuation of Social Policies in Nigeria

By

Abeki, Sunny Okoro PhD

Department of Public Administration

University of Africa, Bayelsa State

abekisunny2018@gmail.com

&

Monday Sunday Akpakpan PhD

Department of Political Science & Public Administration

University of Uyo, Uyo

mondanyakpakpan@uniuyo.edu.ng

Abstract

The work examines Poverty Crises and its implication for the effectuation of Social Policies in Nigeria. The Nigeria Bureau of Statistics and the World Poverty Clock has averred that over 133 million Nigerians are multidimensionally poor. The objectives of this work is to effectively make use of social policies to enhance poverty reduction in Nigeria. The work uses Prebendalism as theoretical framework for the study. The historical descriptive statistical methodology has been adopted. Also, data were drawn from text books, journals, internet materials etc. the work found out that to solve the high level of poverty in Nigeria, social policies must be very effective to address the poverty situation in the various facets of the country.

Introduction

Poverty means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow food, a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individual, households and communities.

According to investopedia, the bottom line is defined as the state or condition where people and communities cannot meet a minimum standard of living because they lack the proper resources, which include but not limited to finance,

basic healthcare and education, clean drinking water, and infrastructure. Living in the socioeconomic condition of poverty is a result of multiple factors not simply including race, sexual identity, sexual orientation and access to education amongst others. Organizations like the United Nations and World Bank have said that poverty will continue to grow well beyond 2030, and have urged nations to fight poverty by implementing policies and regulations that can drastically improve the quality of living for all communities. World Bank (2023) averred that poverty is pronounced deprivation in wellbeing. The poor are those who do not have enough income or consumption to put them above some adequate minimum threshold. Poverty may also be tied to specific type of consumption. For example, people could be house poor, or food-poor or health-poor.

United Nations (2023) defines poverty as fundamentally a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means susceptibility to violence and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environment without access to clean water or sanitation. Poverty is measured through social indicators like illiteracy level, lack of general resistance due to malnutrition, lack of access to health care, lack of opportunities, lack of access to safe drinking water, lack of access to sanitation facilities, living standard.

Poverty became prevalent in Nigeria beginning in 1985 and was seen as an obstacle or limitation to economic growth because poverty was measured based on the world standard of US\$1 per day or US\$2 per day. International prices were adjusted for local currency such that purchasing power parity conversion factors were employed to compute the depth of poverty as well as its prevalence in Nigeria. The poverty gap calculated on the basis of \$1 and \$2 per day as the mean shortfall below the poverty line indicated that 70.2% and 90.8% of Nigerians respectively, earned income that put them below the poverty line in a survey conducted in 1992-1993. During the same period, the poverty gap computed at \$1 and \$2 per day was 34.9% and 59.0%, respectively (Mohammed et, al, 2014).

Nigeria is a country located at Western Africa with an area of 923,770km². Nigeria has a projected 213,401,323 people constituting one of the most populous nation in the world. Nigeria holds 32 position by nominal GDP with its national debt as at

2022 stood at \$181,486 million with 38.02% debt – to – GDP ratio and its public debt per capita is \$850 per inhabitants.

The Human Development Index (HAD) was 0.535 in 2021 making Nigeria the 164th of the 191 countries published. Ease of doing business – 146 (2019). Rate of unemployment – 70.2% (2016). Unemployed – 5.821K (2016). Fragile state index - 99.9. Corruption – 24% (2022). Education budget – 5.14% (2021). Debt %GDP – 38.02%.

The relative poverty line is an arbitrary population of the mean expenditure of the general population. For example, one-third or two-thirds of mean. This allows us to measure poverty in the context of the large or socio-economic environment. Lagos is an example of a state where the government generates a decent-income from tax revenue as a result of relatively high personal and business income.

Social factors include all those causes of poverty which are related to demographics, culture and religion.

An excessive number of children as a result of a lack of access to birth control or cultural norms very often leads to poverty. When people have more children than they can comfortably care for, the finances of the family are strained and otherwise manageable needs become prohibitive.

Discrimination and social segregation of various kids based on age, gender, religion and ethnic group lead to poverty because those affected are not to be fully integrated into society and achieve optimal human capital development. For example, the level of girl child education in Nigeria is only a fraction of that of male child as a result of discrimination. Women grow up less educated than men, their skills are less competitive in the job market and therefore their capacity to earn income is greatly diminished relative to that of the male.

