SDGs Monitor

A Journal of Implementation

NIGERIA

Introduction:
Tracking Nigeria's Scorecard on Poverty Eradication

The Lifted and Left-behind:
An Analysis of Poverty Dynamics in Nigeria

Plus:

◆ **Introduction: An Assessment of Nigeria's Implementation of the "Gender Equality" Goal**

◆ **SDG 5: The Journey so far towards Achieving Gender Equality in Nigeria**

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Appraising Nigeria's Scorecard on the "Zero Poverty" and "Gender Equality" Goals

SINCE the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for transforming the world by 2030 were adopted by the United Nations in September 2015, member-states of the world body, including Nigeria, have initiated various strategic policy interventions to achieve the set goals.

In this edition of the *SDGs Monitor Journal,* we assess Nigeria's implementation of two of the 17 global goals – Zero Poverty (SDG 1) and Gender Equality (SDG 5). After an in-depth assessment of progress towards SDG 1, we find that instead of being on course to attain the zero poverty goal, poverty is rising in the country. Our review shows that despite the measures taken by the Nigerian government to reduce poverty, a large proportion of Nigerians still live below the poverty line. The 2018 World Data Lab report, which indicates that Nigeria has overtaken India as the country with the highest number of the extremely poor, has raised fears that SDG 1 which seeks to end extreme poverty by 2030 is unlikely to be met.

Therefore, the focus of the first research in this edition is the dynamics of multidimensional poverty in Nigeria, using the 2011 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS4) and 2016 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS5) datasets. The result of a disaggregated analysis of multidimensional poverty shows that compared to the south, poverty is more concentrated among households in the northern part of Nigeria ravaged by the ongoing humanitarian crisis. The study written by our two consultants, Dr. Joseph O. Ogebe of the University of Ibadan and Dr. Adedeji P.Adeniran of the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA), recommends that pro-poor programmes aimed at lifting people out of poverty should focus more on deprived households in rural areas, especially those in the lagging-behind geo-political regions in Nigeria.

The second research by our consultant on gender, Ms. Maria Glover, project leader of the Impact Investors Foundation, focuses on the journey towards achieving Gender Equality (SDG 5) in Nigeria. Our review finds that although Nigeria has devised several national policies, and has signed and ratified numerous international conventions, treaties and protocols on discrimination against women, the country has failed to live up to either its national or its international commitments. It also finds that there is continuing discrimination against women in its legal system and the survival of critical factors such as patriarchal norms, customs, traditions, and religious belief systems. According to the study, these factors pose a threat to achieving SDG 5. To put Nigeria on the path to attaining SDG 5, the study recommends that the government should increase its efforts to combat the issue from its root causes and by so doing, ensure the full participation of its female populace in the process of nation-building.

It is a bumper package. Happy reading!

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Introduction:
Tracking Nigeria's Scorecard on Poverty Eradication

ONE of the greatest challenges facing humanity is eradicating poverty "in all its forms everywhere." Globally, the gap between the rich and poor is widening by the day. According to the World Bank's most recent estimates, in 2015, 10 per cent of the world's population lived on less than $1.90 a day and hundreds of millions are at risk of falling back into poverty.

Concerned at global poverty, world leaders have been passionate about mobilising the international community to achieve the twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. Consequently, on September 25, 2015, the United Nations adopted the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with goal number one as ending extreme poverty and move the world onto a sustainable development path while ensuring that no one is left behind by 2030.

Of the 17 SDGs for transforming the world by 2030, SDG 1, which focuses on "Zero Poverty", ranks high and for perceptible reasons. Poverty, in all ramifications, has remained a threat to humanity. As Danaan (2018) points out, poverty is complex, multidimensional and multifaceted with manifestations in every realm of human existence, including the economic, social, political, and environmental. Poverty is listed as a risk factor in coping with health challenges (Pearson, 2015). It has multiplier effects and linkages such that lack of access to resources can affect health status, life expectancy, security, education and relationships. Poverty reduction is therefore an indispensable precondition for sustainable development, which entails meeting human development goals such as improvement of human well-being, removal of hunger and disease, and promotion of productive employment for all (Edoh, 2003 Kankwanda, 2002; Mahammed, 2006).

Simply put, implementing SDG 1 entails focusing on those living in vulnerable situations, increasing access to basic resources and services, and supporting communities affected by conflict and climate-related disasters.

Clearly, these problems associated with poverty are very pronounced in Africa. Compared to the rest of the world, the poverty crisis is worse in African countries, especially Nigeria, the most populous black nation, where a significant proportion of the poor are chronically poor.

As one of the world leaders who endorsed the global agenda for poverty eradication, President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria had affirmed that his government would "vigorously pursue the implementation of the SDGs so as to lift our citizens out of poverty."

Nigeria's past poverty alleviation initiatives

The description of Nigeria as a paradox by the World Bank (1996) 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 (Obadan 1996). It is a classic case of poverty in the midst of plenty because the country is endowed with human and natural resources and has had an increasing national income; yet, the larger section of her population languishes in poverty due to uneven distribution and allocation of income and wealth (Aigbokhan, 1998; Alesina & Perotti, 1996; Lipton, 1980). Dauda (2017) notes that poverty in Nigeria differs from the pattern in many other countries given that even in periods of economic growth, Nigerians did not experience considerable or commensurate poverty reduction especially in

the North West and North East geo-political zones which lead in the poverty indices.

Even before the inception of the Buhari administration in 2015, successive governments in Nigeria had designed different interventionist programmes to ameliorate the poverty scourge.

Arisi-Nwugballa, Elom, and Onyeizugbe (2016) categorise the poverty alleviation interventions in Nigeria into the pre-Structural Adjustment Programme era (pre-SAP) and the SAP/post-SAP era. The SAP was introduced in 1986 by the military administration of General Ibrahim Babangida to address the worsening economic situation which had increased the level of poverty in the country.

The policies of the pre-SAP era, which were essentially ad hoc, included the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) in 1972, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1979, the Green Revolution in 1981. Others were the Agricultural Development Progamme (ADP) established in 1975 and the network of River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) established in 1976 to enhance water resource development, irrigation and thereby lead to the development of rural areas.

Governments also made efforts to fight poverty in the SAP/post SAP era, with programmes which included the Directorate for Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DIFRRI) in 1986, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 1986, Peoples Bank of Nigeria (PBN) in 1990, Better Life for Rural Women in 1987, Family Support Programme (FSP) in 1993 and the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) in 1997. In 1994, the Government set up a broad-based Poverty Alleviation Programme Development Committee (PAPDC) whose primary objective was to advise the government on the design, coordination and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes. By the end of 1998, there were sixteen poverty alleviation institutions in the country.

Compared to the rest of the world, the poverty crisis is worse in African countries, especially Nigeria, the most populous black nation, where a significant proportion of the poor are chronically poor.

With the return to civilian rule and the inauguration of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999, the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo introduced its Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) as an interim anti-poverty measure designed to alleviate poverty by providing direct jobs to 200,000 unemployed people.

Despite PAP, the incidence of poverty in Nigeria remained high. Recognising PAP's ineffectiveness, the government introduced the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001. This programme was structured to integrate four sectorial schemes, namely the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), the Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), the Social Welfare Scheme (SOWES) and the Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS).

During this period, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) was introduced as a national policy intended to meet some of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially poverty reduction. NEEDS was a national framework of action, which had its equivalent at the state and local government levels, namely the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (SEEDS) and the Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (LEEDS). The implementation was done through the collaboration and coordination among the federal and state governments, donor agencies, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders.

However, the poverty reduction measures of the Obasanjo administration did not alleviate poverty much. According to National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) figures for 2004, 54 per cent of Nigerians lived below the relative poverty line of 2/3 of per capita households' expenditure, while 22 per cent lived below the extreme relative poverty line of 1/3 of per capita households' expenditure.

The Nigerian government stepped up its efforts in the implementation of the MDGs from 2005 after it successfully negotiated debt relief from the Paris Club. This enabled the country to increase and target public investment in pro-poor interventions aimed at achieving the MDGs. The Presidential Committee on the Assessment and Monitoring of the MDGs and the Office of the Special Assistant to the President on MDGs (OSSAP-MDGs) were established to guide the use of the Debt Relief Gains in the execution of pro-poor programmes and projects.

President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's administration which succeeded the Obasanjo administration in 2007 sought to improve on the anti-poverty measures of the previous administration by the introduction of a "Seven Point

Agenda" on which wealth creation and poverty alleviation were the sixth key area for intervention. However, it did not significantly address the problem. NBS statistics showed that by 2010, 60 per cent of Nigerians were living in "absolute poverty".

When Goodluck Jonathan succeeded Yar'Adua in 2011, his administration embraced the MDGs and came up with the "Transformation Agenda" which drew inspiration from the Vision 20:2020. The blueprint was primed to address rising unemployment, inequality, poverty and other factors which had made it difficult for Nigeria to achieve sustainable development. The Jonathan administration also initiated some youth empowerment schemes such as the Subsidy Re-Investment Programme (SURE-P) through which it implemented the graduate internship scheme –YouWin aimed at creating jobs and alleviating poverty

However, despite the anti-poverty measures introduced by successive civilian administrations between 1999 and 2015, poverty continued to increase thus exposing the ineffectiveness of these strategies and programmes. Indeed, studies by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and experts in the field indicate that these initiatives failed to achieve desired results because the Nigerian poverty alleviation institutional landscape is fraught with duplication and proliferation of programmes and implementing agencies, sometimes with overlapping responsibilities and even conflicting mandates. The result has been waste, poor coordination and unhealthy rivalries (World Bank, 1996; UNDP, 1998; NAPEP, 2001; Eboh, 2003).

Besides, poor design and implementation, policy inconsistencies and discontinuity, poor funding, pervasive corruption and lack of transparency and accountability militated against theses poverty alleviation initiatives (Aigbokhan, 2008; Arisi-Nwugballa et al., 2016; Dauda, 2017; Elumilade, Asaolu, & Adereti, 2006).

Consequently, Nigeria failed to meet the MDGs target in terms of reducing poverty by 2015. The "*Nigeria 2015: Millennium Development Goals End-Point Report*" published by the OSSAP-MDGs with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Department for International Development (DFID), noted that:

> "One major challenge to effective poverty reduction in Nigeria is the very limited reduction effect of economic growth. Thus whereas the country recorded largely impressive growth rates in the 2000s decade and in more recent times, this was not entirely inclusive and neither did it reduce poverty or generate employment."

The description of Nigeria as a paradox by the World Bank (1996) 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.

This report provided leeway for the Buhari administration when Nigeria transited from the MDGs in 2015 and to the SDGs in 2016.

Buhari's Administration and Implementation of SDG 1

In the past three years, the Buhari administration has been implementing the Social Investment Programmes (SIPs), targeted at lifting many Nigerians from poverty, and at the same time, create the opportunities for people to fend for themselves. The SIPs involves targeting those living in vulnerable situations, increasing access to basic resources and services, and supporting communities affected by conflict.

Launching the Social Protection Programme which is the umbrella scheme of the SIPs on May 29, 2016, Buhari lamented that for too long Nigeria has been:

> "…a society that neglects the poor and victimizes the weak, a society that promotes profit and growth over development and freedom. A society that fails to recognize that 'poverty is not just lack of money; it is not having the capability to realize one's full potential as a human being."

He added that the programme was comprehensive and had taken some of the factors that led to the failure of past poverty alleviation schemes into consideration. President Buhari promised that the SIPs would cater for a larger number of the poorest and most vulnerable Nigerians.

Presenting the scorecard of the scheme recently, Maryam Uwais, Special Adviser to the President on Social Investment Programmes (SIPs), said that between May 2016 when the initiative was flagged off and 2018, the Federal Government had injected N470 billion into it.

There are four broad programmes under the SIPs, namely:

- N-Power for job creation initiatives for teachers, artisans which targets 500,000 graduates and 100,000 non-graduates.
- A Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSF) which is a free school feeding scheme for primary school pupils across the country targeting 5.5 million primary school pupils in the first instance.
- Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Scheme with transfer of ₦5,000 monthly directly to 1 million caregivers in targeted poor and vulnerable households.
- Government Enterprise & Empowerment Programme (GEEP) for financial inclusion and access to credit for market women cooperatives, traders, farmers, and the youths which targets 1.66 million beneficiaries. Under the GEEP are social investment schemes like the FarmerMoni, MarketMoni and TraderMoni. For the first two, funds between N10, 000 and N350,000 are paid into the accounts of the successful applicants who belong to a registered cooperative and have bank accounts. For TraderMoni, petty traders are given a loan of N10, 000 each and upon repayment within six months, the beneficiary becomes eligible for a higher amount, at which point she or he must open a bank account.

However, Uwais, said that although the Federal Government budgets N500 billion annually for social investments, only N79.98 billion was released in 2016, N140 billion in 2017 and N 250.4 billion in 2018.

She added that about 526,000 youths, spread across 774 Local Government Areas in the country are benefitting from the N. Power programme and that they are teaching in public schools, acting as health workers in primary health centres and as agric extension advisors to small holder farmers in rural communities.

As part of measures to address the problem of extreme poverty, the Buhari administration

Despite the anti-poverty measures introduced by successive civilian administrations between 1999 and 2015, poverty continued to increase thus exposing the ineffectiveness of these strategies and programmes.

decided to invest the $322 million returned by the government of Switzerland from the money looted by the late Head of State, General Sani Abacha into its SIPs.

Although the decision to deploy Abacha loot from Switzerland for poverty alleviation through the TraderMoni programme was reportedly based on an agreement Nigeria entered into with the Swiss government, the legislative arm of government and some Nigerians faulted it because of the fear that it could be turned into another political slush fund for the party in power. While the Senate said it was unaware of any budgetary proposal from the executive regarding the distribution of the money, the House of Representatives expressed surprise that the Presidency had ordered the distribution of the monies to indigent Nigerians prior to the 2019 elections.

The Presidency, however, insisted that the implementation of the disbursement of TraderMoni funds is meant to address abject poverty and had commenced in August, 2018, after the programme met the back-end requirement of the World Bank to ensure accountability and transparency of the distribution.

According to Uwais, at the end of March 2019, out of the N322 million dollars recovered Abacha loot meant for the SIPs, only N22 million dollars had been utilised by her office. The money was disbursed through Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT) to poor households in various parts of the country. She added that within the same period, SIPs had made direct impact on 12,069,153 beneficiaries and over 30 million secondary beneficiaries, comprising cooks, farmers, families, employees and members of the community.

Apart from the SIPs, the Presidential Initiative for the North (PINE) is also one of the major responses of government to alleviate poverty among the people of that part of the country which has been worsened by insurgency. PINE is an intervention designed specifically to mobilize resources to revitalize the economies of the North Eastern states of Nigeria. It targets infrastructural development, agricultural revitalization, health sector reforms, educational transformation, job creation for women and youth, good governance and peace, among others.

Nigeria's recent poverty index

Despite the measures taken by the Buhari administration to ameliorate poverty, a large proportion of Nigerians still live below poverty line of less than $1.90 which translates to N579 a day. According to a poverty index report published by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in October 2016, about 112 million Nigerians lived below the poverty line.

In the same vein, a United Nations report on Nigeria's Common Country Analysis, (CCA) published in September 2016, described the country as one of the poorest and most unequal in the world, with over 80 million or 64 per cent of her population living below the poverty line. The report indicates that a large number of poor Nigerians live in areas ravaged by the ongoing humanitarian crisis. According to the UN, available reports indicate that there were over 3.3 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria, the largest number in any African country and ranking only behind Syria and Columbia on a global scale. The report states *inter alia:*

"Poverty and hunger have remained high in rural areas, remote communities and among female-headed households and these cut across the six geo-political zones, with prevalence ranging from approximately 46.9 percent in the South-west to 74.3 percent in North West and North East.