Finally, civil war, religious violence, genocide all lead to poverty as innumerable lives are lost and property destroyed. Families become displaced and children become orphans.

Most of the causes of poverty in Nigeria are attributed or failed leadership. The causes of the economic and social aspects of poverty can be traced to a failure of government.

The most obvious failure of the successive Nigerian governments (Civilian Military) is the poor management of oil revenues. Therefore, rather than lifting Nigeria out of poverty, oil wealth has become a resource curse. The failure of government to provide essential infrastructure such as power, good road and clean water worsens poverty because it increases the cost of doing business. The cost of generating power, transportation and water resources makes it difficult for small and medium businesses to break even in Nigeria. This creates inefficiencies in the labour market as it deprives the economy of new jobs which would be created as businesses grow and new ones setup.

This works tend to reveal a question begging of answer:

1. Could it be that bad governance and corrupt leadership brings about poverty, unemployment which also translates into insecurity in Nigeria?

Conceptual Clarification

Poverty is simply referred to as the deprivation of common necessities that determines the quality of life, including food, clothing, shelter and safe drinking water and may also include the deprivation of opportunities to learn, to obtain better employment to escape poverty, and/or enjoy the respect of fellow citizens. (Adebowale, 2012).

According to Wikipedia, poverty is the deprivation of those things that determine quality of life such as food, clothing, shelter and safe drinking water. It also includes the deprivation of such intangible things as the opportunity to learn, engage in meaningful employment and enjoy the respect of fellow citizens. Simply put, poverty is the inability to achieve a certain minimum standard of living.

The economic view of poverty focuses on the material needs of human beings – food, clothing, shelter, and potable water. In this sense, poverty is a situation in which a person or group of people lack the basic needs for minimum standard of life, mainly as a result of a persistent lack of income.

The social view of poverty on the other hand draws connections between conditions of scarcity and aspects of the distribution of resources and power in a society. It recognizes that poverty can arise as a result of the diminished capability of people to live the kinds of lives they value/desire. These social aspects of poverty include lack of access to education, healthcare, information, social justice or political power. Poverty may also be understood as an aspect of unequal social status and inadequate social relationship such as social exclusion, dependency, a diminished capacity to participate in or develop meaningful connections with other members of society. In 2010, the World Bank defined or readjusted the international poverty line of \$1 equivalent in 2001 to a new international poverty line of \$1.25 per day in US prices (World Bank, 2011).

The World Bank defines extreme poverty as living on less than JS\$! (PPP) per day; and modern poverty as less than US\$2 a day. Poverty can also be measured based on two demarcations; the absolute poverty line and the relative poverty line.

Absolute poverty refers to a standard that which is consistent over time and between countries. The absolute poverty line is defined based on a minimum nutritional requirement (which is then converted into minimum food expenses). Plus non-food expenses which are considered necessary. An example of an absolute measurement would be the percentage of the population eating less than is required to sustain the human body per day.

Finally poverty, crime, homelessness etc, increase the risk of political, religious and ethnic violence. When tensions are high and people are desperate, the slightest provocation triggers a violent response. At best, this could lead to bursts of street protests at worst it could degenerate into civil war.

The Case for Effective Social Policy

Having examined the subject of poverty in detail, the logical question to ask is what then do we do? In answering this question, I like to suggest that it is only by evolving an effective social policy can we begin the process of attempting to drastically reduce the extent of the pervasive poverty that we are currently faced with.

What then is Social Policy?

Historically, definitions of social policy have varied, depending on whether defined in sectoral or holistic terms. The sectoral approach is based on the premise that particular aspects of human activity can be isolated for separate treatment, differentiating spheres such as education, health, housing or personal social services for individual professional application. Social policy and planning is then equated with social sector policy, with planning focusing on those sectors Mined as "social". With its objective the promotion of human welfare, or human renounce development, this has traditionally meant the welfarist provision of individual, family and community welfare services ranging from health to education to social security

The holistic or "unified" approach to social policy addresses wider issues within which sectoral concerns are rooted. This approach originally emerged in the UN in the late 1960s and 1970s as a reaction against the excessively narrow emphasis both on economic goals in economic policy, and on social services in social policy, and the consequent neglect of broader social development goals themselves (UN, 1971)

Its primary concern is the attainment of social objectives compatible with the ideal of the just equal and prosperous society. These include the equitable distribution of wealth, increased participation and national integration, as well as steady increases in levels of living and welfare (Hardiman and Midgley, 1982,20).