In Nigeria, 37 per cent of children under five years old were stunted, 18 per cent wasted, 29 per cent underweight and overall, only 10 per cent of children aged 6-23 months are fed appropriately based on recommended infant and young children feeding practices. Youth unemployment which is 42 per cent in 2016 is very high, creating poverty, helplessness, despair and an easy target for crime and terrorism.".

Nigeria received yet another blow from the June 2018 report by the World Poverty Clock, which indicates that the most populous black nation now has the dubious distinction of having overtaken India as home to the highest number of the extremely poor. The 2018 report *The Start of a New Poverty Narrative*, showed that Nigeria emerged as the headquarters of global poverty with an estimated 86.9 million people in extreme poverty (46.7 per cent of Nigeria's population) compared to India's 73 million. According to the report, extreme poverty in Nigeria is growing by six people every minute, the highest rate in the world.

Consequently, the latest report by the World Poverty Clock published on February 13, 2019 shows that the number of extremely poor Nigerians has further risen to 91.6 million. The implication is that an additional four million Nigerians have since fallen under the poverty line.

The clock also shows that instead of being on track towards attaining the United Nation's first Sustainable Development Goal (zero poverty), poverty is rising in Nigeria.

Reacting to the damning report of World Poverty Clock, the Buhari administration had last year, rejected the report, insisting that it had created jobs especially in the area of agriculture and reduced poverty. Nigeria's immediate past

| TABLE 1: Poverty rate across 36 states in Nigeria ||
STATES	POVERTY RATE
Lagos	8.50%
Osun	10.90%
Anambra	11.20%
Ekiti	12.90%
Edo	19.20%
Imo	19.80%
Abia	21.00%
Rivers	21.10%
FCT (Abuja)	23.50%
Kwara	23.70%
Akwa Ibom	23.80%
Delta	25.10%
Ogun	26.10%
Kogi	26.40%
Ondo	27.90%
Enugu	28.80%
Bayelsa	29.00%
Oyo	29.40%
Cross River	33.10%
Plateau	51.60%
Nasarawa	52.40%
Ebonyi	56.00%
Kaduna	56.50%
Adamawa	59.00%
Benue	59.20%
Niger	61.20%
Borno	70.10%
Kano	76.40%
Gombe	76.90%
Taraba	77.70%
Katsina	82.20%
Sokoto	85.30%
Kebbi	86.00%
Bauchi	86.60%
Jigawa	88.40%
Yobe	90.20%
Zamfara	91.90%
Source: UN 2014	

Minister of Budget and National Planning, Udoma Udo Udoma, disputed the conclusion of the Brookings Institution "that the poverty situation is getting worse in Nigeria." He dismissed the report as unreliable, since it was not based on any recent, survey on household data, compiled by the National Bureau of Statistics on Nigeria's poverty level. Faulting the methodology adopted by the Poverty Clock report, Udoma noted that in deriving its poverty estimates, the clock did not directly rely on household survey data as national statistical offices in most countries do.

Instead, he said the Poverty Clock's methodology relied on models to estimate poverty rates across countries, using data provided by national governments to international agencies. He said that:
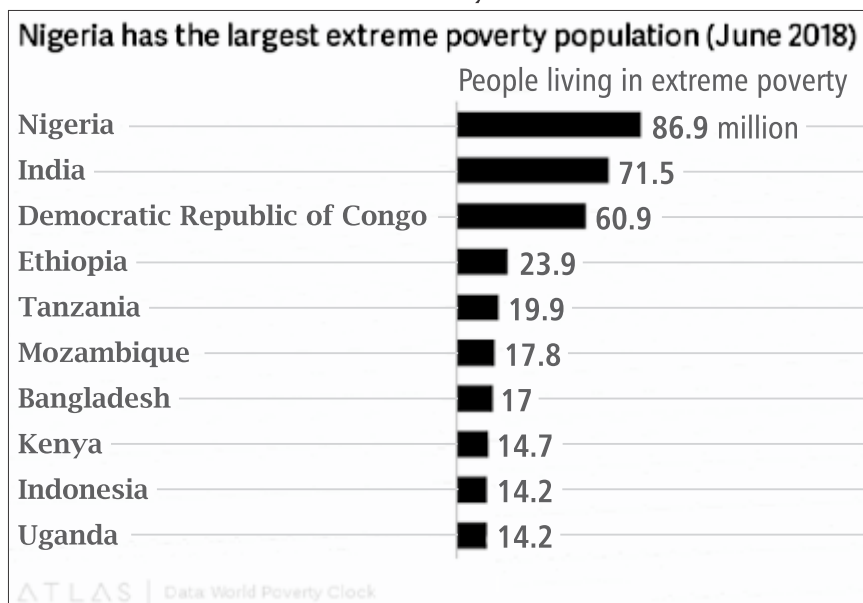
"The models make assumptions on expected future changes in income, International Monetary Fund (IMF) medium-term growth forecasts and long-term projections and analysis developed by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), all of which are significantly influenced by uncertainty."

Besides, he said, in line with strategies outlined in the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), the Buhari administration remains committed to promoting sustainable economic development through various social investment schemes capable of yielding positive impacts on poverty and unemployment; and will consequently change the trajectory of poverty in the country.

President Buhari reiterated his administration's commitment towards reversing the country's current poverty level in his inaugural address for a second term in office during the maiden celebration of June 12 as the nation's Democracy Day, when he set a 10-year target for Nigeria to lift at least 100 million of its people out of poverty. Drawing inspiration from other countries that are overcoming similar odds such as China, India and Indonesia, Buhari was upbeat that Nigeria could achieve the feat by lifting millions out of poverty and onto the road to prosperity:

"This task is by no means unattainable. China has done it. India has done it. Indonesia has done it. Nigeria can do it. These are all countries characterised by huge burdens of population.

TABLE 2: World Poverty Clock 2018 Data

Nigeria has the largest extreme poverty population (June 2018)

People living in extreme poverty

Country	People living in extreme poverty
Nigeria	86.9 million
India	71.5
Democratic Republic of Congo	60.9
Ethiopia	23.9
Tanzania	19.9
Mozambique	17.8
Bangladesh	17
Kenya	14.7
Indonesia	14.2
Uganda	14.2

ATLAS | Data World Poverty Clock

China and Indonesia succeeded under authoritarian regimes. India succeeded in a democratic setting. We can do it. With leadership and a sense of purpose, we can lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in 10 years."

Factors constraining poverty reduction in Nigeria

A number of factors are believed to have contributed to the failure of anti-poverty interventions in Nigeria to achieve the desired results. Obadan (2006) identifies some of the factors as follows:

(I)   Lack of targeting mechanisms for the poor and the fact that most of the programmes do not focus directly on the poor.

(ii)   Political and policy instability have resulted in frequent policy changes and inconsistent implementation which in turn have prevented continuous progress.

(iii)   Inadequate coordination of the various programmes which has resulted in each institution carrying out its own activities with resultant duplication of effort and inefficient use of limited resources. Ultimately, overlapping functions led to institutional rivalry and conflicts.

(iv)   Severe budgetary, management and governance problems have afflicted most of the programmes, resulting in facilities not being completed, broken down and abandoned, unstaffed and under-equipped.

(v)   Lack of accountability and transparency thereby leaving the programmes open to abuse   as conduit pipes for draining national resources.

(vi) Over-extended scope of activities of most institutions, resulting in resources being spread too thinly on too many activities.

(vii) Inappropriate programme design reflecting lack of involvement of beneficiaries in the formulation and implementation of programmes. Consequently, beneficiaries were not motivated to identify themselves sufficiently with the successful implementation of the programmes.

(viii) Absence of target-setting for Ministries, Agencies and Programmes.

(ix) Absence of effective collaboration and complementation among the three tiers of government.

(x) Absence of an agreed poverty reduction agenda that can be used by all concerned – Federal Government, State Governments, Local Governments , NGOs, and the International Donor Community.

(xi) Most of the programmes lacked mechanisms for their sustainability.

Obadan equally believes that the high levels of inequality and the predominance of slums within the nation make it tough for economic growth to have an influence on poverty:

"Many of the programmes to reduce poverty in Nigeria lacked emphasis on inequality and did not allow the underprivileged to share in the increase of GDP and per capita income and thereby has no effect in improving their poverty reduction."

Reflecting on the reasons for the increasing rate of poverty in Nigeria Ozden and Udeh (2018) attribute it to the inability of successive governments to diversify the Nigerian economy from a mono-cultural economy rife with corruption and rent seeking. According to them, even though the country is blessed with a rich array of   natural resources, many Nigerians are poverty-stricken because successive governments had been over-dependent on oil revenue instead of shifting economic focus to expanding and modernising the agricultural and mining sectors.

The spate of insecurity across Nigeria has also made it difficult to reduce poverty. As Achimugu, Abubakar, Agboni & Orokpo (2012) point out, no meaningful development including (poverty eradication) can be gainfully pursed in a society where people are scampering for safety and are unsure of the next moment. At different times, poverty eradication in Nigeria has been crippled by ethnic crises, religious upheavals, boundary disputes, battles for political supremacy and regional control of resources in the Niger Delta region and the current problems of banditry and terrorism (Boko Haram) in the Northern part of the country.

One other factor constraining poverty reduction in Nigeria is the adoption of the Top–Down Approach. According to the UNDP (1998), one at the most handicapping factors in the achievement of poverty eradication is that, programmes designed to achieve it, miss those for whom they were designed. They exclude the most vulnerable, the poorest, the rural dwellers, the unemployed, women and children. Most poverty eradication programmes in Nigeria are characterized by what Maduagwu (2001) describes as a master and servant relationship where government claims to know and understand what poverty is, who the poor are and what they need in other to eradicate their poverty even though they (politicians) are effectively excluded from poverty by their forceful grabbing of the collective wealth of the nation.

"It is doubtful whether anyone else understand poverty better than the poor, hence, efforts at alleviating poverty that rides on the back of a machinery that excludes them (the poor) may be at best equipped to merely paper the cracks without actually solving the poverty puzzle."

The way forward

Reducing poverty remains a key development challenge in Nigeria because the country hosts the largest population of poor people. Over the years, the incidence of poverty in Nigeria has been galloping upwards as empirical studies have shown.

Indeed, there are fears that the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to end extreme poverty by 2030 is unlikely to be met—no thanks, in large part, to Nigeria's poverty entrapment.

However, to reduce poverty in Nigeria, scholars have canvassed certain paradigms, that the government, policy formulators, donor agencies and all stakeholders must vigorously pursue in the quest to reduce poverty and position the country on the paths of sustainable development. Among the measures being canvassed by scholars is that government's poverty reduction strategies should be properly structured to effectively target the poor

Nigeria received yet another blow from the June 2018 report by the World Poverty Clock, which indicates that the most populous black nation now has the dubious distinction of having overtaken India as home to the highest number of the extremely poor.

who are supposed to be the actual beneficiaries. Achimugu, Abubakar, Agboni & Orokpo (2012) posit that this requires that poverty eradication and sustainable development initiatives should adopt the Bottom-Top approach not just at the implementation stages but at all stages of poverty eradication endeavours.

"This would ensure the incorporation of the much needed element of local knowledge and support for the programme. Besides, most programmes that target poverty eradication and sustainable development in Nigeria are designed and pursued for political reasons and so, the idea of what should be done, when and how is monopolised by a government that is far and removed from the everyday realities of poverty. In an attempt to pacify the people, the government most times involves them at the implementation stages of a programme they know little or nothing about. This faulty paradigm continually supplants poverty

Strengthening the existing poverty alleviation strategies and ensuring good management could be one major way towards the effective performance of existing poverty alleviation programmes.

eradication initiatives in Nigeria. The government should therefore make the Bottom-Top approach and indeed people-participation (at all stages of poverty eradication programmes) a critical criterion for all poverty eradication and sustainable development initiatives in Nigeria."

Beyond adopting the Bottom-Top approach, Yisau (2017) recommends that "Nigeria has to overcome significant gaps and challenges such as poor governance, official kleptocracy, weak legislative framework, poor budgeting culture among others in order to reduce poverty."

For Obadan (2006), there is also a need for a strong political commitment to the poverty reduction goal, as well as a depoliticisation of poverty alleviation programmes and projects.

"Very importantly, in order to make a meaningful dent on poverty, it is crucial for poverty reduction programmes and measures to be implemented within the framework of rapid

broad-based economic growth with equity, controlled population growth, sound economic management and good governance, among others. Finally, it is important to give expression to poverty alleviation objectives in national development plans with the strategies and measures integrated into the country's overall development/policy management framework."

As global attention turns towards Nigeria, home of the highest number of extremely poor in the world, Abdullahi (2019) recommends three ways concerned stakeholders and policymakers can assist in the efforts to achieve the first of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty. They are: 1.Investing in girls' education. 2. Investing in health and wellbeing. 3. Expanding economic opportunities and advancing technological innovation.

One other important thing which scholars would want the Nigerian authorities to address in the country's quest to reduce poverty is lessening the burden of poverty on women. According to Achimugu, Abubakar, Agboni & Orokpo (2012), women suffer disproportionately from the burden of poverty and are systematically excluded from access to essential assets.

"Therefore, if the government were to improve the status of women by creating more special economic opportunities (for example by broadening women-access to vocational training, readily available credits and special markets) for them it would be addressing a priority area of poverty."

Conclusion

From all indications, the outlook for poverty alleviation in Nigeria is currently weak. Several poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria, initiated by the government with the support of some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), aimed at combating and alleviating poverty, have been found not to be successful. Instead of reducing the incidence of poverty, which is their sole aim, these programmes tend to serve as means for draining the national resources due to the pursuit of parochial interests, as a result fostering corruption and dishonesty. For a successful implementation of these programmes, the government and the implementation agencies must take a more proactive approach and be genuinely committed towards emancipation of the poor. Strengthening the existing poverty alleviation strategies and ensuring good management could be one major way towards the effective performance of existing poverty alleviation programmes. This would help to change the trajectory of poverty in the country and put her on the path to the attainment of SDG1 by 2030.

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The Lifted and Left-behind: An Analysis of Poverty Dynamics in Nigeria

Abstract

THIS study examines the dynamics of multidimensional poverty in Nigeria using the 2011 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS4) and 2016 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS5) datasets. Based on the Alkire and Foster (2011) multidimensional poverty measurement, we found that national poverty increased to 22.2 per cent in 2016, higher than 16.2 per cent in 2011. The result of a disaggregated analysis of multidimensional poverty shows that poverty is more concentrated in the North compared to the South. Consequently, the study recommends that pro-poor programmes aimed at lifting people out of poverty should focus more on deprived households in rural areas, especially those in the lagging geo-political regions in Nigeria.

1. Introduction

ECONOMIC development is the process of improving the socio-economic welfare and quality of life of citizens. Agenda 2030 recognizes this by setting the goal for the world to eradicate extreme poverty in all its forms (SDG 1). This means lifting about 736 million[3] people who live below $1.9 poverty line out of extreme poverty. It also implies expanding economic access, improving resilience to socio-economic and environmental shocks, and eliminating deprivation based on sex, age, employment status and geographical location.

For Nigeria, meeting SDG 1 is of utmost priority given the high incidence of poverty and its recent sclerotic growth. In 2018, World Data Lab reported that Nigeria had overtaken India as the country with the most extremely poor people. A synergetic approach to tackle poverty and ensure that the country delivers on SDG 1 is therefore necessary. Eradicating poverty could also enhance the achievement of the other 16 SDGs. For example, Oghuvbu (2018) noted that improvement in the income of the poor leads to a better quality of education in Nigeria. In essence, the 17 SDGs are integrated, and should be viewed as a whole, with achievement in one area enhancing progress in other areas.