Social Policy and Welfare

The importance of social policy, defined holistically, lies in its particular focus on social rather than economic interventions as complimentary determinants of development. It places less emphasis on economic and infrastructure factors - such as instrument in technologically advanced industrial and agricultural production - and more on both the social structure of society and political context in which decisions are made, ?s determinants of development.

In the same way that economic policy-promotes economic development objectives the development to the economy - social policy promotes social development objective -the development of an equitable society in terms not only of income but also gender, ethnicity and race. To achieve this objective, social policy prioritizes poverty reduction increased employment and societal cohesion

Economic policy generally considers individuals, including the poor as "atomistic decision-makers in product and labour markets, not as members of social groups" (N T 1992,4). It focusing on "competitive" individuals or hours holds outside of specific social reality it is not concerned with the nature of society, and relies on a utilitarian definition of social we are. The basic measure of welfare is income and consumption, supplemented by measures of access to basic needs such as health, education and shelter. "Poverty is seen as a act of command over certain goods and services, not in a broader sense a deprivation of basic human rights" (Noel, 1992, 5).

Social policy, in integrating not-utilitarian dimensions of welfare and. Collective behavior of socio -economic groups, shows that social relationships and society cannot simply be favored into an equation. It also assumes the concept of welfare well-being is normative in that policy makers, as social actors, make judgments and plan expenditure on the basis of how they perceive the world. As the '990 World Development report states "the criteria for distinguishing the poor from the non-poor tend to reflect specific national priorities and normative concepts of welfare and rights" (1990, 27).

Just as economic policy analysis assesses how government policy affects the economy, so social policy analysis focuses on the way in which government action affects the welfare or well-being of its citizens. It recognizes that governments vary in the extent to which they are capable of identifying, or interested in understanding the impact of their interventions on peoples' well-being, More often than not they base their prescriptions on "common sense" or the interests of certain classes or groups in society that they represent.

Social policy therefore provides a different conceptual framework for the analysis of what causes, and perpetuates poverty. It identifies the importance of understanding poverty in terms of societal processes, rather than static indicators. It recognizes that poverty is contextually based and the consequence of inter-related factors at individual, household and community level. In addition it recognizes; that the poor access their social and economic needs in terms of different practical and strategic priorities and needs at different points in their life cycle.

For instance a household can have food on the table, a new bridge, and children in school. However if there is no adequate child care provision, households with children under school-age often cannot release women for income generating work. If there is no running water due to city level shortages, road conditions make transport slow and time consuming, dengue is rampant due to flooding, and personal safety is problematic due to the scale of social unrest, the entire community is affected and experiences vulnerability. Finally, if human rights or political freedom is curtailed, this generally has an impact on civil society. The capacity to cope in such a context is dependent not only on individual capability, but also and more importantly on household imposition and community level organizational structures.

Poverty became prevalent in Nigeria beginning in 1985 and was seen as an obstacle or limitation to economic growth because poverty was measured based on the world standard of US\$1 per day or US\$2 per day. International prices were adjusted for local currency such that purchasing power parity conversion factors were employed to compute the depth of poverty as well as its prevalence in Nigeria. The poverty gap calculated on the basis of \$1 and \$2 per day as the mean shortfall below the poverty line indicated that 70.2% and 90.8% of Nigerians respectively, earned income that put them below the poverty line in a survey conducted in 1992-1993. During the same period, the poverty gap computed at \$1 and \$2 per day was 34.9% and 59.0%, respectively (Mohammed et al, 2014).

Nigeria is a country located at Western Africa with an area of 923,770km². Nigeria has a projected 213,401,323 people constituting one of the most populous nation in

the world. Nigeria holds 32 position by nominal GDP with its national debt as at 2022 stood at \$181,486 million with 38.02% debt – to – GDP ratio and its public debt per capita is \$850 per inhabitants.