In this article, we review Nigeria's progress on SDG 1, particularly how poverty dynamics in Nigeria have been responding to macroeconomic

environments and targeted poverty alleviation programmes. We also dissect the sectoral, regional and sub-national dimensions of poverty in Nigeria. However, there is a notable challenge in meeting data requirements for monitoring progress for SDG 1 (uni-dimensional measure of poverty[4]) in Nigeria, due to the absence of disaggregated data.

Conventionally, the incidence and severity of poverty are measured using Living Standards

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[3]https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/half-world-s-poor-live-just-5-countries

[4]This is also referred to as the monetary measure of poverty

Measurement Surveys (LSMS). However, in Nigeria, LSMS was last conducted in 2010, making it hard to track recent poverty trends. In recent times, a model-based approach has been developed for more frequent tracking of the level of poverty. For example, World Data Lab developed a model that provides an estimate of the poverty level at every second in a day, based on recent macroeconomic conditions. But there are challenges with model-based poverty measurements too, as they are not disaggregated in the manner needed to track SDG1. Lastly, there is a multidimensional poverty measurement which encompasses education, health, living standards and other factors. This multidimensional measure has been employed in recent measures of poverty in Nigeria (see Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2018). Also, it can be computed from widely available household surveys, which improve the periodicity and addresses disaggregation issues.

Consequently, this study employed the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in analysing the state of SDG 1 in Nigeria. Interestingly, we arrived at a conclusion similar to the model-based approach, namely that the poverty level has increased in Nigeria, especially since 2016, and this is due to the economic downturn. Given that SDG implementation also began in 2016, this means that not much progress has been made, and that therefore, strategic policy interventions are required.

2. Background on Poverty Dynamics in Nigeria

OVER the past two decades, the poverty rate (number of poor as a percentage of the population) in Nigeria has been on the decline, but the number of the poor has been increasing. According to the World Bank, the headcount poverty rate stood at 48.4 per cent in 2004, translating to 63.9 million people below the poverty line. In 2010, the poverty rate declined slightly to 46 per cent, but the number of poor jumped to 71 million. No survey-based estimate of poverty has been conducted since 2010, but there are many model-based measures making predictions on the poverty trend. The model-based estimate by World Data Lab shows that the poverty rate was around 46.7% in 2018, with the number of people in extreme poverty at 86.7 million[5].

As Kakwani (2000) noted, poverty dynamics reflect two factors: the pattern of economic growth and the extent of redistributive and pro-poor policies. As far as income poverty is concerned,

For Nigeria, meeting SDG 1 is of utmost priority given the high incidence of poverty and its recent sclerotic growth.

economic growth translates to higher gross national income (GNI) and an improvement in per capita income. The poor could benefit if the growth takes place in the sector or geographical location where they operate. In essence, the growth effect on poverty reflects the macroeconomic fundamentals regarding the pattern of sectoral/geographical growth. The redistributive channel of poverty reduction includes deliberate government action to tackle poverty through the provision of social security, or investment in social sectors like education, health or even the agricultural sector, in a way that addresses the underlying drivers of poverty. In this section, we examine how these factors have evolved over time in Nigeria and draw implications for the observed poverty pattern.

2.1 Macroeconomic Environment in Nigeria

Economic growth is arguably the most important driver of poverty. In a cross-country study spanning 118 countries, Kray, Kleineberg and Dollar (2015) found that economic growth accounted for about 75% of the reduction in poverty. Similarly, a recent study by Ravallion, Jolliffe and Margitic (2018) found that the bulk of those lifted out of poverty was mostly through growth, rather than higher spending on social protection.

Relating this to the Nigerian experience, the country recorded an average growth of 7.3 per cent between 2000 and 2015, before the economy slide into recession in 2016. This growth trajectory has contributed to the declining poverty rate between 2000 and 2014. By one estimate[6], growth alone contributed about 76 percent of the poverty reduction in Nigeria between 2004 and 2010.

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[5]https://qz.com/africa/1313380/nigerias-has-the-highest-rate-of-extreme-poverty-globally/

[6]https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/82406/1/MPRA_paper_82406.pdf

However, the number of poor has been increasing due to several factors. First, population growth and demographic trends have reduced the overall effect of growth. Second, the rate of inequality has increased in tandem with growth, which again muted some of the effects of growth. Third, the uncounted population of poor is in the informal sector. The informal sector is not included in the official GDP computation but is included in the household surveys used for computation of poverty. This creates some measurement issues in which macro-landscape overestimate the growth effect on poverty. Nevertheless, with the tepid growth experienced since 2016, the population and inequality effect will be overwhelming, and this could explain the elevated poverty level.

Figures 1 and 2 examine the sectoral pattern of growth recorded in the past two decades. The breakdown of growth trend into oil and non-oil sectors shows that the non-oil sector has been the

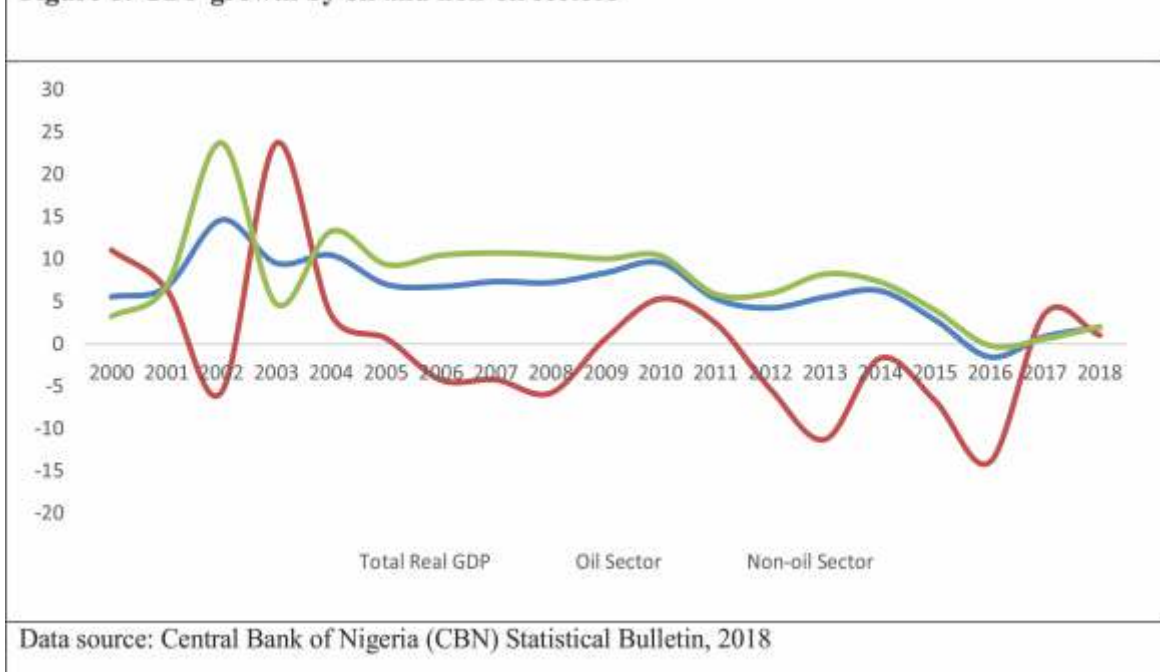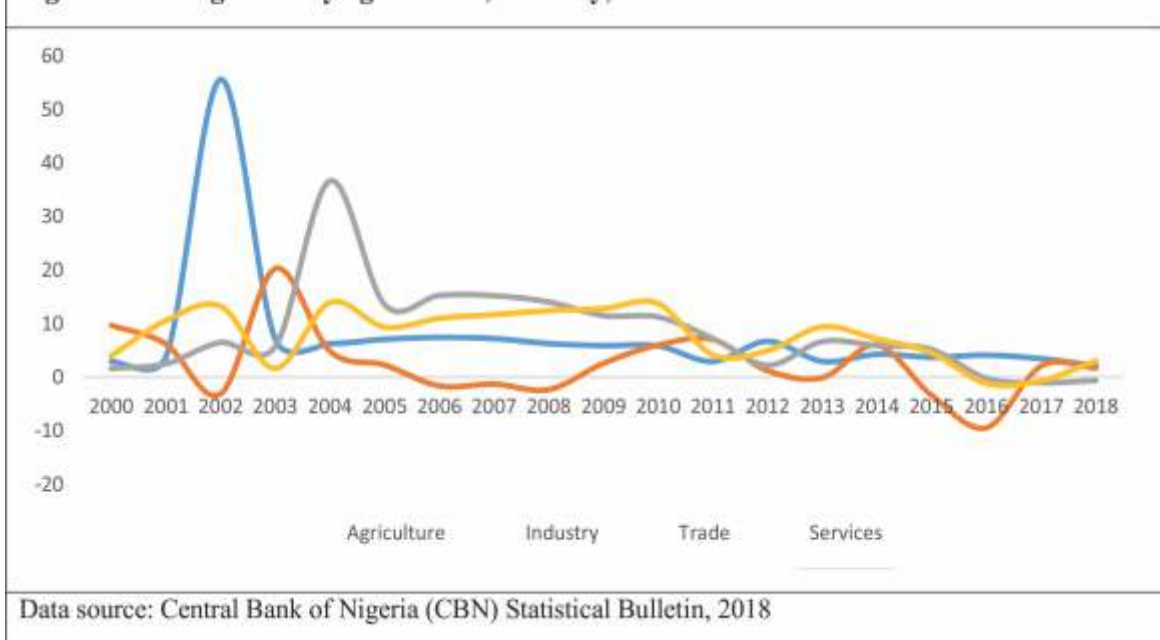Figure 1: GDP growth by oil and non-oil sectors