The Human Development Index (HAD) was 0.535 in 2021 making Nigeria the 164th of the 191 countries published. Ease of doing business – 146 (2019). Rate of unemployment – 70.2% (2016). Unemployed – 5.821K (2016). Fragile state index - 99.9. Corruption – 24% (2022). Education budget – 5.14% (2021). Debt %GDP – 38.02%.

LIST OF NIGERIAN STATES BY HDI (2021)

1. Lagos – 0.681
2. Ogun 0.671
3. Anambra – 0.662
4. Delta – 0.662
5. Bayelsa – 0.651
6. Rivers – 0.648
7. Imo - 0.647
8. FCT – 0.646
9. Enugu - 0.640
10. Abia – 0.644
11. Oyo – 0.632
12. Edo – 0.627
13. Ekiti – 0.614
14. Osun – 0.614
15. Cross Rivers – 0.613
16. Ondo – 0.610
17. Akwa Ibom – 0.608
18. Benue – 0.604
19. Nasarawa – 0.575
20. Kwara – 0.571
21. Ebonyi – 0.569
22. Plateau – 0.564
23. Kogi – 0.557
24. Borno – 0.512
25. Kaduna - 0.511

26. Taraba - 0.501
27. Adamawa - 0.485
28. Niger – 0.485
29. Kano – 0.481
30. Kastina - 0.451
31. Bauch – 0.425
32. Zamfara - 0.416
33. Jigawa – 0.409
34. Gombe - 0.408
35. Yobe – 0.363
36. Sokoto – 0.336
37. Kebbi – 0.335

Sokoto, Bayelsa, Jigawa, Kebbi and Gombe States have been ranked as the poorest States in Nigeria based in the Multidimensional Poverty Index (2022) released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The MPI has four dimensions namely; wealth, living standards, education, work & shocks. While each of this matric has its sub factors that capture the many forms and problems exists for better understanding and policy response. The states with the highest number of poor people have in common monetary poverty, a poor population of 90% man power, deprivations in years of schooling, food security, access to water, greater nutritional deprivation while the proportion of child population under 5 living in multidimensional poverty above 50% in all the states.

According to NBS (2022), both the monetary and non-monetary poverty measures are needed to enhance the understanding of the policies intended to address the needs and deprivations faced by the poor population.

With an estimated population of about 240 million people, Nigeria is the largest country in Africa. The burden of unemployment has been prevalent over the years, leaving the labour dependency rate forecast of 2.6% in 2022, only 27.90% are in the employ and a total of 21.6 million unemployed. The national minimum wage for Federal workers in Nigeria reached ₦30,000 which is equivalent to US\$8.39, whereas the living wage of an individual is ₦43, 200 about US\$11.1. On the other hand, a family could be waged about ₦137,000, equivalent to US\$154 as at 2020.

Causes of Poverty

The causes of poverty are numerous and wide-ranging. Depending on one's viewpoint. The factor attributed as the causes of poverty vary widely. Globally, anti-poverty campaigners point to unfair trade practices, debt burdens, international aid and regional conflicts such as the causes of poverty. Within countries, citizens cite corrupt governments, employment and environment hardship as causes.

For the purpose of this paper, the causes of poverty have been divided into six broad categories. Each category will be explained in detail.

1. Healthcare
2. Education
3. Economics
4. Environmental factors
5. Social factors
6. Governance

Healthcare

The lack of or inadequate access to healthcare services is a direct cause of poverty because it affects a person's ability to learn to earn an income. A person can only be productive to the degree that he or she is healthy. Therefore, poor access to healthcare makes a person more vulnerable to poverty. Access to healthcare has both long and short term effects on human capital development. In the short term, Nigerians are susceptible to diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, typhoid fever, yellow fever, and AIDS. These diseases reduce a person's economic productivity at the time he/she is afflicted with disease. Therefore his/her ability to learn income is greatly diminished in a country where one person's income is estimated to support an average of five other people, this has far reaching consequences.

In the long term, poor maternal care, debilitating disease during childhood (polio) and inadequate nutrition during childhood all undermine the ability of individual's to develop their full human capabilities and thus makes them more vulnerable to poverty. Many pregnant women lack access to decent ante-natal care, so their children are born with physical and /or mental challenges. They come into the world from a position of disadvantage from day one. Lack of essential

minerals such as iodine and iron can impair the development of the brain. Finally, the lack of access to immunization and treatment for such diseases such as polio, meningitis and river blindness had a devastating effect on the economic development of many Nigerians, especially those in the rural areas. These diseases lead to permanent physical disabilities which are ultimately prohibitive in a country where there are little or neither alternative sources of income for the physically challenged and nor are they accommodated/integrated into the mainstream workforce.

The misdiagnosis, and/or trivialization of unfamiliar diseases such as autism and clinical depression should also be a cause of a source of concern to us all as these treatable conditions which need not incapacitate. These disorders are often derided as being Western or Foreign. On the contrary, they affect more Nigerians than we are willing to admit, and render them unable to develop their full potential and engage in economic activity.

Education

As a general rule, the level of an individual's formal education is directly proportionate to his ability to earn income. There are outstanding expectations to this rule, but it generally applies. Therefore, the lack of or inadequate access to formal education impedes a person's ability to earn income and to sustain him/herself.

The abysmal state of the public education system in Nigeria can therefore be cited one of the causes of persistent poverty in the country. There is a Universal Basic Education Scheme in place, which entitles all children to formal education until grade Education three. This can hardly be enforced when the funds and technical expertise with which to run the schools are unavailable. So, we have created a vicious cycle - a vast majority of Nigerian children attend public schools, the public school system is inefficient at best and so the children are poorly educated, the children graduate into a labour market where they cannot compete because more affluent children who attend private schools are much better educated. They become unemployed and therefore unable to sustain themselves and their families, become unemployed and therefore unable to sustain themselves and

their families, and slowly their quality of life degenerated and they slip into poverty.

The private school system which is much better is cost prohibitive to the lower and middle class. Sadly, the quality of education one receives in Nigeria today is a function of finances. Great nations are not built on the backs of the rich. They are built by a productive middle/working class. When the middle class is not armed with the tools which it needs to drive the productivity of the nation (measured GDP), then poverty persists.

The ripple effect of the poor state of education in Nigeria is also evident in brain drain. Nigeria has become a net importer of talent – making intellectual resources cost prohibitive to the poor. This also contributes to regression in the quality of education as the best and brightest move their intellectual talent and labour to more financially rewarding markets.

Economics

Unemployment is one of the most direct causes of poverty; when a person has no job, he/she has no income, and over time savings (if available) are depleted and the person slips into poverty. A person is considered as unemployed only if he has the skills required for employment, but is unable to get a job. Inefficiencies in the labour-market lead to high rates of unemployment.

Capital flight by which the wealthy move their assets to off-shore accounts for various reasons, deprive Nigeria of much needed revenue to break the cycle of poverty. The diversions of these funds which are generated within the Nigerian economy creates a 'hole' in the economy.

Lack of, or insufficient access to credit is also a direct cause of poverty. Those in rural areas lack access to small loans which they can buy seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. Which they need for their small and medium scale businesses with which they can generate sufficient income for themselves and create employment for others.

A weak legal system which does not uphold formal systems of title to private property or defend ownership of private property/funds limits economic growth and therefore encourages poverty in two major ways (i) transfer of wealth (ii) generation of funds. The weak legal system makes the transfer of wealth complex and difficult. Families struggle to transfer funds and property from one generation to another because very often the last testament/will of a benefactor is not honored. Third parties lay claims and seize property from rightful owners through a mix of intimidation and an imposition of traditions. Unfair forms of trade in the global markets adversely affect the countries in the developing world. In particular, high subsidies and protective tariffs for agriculture in the developed world makes it impossible for the products of farmers in the developing countries to compete favorably in global markets. This undermines the very industries for which developing countries have a competitive advantage.

Environmental Factors

The environmental causes of poverty are very pertinent in Nigeria where a majority of the population are rural dwellers and their main source of income is agriculture/fishing. Even the smallest environmental shocks have far reaching consequences.