Data source: Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletin, 2018

Figure 2: GDP growth by agriculture, industry, trade and services sectors

Data source: Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletin, 2018

key driver of growth up to 2015. Further disaggregation of the non-oil sector in Figure 2 reveals that agriculture, service and trade have recorded robust and consistent growth in the period. In fact, between 2000 and 2018, the non-oil sector has recorded an average growth of 7.7 per cent, compared to a decline of 0.04 per cent for the oil sector. This suggests that growth has been taking place within the sectors that poor people operate in, or which have fewer barriers to entry by the poor. In essence, the analysis of growth patterns shows that macroeconomic conditions have been favourable for poverty reduction. It is therefore a paradox that poverty has not declined as substantially as might be expected.

A plausible reason for the sluggish response of poverty to growth could be the weak employment situation. Growth effect is spread through expansion in economic opportunities. As Table 1 shows, unemployment has been increasing in Nigeria despite sustained growth in the non-oil sector. Between 2010 and 2018, the unemployment rate has risen from 5 per cent to 22 per cent. This case of jobless growth illustrates two things. One, the pace at which new job seekers enter into the labour market exceeds its absorption capacity. Two, it is likely that growth is not taking place in sectors with high absorptive capacity. By historical trend, industry, especially the manufacturing sector, has high absorption capacity in any economy. But in Nigeria, the manufacturing sector contributes less than 10 per cent of the GDP, and growth in this sector is weak compared to other non-oil sectors.

Table 1: Unemployment rate in Nigeria

Year	Unemployment Rate (%)	Change (%)
2010	5.1	-
2011	6	1.1
2012	10.6	4.6
2013	10	-0.6
2014	7.8	-2.2
2015	9	1.2
2016	13.4	4.4
2017	17.4	4
2018	22.6	5.2

Source: World Bank's World Development Indicator (2018)

2.3 Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Nigeria

Given the high level of poverty in Nigeria, successive governments have implemented various social protection policies targeted at the vulnerable groups in Nigeria. We briefly review these pro-poor programmes under different administrations since 1999.

2.3.1 Pro-poor programmes: 1999 to 2007

With the transition from military rule to a democratic regime in 1999, the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo faced a barrage of challenges, including a high rate of poverty and dismal economic performance. In response, the government launched the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) in 2000 to provide direct employment opportunities for youths. The objective of the programme was to mop up the excess supply of labour in Nigeria, and especially to reduce youth unemployment, to which rising violent conflicts were attributed. The beneficiaries were paid a monthly stipend in return for direct services providing public goods, such as afforestation and environmental sanitation. However, less than a year into its implementation, PAP was discarded due to public outcry over the corruption in its administration and the inclusion of non-poor persons among the beneficiaries.

The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) was introduced in 2001 to replace PAP. NAPEP had four focal areas: (i) Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES): This involved capacity development in the form of mandatory attachment, mentorship to prospective entrepreneurs, and micro-credit facilities to the youths to ease their transition into the labour market; (ii) Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS): This targeted energy, transportation network, telecommunication, and water infrastructure in the rural areas; (iii) Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS): This addressed structural issues such as quality of informal education, healthcare delivery and special intervention for destitute and disabled (iv) Natural Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS): This covered environmental sustainability issues and local participation in resource management.

NAPEP took a multidimensional approach to poverty eradication by addressing not only income poverty but also education, energy, health and environmental poverty. However, the reach of NAPEP was limited, due in part to funding constraint. NAPEP also faced challenges in terms of poor targeting, corruption and mismanagement and coordination with sub-national levels. Overall, given the huge population of the poor in Nigeria, the best that NAPEP could have hoped to achieve was to

Over the past two decades, the poverty rate (number of poor as a percentage of the population) in Nigeria has been on the decline, but the number of the poor has been increasing.

lift the most vulnerable groups out of the poverty trap. But by various assessments of its impact, the programme did not deliver much in this regard[7].

2.3.2 Pro-poor programmes: 2007 to 2011

President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua also prioritized poverty reduction in his economic blueprint. His administration introduced the 7-point agenda with the overarching objective of tackling poverty. The agenda focused more on the underlying causes of poverty such as lack of power and energy, poor or no education, land reform and insecurity. The president laid out his approach in his inaugural speech when he stated that

> "by fighting poverty, we fight disease. We will make advances in public health, to control the scourge of HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases that hold back our population and limit our progress."

However, these focus areas were central not only to poverty reduction but also to economic growth. Therefore, the distinction between pro-growth or pro-poorness is blurred in the policy. Also, while not discounting the importance of pro-growth policies, the high incidence of poverty in Nigeria called for a multi-pronged approach in which pro-growth initiatives complemented the targeted social transfers. However, the administration continued with the existing structure and intervention by NAPEP.

In general, political and economic factors affected the implementation of Yar'Adua's 7-point agenda. Competing demands on budgetary allocation, especially with the implementation of a new minimum wage in 2011, made scaling up the interventions difficult. Also, issues that bedevilled past poverty alleviation policies manifested in the

7-point agenda. For example, Kanayo (2014) noted that the agenda suffered from poor coordination of activities, lack of sustainability of the programme, absence of achievable target setting and lack of periodic impact assessment.

2.3.3 Pro-poor programmes: 2011-2015

The administration of President Goodluck Jonathan followed up on the pro-growth approach to poverty reduction. Its anchor initiative called "Transformation Agenda" focused on removing bottlenecks to growth in areas such as human capital development, agro-allied industry, power and infrastructure. In 2012, the administration attempted to implement oil-sector reform by removing fuel subsidy. The protests and agitation that followed led to more a moderated reform and introduction of Jonathan's Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme, (SURE-P) to cushion the effect of the partial increase in fuel prices.

SURE-P had several pro-poor components. There was a graduate internship scheme for unemployed youths to acquire labour market experience and enhance their employability skills. There was also an intervention for small-scale enterprises in the form of mentorship and grants for business expansion. Another intervention area of the programme was maternal and child health. Specifically, conditional cash transfers were provided to pregnant women who attended antenatal care, used skilled health personnel for delivery, and attended postnatal care. Other components of SURE-P included mass transit to ease urban transport problems, and vocational training.

SURE-P was phased out in 2015 with the transition to another administration. The effectiveness of the intervention on poverty was minimal, much like the previous initiatives. Specifically, the number of poor covered was too small to drive a significant reduction in the poverty level. In addition, Amakom (2013) noted that issue of leakages, inefficiencies, duplication of efforts and corruption were evident in the implementation of SURE-P. Overall, SURE-P had strong pro-poor components but its coverage was limited.