Access to fresh water and fertile land determines quality of life to a great degree for many Nigerians. This is evident in the Niger Delta where oil soils and gas flaring have contaminated the bodies of water and degraded the environment. The main source of livelihood for the local population has effectively been destroyed. Erosion, as a result of intensively farming also leads to a decline in soil fertility and therefore crop yield. A lack of access to fresh water and fertile land as a result to natural topography, also contributes to poverty in rural areas, as inhabitant have limited access to or understanding of technology and skills with which to engage in alternative economic activity. Desertification, deforestation and overgrazing degrade the quality of land available for agriculture, reduce crop yield and thus increase poverty. Approximately 40% of the World's agricultural land is seriously degrades. According to the UN's Ghana-based institute for Natural Resources in Africa, if current trends of soil degradation continue in Africa, the continent might be able to feed just 25% of its population by 2025. Droughts and water crises have historically been major causes of poverty in Northern Nigeria. Long periods of

drought leave the land dry and infertile, killing all food and cash crops. This leads to hunger, malnutrition and epidemics and creates a negative ripple effect across society.

Social Factors

Social factors include all those causes of poverty which are related to demographics, culture and religion.

An excessive number of children as a result of a lack of access to birth control or cultural norms very often leads to poverty. When people have more children than they can comfortably care for, the finances of the family are strained and otherwise manageable needs become prohibitive.

Discrimination and social segregation of various kids based on age, gender, religion and ethnic group lead to poverty because those affected are not to be fully integrated into society and achieve optimal human capital development. For example, the level of girl child education in Nigeria is only a fraction of that of male child as a result of discrimination. Women grow up less educated than men, their skills are less competitive in the job market and therefore their capacity to earn income is greatly diminished relative to that of the male.

Finally, civil war, religious violence, genocide all lead to poverty as innumerable lives are lost and property destroyed. Families become displaced and children become orphans.

Governance

Most of the causes of poverty in Nigeria are attributed or failed leadership. The causes of the economic and social aspects of poverty can be traced to a failure of government.

The most obvious failure of the successive Nigerian governments (Civilian Military) is the poor management of oil revenues. Therefore, rather than lifting Nigeria out of poverty, oil wealth has become a resource curse. The failure of government to provide essential infrastructure such as power, good road and clean water worsens poverty because it increases the cost of doing business. The

cost of generating power, transportation and water resources makes it difficult for small and medium businesses to break even in Nigeria. This creates inefficiencies in the labour market as it deprives the economy of new jobs which would be created as businesses grow and new ones setup.

The effectiveness of government has a major impact on the socio economic situation of poor population. Poor access to affordable education and healthcare traps individuals, communities and therefore countries in cycles of poverty. High levels of corruption also undermine efforts to make a sustainable impact on poverty. In Nigeria, more than US\$ 400 billion was misappropriated or wasted through corruption from the treasury by leaders between 1960 and 1999. The figures since 1999 are still being compiled.

Political instability and abuse of the rule of law over the ear have discouraged investment in Nigeria – foreign direct investment and plough-hack investment by resident Nigerians. Foreign companies have been discouraged from setting up subsidiaries, manufacturing plants etc. in Nigeria. India stands as a food example of how a stable political and economic climate affects foreign direct investments. Hundreds of multinationals across the world have outsourced most of their information technology requirements to local Indian companies, creating employment (and wealth) for millions of Indians. Resident Nigerians, who would otherwise invest their wealth in various sectors of the economy, have also diverted the funds to other countries as a result of the uncertain political and economic climate in the country.

According to the figures from the Federal office of Statistics for 2004, over 70% of the Nigerian population lives below ₦26,000 per annum. There is also a bias towards rural areas when poverty is being contextualized in Nigeria. It is important to note that urban poverty is as much a problem as rural poverty. Even within the poor, there are varying degrees of poverty. Therefore, it is important to segment the poor population.

1. The core poor are those who live in abject poverty. They are too poor, too old, illiterate, unhealthy or unskilled and therefore permanently unable to lift themselves out of poverty.
2. The unemployed (but skilled) poor

3. The unemployed and unskilled poor
4. The educated poor
5. The female vs male poor – this refers to the feminization of poverty.

Effects of Poverty

There is a vicious cycle which connects the causes and the effects of poverty. Therefore it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the two. It is a classic chicken and egg situation. For example is there war because people are poor or are people poor because there is war? This section of the paper attempts to explain some of the effects of poverty.

One of the more obvious effects of poverty is crime. Poverty is a security risk, and the deteriorating situation in Nigeria has brought this to the fore. When people are terribly poor and have no means of lifting themselves out of poverty, they feel helpless. When they see no end in sight to their situation and feel they have nothing to live for, this helplessness soon turns to desperation. The young men fall prey to violent gangs and become robbers, murderers and area boys. Increased risk of drug use may also be associated with poverty. The young women fall prey to pimps and become prostitutes. These men and women engage in loose sexual activity and bring children into the world in inner cities and slums across the country. These children are raised in these desperate conditions with no positive role models. Thus begins another cycle of poverty, crime and violence.

Another effect of poverty is lower life expectancy as those living in poverty lack access to essential healthcare services, they suffer hunger even starvation. Every year, nearly 11 million children (worldwide) living in poverty, die before their 10th birthday. One-third of deaths are due to poverty related cause. Poverty also increases the rate of homelessness and thus makes the poor more vulnerable to crime.

Child labour is one of the more disturbing effects of poverty because it almost ensures that poverty will be perpetuated into the next generation. When a child is forced into labour, he/she is denied an education and is therefore condemned to engaging in informal economic activity to generate income for the rest of his/her life. The odds of breaking the cycle are stacked against these children. Poor,

uneducated families often perpetuate this cycle by having more children in the hope that they can put them to work to generate income for the family.

Human trafficking and the sex trade within Nigeria and beyond are also effects of poverty. Children and even adults are sold into modern day slavery as domestic servants. They are displaced from their families and communities and made to work for long hours in inhuman conditions. Nigerian women play an active role in the international sex trade especially in Europe. They are an established part of the underground trade in Italy and Denmark. Many of these women are lured by the illusion of financial independence, only to become trapped illegal immigrants at the mercy of pimps and malams in foreign countries.

Theoretical Framework

The work uses Prebendalism as theoretical framework. Max Weber used the term to describe India and China in the early middle ages in his 1915 & 16 book "The Religion of China and India". For Richard Joseph, Director of Programme for African Studies at Northwestern University is usually credited with first, using the term Prebendalism to describe patron-clientelism or neopatrimonialism in Nigeria. Since then, the term has been commonly used in scholarly literature and textbook. Joseph wrote in 1996, the theory of Prebendalism, states office are regarded as prebends that can be appropriated by office holders who use them to generate material benefits for themselves and their constituents and kin groups. As a result of that kind of patron-client or identity politics, Nigeria has regularly been one of the lowest ranked nations for political transparency by Transparency International in its corruption perception's index. Other uses includes the corruption investigations into the activities of the 31 out of the 36 Nigerian Governors for frequent comments in the Nigerian Press about the problems of corruption. The implication is that, due to high level corruption by political office holders who were supposedly be working for the masses, the reverse is the case. There has been high level disconnect between the office holders and the citizens. Prebendalism refers to political systems in which elected officials and government workers feel they are right to a share of government's revenues.

Methodology

The historical description research method was used to carry out this investigation as data were derived principally from secondary sources. The goal of historical descriptive studies is a comprehensive summary in every day terms of specific events experienced by individuals or group. The data derived for the study are mainly from sources including textbooks, journal articles and other online materials.

Discussion of Finding

Measurements of poverty therefore, need to recognize that indicators of vulnerability and well-being focus at individual, household and community levels – to [beneficiaries](#) can be targeted in different ways in relation to a variety of [roles](#), relationships and social functions. While economic analysis tends to focus on individual or single function household indicators, social analysis recognizes that focusing on one set of indicators misses the fact that it is the interrelationship between the three which determines what poverty means to low-income men, women and children.

As the table below shows, individual level determinants and their associated indicators lend themselves to economic measurement and are commonly used. Per capita income **and** household type is an obvious example of the interrelationship between individual and household level indicators - with the distinction between female and male he added household now recognized as potentially important in determining well-being, less widely recognized is the interrelationship between per capita income and household structure. For instance, evidence shows that where households have more than one adult or teenage female sharing reproductive work the contribution to household income is greater than where there is only one woman responsible for all reproductive work.