1.3.4 Pro-poor programmes: 2015 till date

Since the inception of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration in 2015, poverty alleviation has been an integral part of its economic development plan. For instance, one of the objectives of the Economic Growth and Recovery Plan (ERGP) is social inclusion through targeted programmes to reduce regional inequalities. In line with this commitment, the administration introduced the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP). The NSIP components include

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[7]https://www.academia.edu/16953999/Appraising_the_Policies_and_Progra mmes_of_Poverty_Reduction_in_Nigeria_A_Critical_View_Point

the National Social Safety Net Programme (NSSP), N-Power, National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), and the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP).

The NSSP broadly covers initiatives around cash transfer and targeted community development projects. Under the NSSP, the government also established the National Social Safety Net Coordinating Office (NASSCO) to coordinate existing social safety net at the federal level. Overall, the intervention target is to reach 1 million poorest households. This objective is achieved through provision of monthly stipend of NGN5,000 to the beneficiaries. An additional NGN5,000 is provided on the condition that the beneficiaries participate in selected activities focused on human capital development and sustainable environments. Between 2016 and 2018, the intervention has only reached 297,973 households in 19 states. Thus, the programme has not covered up to 30% of its intended targets.

The NHGSFP aims to provide one nutritious, balanced meal each school day to 5.5 million pupils in public primary schools. The objective is to simultaneously address three core development challenges: the malnutrition issue among schoolchildren, poor education performance, especially low enrolment and completion, and lack of linkage between the agriculture sector and the local economy. Based on the 2018Q3 review by the National Social Investment Office (NSIO), the programme has reached 9.3 million children in 26 states in Nigeria. This means the programme has already exceeded its targets. However, a third-party monitoring by multinational organizations put the total beneficiaries at 1.9million pupils.

N-Power is the labour market component of the administration's social protection. It addresses the issue of youth unemployment by providing relevant work skills needed for entrepreneurship and employability. It also provides beneficiaries with monthly stipends of NGN30,000. The target is to enrol and equip 700,000 youths in about eight years, who are to be deployed into the critical sector of the economy. The 2018Q3 review by NSIO shows that 520,000 youths have been reached. Again, third party shows much lower beneficiaries from the programme. The conflicting figures could reflect either disparity in data used for the assessments or more likely government bias to overestimate the impacts of its interventions.

Lastly, GEEP is the component designed to address the challenges facing micro, small and medium scale enterprises, especially capital. It is targeted at the segments of the society with limited access to credit: market women, traders, artisans, women co-operatives, enterprising youth, farmers,

> **Based on our findings, this study recommends that pro-poor programmes aimed at lifting people out of poverty should identify and focus more on deprived households in the rural areas, especially those in the lagging geo-political regions in Nigeria.**

and workers in the agricultural sector. For example, a 6-month loan tenor of between NGN10,000 and NGN100,000 has been provided to market traders. The plan is to eventually provide micro-lending to 1.66 million businesses. Based on NSIO review, 1.3 million businesses have been reached.

Overall, about NGN300 billion has been spent on the NSIP since 2016, with the intention of reaching 9.76 million beneficiaries directly. While an assessment of the effectiveness of NSIP now would be premature, it is obvious that the programme has more depth, coverage and budgetary allocation than previous programmes. The NSIP is also innovative in terms of ensuring stronger linkages between pro-poor policies and the broader economic development plan (ERGP) of the government. However, since 2016 when the NSIP was also introduced, the economy has experienced significant contraction, especially in the non-oil sectors. The unemployment level has also increased dramatically. The macroeconomic environment has therefore compounded the incidence of poverty and places more expectation on NSIP.

Challenges in poverty alleviation programmes

The weak effectiveness of various pro-poor programmes in Nigeria is due to factors such as:

1. **Policy summersault and sustainability challenges:** The various poverty alleviation programmes have changed with government transitions. This has made it hard to sustain the initiatives or use their success/failure as feedback to improve programme design and effectiveness.

2. **Poor targeting and limited coverage:** For a country without reliable demographic data, there are challenges in targeting the poor. This has made many of the initiatives to exclude the poor and include the non-poor. Even when the poor are reached, the programmes are constrained by limited budgetary allocation to essential services. For example, despite its wide outreach, the NSIP still covers only about 10 per cent of the population of poor in Nigeria.

3. **Inefficiency and corruption in delivery:** Many of the poverty alleviation programmes have been unable to deliver their mandates due to mismanagement and inefficient use of resources. For instance, it was found that about 92 cases of misappropriation under SURE-P are still before the courts. A substantial part of what is described as "poverty alleviation budget" are administration expenses that do not benefit the poor.

4. **Coordination with subnational government:** State and local governments in Nigeria also have some poverty alleviation programmes. In many cases, these are not linked to the federal government-led initiatives. As a result, knowledge sharing and transfer of accumulated experiences on successful development initiative do not take place.

3.0 Data Source and Methodology

3.1 Data Source

THIS study used the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey[8] datasets to compute the multidimensional poverty index. To understand the dynamics of multidimensional poverty in Nigeria, two survey periods[9] were considered: 2011 (MICS4) and 2016 (MICS5).The MICS survey was conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in collaboration with the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) and National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), with support from international organizations. The survey is nationally representative as it covers households across the 36 states and FCT. It reports detailed information on key indicators, including education, health, water and sanitation, nutrition and other relevant household and individual characteristics.

3.2 Methodology

The multidimensional poverty owes its foundation to capacity approach developed by Amartya Sen. Capacity approach emphasized on the freedom in the assessment of depravity. As such, it enlarges the space for analysis of poverty and other forms of deprivation away from the dominant income analysis. Capacity approach also focuses on the extent to which an individual can convert resources to useful functioning. In essence, it is not enough to possess resources but the individual must also have freedom and access to market to exchange the resources for improved quality of life. On the basis of capacity approach, it is more relevant to look broadly into poverty not only from income dimension but also social (education, health) and environmental dimensions.

The MPI reflects deprivations in very rudimentary services and core human operations for households (Alkire and Santos, 2010).It differs from the traditional income measure of poverty (uni-dimensional), as it considers different sets of deprivations. In line with Alkire and Foster (2007, 2011 and 2018), we based our MPI on three core dimensions: (i) education (ii) health and (iii) standard of living. The three broad dimensions are measured using 10 indicators. Each dimension was equally weighted and each indicator within a dimension was also weighted equally (Alkire and Foster, 2011).

Based on the Alkire and Foster (2011 and 2018) method, a household is identified as multidimensionally poor if, and only if, it is deprived in some combination of indicators whose weighted sum is 33 per cent or more of the dimensions. The dimension, indicators and their deprivation criteria are explained in Table 2. The MPI is calculated by multiplying the percentage of the people who are poor (H) by the average proportion of dimensions in which households are deprived (A). This is shown below;

$$MPI = H \, X \, A$$

where H is the percentage of people who are MPI poor (incidence of poverty) and A is the average intensity of MPI poverty across the poor.

4.0 Result

TABLE 3 shows the percentage of Nigerians who are multidimensionally poor in 2011 and 2016. It also shows the intensity and severity of poverty in both periods. From the result, more households were poorer in 2016, as both the severity and intensity of poverty increased during the period. Multidimensional poverty increased from 16.2 per cent in 2011 to 22.2 per cent in 2016. Also, the percentage of people who are multidimensionally poor increased by 6.3 per cent in 2016, while the proportion of dimensions in which poor people are deprived increased by 7.5 per cent. The increase in multidimensional poverty could be attributed to the slowdown of the Nigerian economy which contracted by 1.6 per cent in 2016 (see Figure 3).