Determinants and Associated Indicators of Urban Vulnerability and Well-being at Different Levels

Level	Determinants and associated indicators of urban vulnerability and well-being
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to adequate nutrition and healthcare (infant mortality) - Access to adequate education (dropout rates) - Access to adequate income (per capita income) - Personal safety from domestic violence - Access to credit
Household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Household type - Household structure in terms of members in productive reproductive and community work - Stage in the life cycle - Access to housing
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to reliability and quality of basic needs of water, electricity, sanitation, roads, education and health care - Personal safety from robbery and violence - Capability and capacity of community based organizations

In the community level lack of access to sanitation and reliable, safe water has important consequences for individual health indicators. Equally important to per capita income is the lack of reliable electricity supplies in households with informal sectoral enterprises. Lack of safe transport in some contexts affects a teenage girl's access to educational facilities and consequently drop out indicators. In many urban contexts where delivery mechanisms for local services increasingly rely on community participation, the capability and capacity of community based organizations is an important determinant of service delivery, and consequently of health and other individual level indicators of well-being.

Table One therefore provides examples of determinants and their related indicators at different levels.

To these three levels, can also be added, a further fourth more abstract level, that of civil society. Indicators here include the degree of political freedom and human rights, with important determinants the structures and processes the negotiation among different actors in the planning process - and the extent to which they are participatory.

Finally, it is necessary to recognize that there may often be important distinctions between urban and rural indicators of well-being and power. Generally indicators are undertaken at the national level, and then disaggregated in urban and rural populations. However, community level indicators of personal safety for instance, are far more important in an urban context where lack of social cohesion is generally much greater. Similarly access to education may be much more critical or urban population than/those in rural population. Lack of subsistence agricultural production means that for many poor urban populations there is no asset for their labor. Where high unemployment exists, skills and educational levels are often critical for access to even the most menial jobs. Again, in some contexts rural populations have access to traditional medicines, not available to urban populations. Considerable work is still required if the differences between rural and urban contexts as well as between different urban populations are to be understood and correctly measured.

Social policies should focus on uplifting the living conditions of the poor by broadening the opportunities for them to participate in economic activities. Most of the causes of poverty are related to bad governance. Therefore, none of these social policies which will address the problems of endemic and emergent poverty can be achieved without the right political and economic leadership.

In making this suggestion, I am aware of the critical importance of sound economic policies in growing the wealth of nation. However, if indeed one of the purposes of a government, if indeed, not the most important, is the

constant improvement of the standard of living of the citizenry, we must constantly address the issue of redistribution of resources in achieving that welfare. This is what social policy is about. We need to define what the real national interests are, which must relate to the people, and through effective [policies](#), aggressively pursue them. For every economic decision, the question 'how does this reduce poverty', or 'how does this create employment' must be clear/resolved, even if it is indirectly.

How do we then put everything together in order to make an impact on poverty? My suggestion is that we first of all undertake a comprehensive review of all the programmes we currently operate. This will assist us to see which of the causes the programmes seek to tackle, and how effective it has been in that regard. Where we find a void, we need to evolve a new set of policies. Same holds for situations in which existing police, are inadequate. We must however be mindful of the distinction between the Urban and rural poor in our prognosis, as well as gender differences. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that not all poor can be taken out of poverty, how else can we assist the chronically poor except by direct transfer to them the means of livelihood? In other words, policies must support their having enough to eat, and a decent access to healthcare! Perhaps then there is no running away from a certain degree of welfarism. These are burden that a decent society must bear, and it is not for nothing that societies, even in developed countries pay the 'dole', or something similar in order to address the 'evil of want'.

Recommendation

1. The government should invest more on social policies to include education, agriculture, food security, health, housing, employment creation, reduction in cost of governance to reduce the effect of poverty on the citizen.

References

Adeola, F. (2008). *The Crisis of Poverty and a Case for Effective Social Policies in Nigeria. National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies.*

Adebowale, T.A. (2012). Is Youth Unemployment a Solvable Problem? *African Journal of Historical Science in Education*, 8(1). 44-53.

CBN Economic and Financial Review Vol. 39, No.4. <http://www.cbn.gov.ng>efr>

Mohammed, D. H., Abdul, B.B., Rosni, B. (2014). Entrepreneurship Development and Poverty Alleviation: An Empirical. *Review Journal of Asian Scientific Research*, 4(10): 558-573.

<https://businessday.ng>

www.statistica.com

www.investopedia.com

United Nations (2023).

World Bank (2011). World Development Indicators Reports. Washington, DC.

World Bank (2023). World Development Indicator Reports. Washington, DC.