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[8]The global MICS programmed was developed by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to support countries in the collection of internationally comparable data on a wide range of indicators on the situation of children and women (NBS and UNICEF, 2017). For Nigeria, the MICS survey data is available for 2007, 2011 and 2016; however, we considered two waves of the survey – MICS4 (2011) and MICS 5 (2016). The choice of these waves is based on data availability on key indicators. Also, the MICS 2016 data better tracks the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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[9]The selected period was based on data availability

Table 2: Description of MPI Indicators and Dimensions

Dimension	Indicator	A household is deprived if…..	Related to	Weight
Education	Years of schooling	No household member aged 10 years or older has completed class six.	SDG 4	1/6
	School attendance	Any school-aged child is not attending school up to the age at which he/she would complete class six.	SDG 4	1/6
Health	Nutrition	At least a child under 5 years of age for whom there is nutritional information is undernourished.*	SDG 2	1/6
	Child mortality	Any child has died in the family in the five-year period preceding the survey	SDG 3	1/6
Living Standards	Cooking fuel	A household cooks with dung, agricultural crop, shrubs, wood, charcoal or coal.	SDG 7	1/18
	Sanitation	The household's sanitation facility is not improved (according to SDG guidelines) or it is improved but shared with other households.**	SDG 6	1/18
	Drinking water	The household does not have access to improved drinking water (according to SDG guidelines) or safe drinking water is at least a 30- minute walk (roundtrip) from home.***	SDG 6	1/18
	Electricity	The household has no electricity	SDG 7	1/18
	Housing	The household has inadequate housing: the floor is of natural materials or the roof or walls are of natural or rudimentary materials.****	SDG 11	1/18
	Assets	The household does not own more than one of these assets: radio, TV, telephone, computer, animal cart, bicycle, motorbike, or refrigerator, and does not own a car or truck	SDG 11	1/18

Note:

*Children under 5 years are considered malnourished if their z-score of either height-for-age (stunting) or weight-for-age (underweight) is below minus two standard deviations from the median of the reference population.

**A household is considered to have access to improved sanitation if it has some type of flush toilet or latrine, or ventilated improved pit or composting toilet, provided that they are not shared. If country survey report uses other definitions of 'adequate' sanitation, we follow the survey report

***A household has access to clean drinking water if the water source is any of the following types: piped water, public tap, borehole or pump, protected well, protected spring or rainwater, and it is within 30 minutes' walk (round trip). If survey report uses other definitions of 'safe' drinking water, we follow the country survey report.

*** Deprived if floor is made of mud/clay/earth, sand, or dung; or if dwelling has no roof or walls or if either the roof or walls are

constructed using natural materials such as cane, palm/trunks, sod/mud, dirt, grass/reeds, thatch, bamboo, sticks, or rudimentary materials such as carton, plastic/polythene sheeting, bamboo with mud/stone with mud, loosely packed stones, adobe not covered, raw/reused wood, plywood, cardboard, unburnt brick, or canvas/tent.

Source: Adapted from Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (2018)
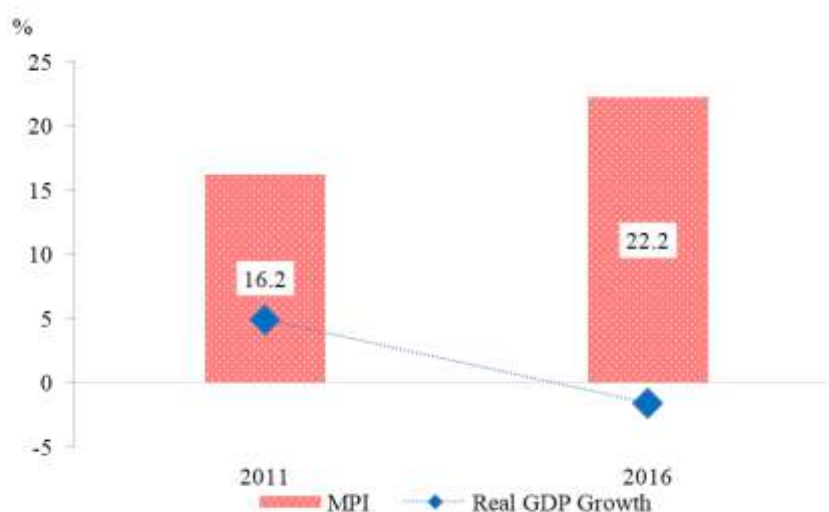
Table 3: MPI in Nigeria

Period	H	Intensity (A)	MPI (M0)
2011	35.9	45.2	16.2
2016	42.2	52.7	22.2

Note: values are in percentage

Source: MICS years 2011 and 2016, own calculations.

Figure 3: Real GDP Growth and Multidimensional Poverty

Source: NBS; MICS years 2011 and 2016, own calculations.

The contributions of each indicator to the multidimensional poverty index in 2011 and 2016 are presented in Figure 4. Of the 10 indicators considered, child mortality has the highest contribution (29.8 per cent) to multidimensional poverty in 2011.This is followed by inadequate housing (12 per cent), poor sanitation conditions (11.7 per cent) and low quality of education[10] (10.8 per cent). In 2016, the low quality of education (21.4 per cent) contributed most to multidimensional poverty. Child mortality contributed 11.2 per cent to multidimensional poverty; school attendance contributed 11.2 per cent, while poor housing contributed 10.3 per cent.

4.1. Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) by Selected Household Characteristics

POVERTY is more concentrated in rural areas than the urban areas. There is a significant poverty gap between households in rural and urban areas. In rural areas, MPI increased from 20.1 per cent in 2011 to 29.7 per cent in 2016 (see Figure 5). In the urban areas, it increased marginally from 8 per cent in 2011 to 10.4 per cent in 2016. The major contributors to rural poverty were higher child mortality and low standard of living.

Male-headed households are poorer compared to female-headed households in Nigeria. Figure 6 shows the distribution of multidimensional poverty by male and female-headed households in Nigeria.[11] As depicted in the figure, poverty is more concentrated in male-headed household relative to female-headed households. Multidimensional poverty in male-headed household grew from 16.5 per cent in 2011 to 23 per cent in 2016, while it declined from 12 per cent in 2011 to 8.7 per cent in 2016 in female-headed households.

Multidimensional poverty is more concentrated in larger households than smaller households. Figure 7 shows a positive association between multidimensional poverty and household size. Households with 1-3 members have the least MPI, while households with ten or more members have the highest MPI.

Households where the head is not educated experience significantly higher multidimensional poverty compared to households where the head has primary education or at least secondary education (see Figure 8).

4.2 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) across Geopolitical Regions: the North vs South Divide

Multidimensional poverty is more concentrated in the North compared to the South. Specifically, the North West had the highest multidimensional poverty (see Table 4), this is followed by North East and North Central. Multidimensional poverty was high at 50.3 per cent in 2011 but declined to 42.8 per cent in 2016. The high poverty rate in the North West is plausible given that most states in the North West have poor living conditions, weak educational system and poor health care facilities (see Ogebe and Adeniran, 2019). The MPI in the North East was relatively high at 20.9 per cent in 2011, but increased marginally to 22.6 per cent in 2016. The increase in MPI in the North East can be attributed to increased insecurity which has crippled education

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[10]This is proxied by years of schooling
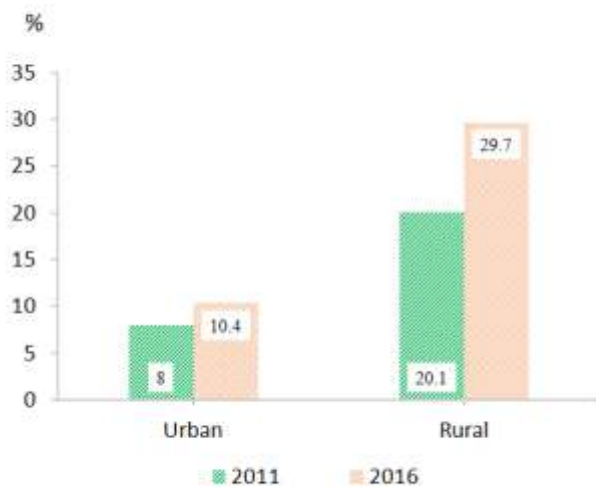
[11]Male headed households constitute more than 80 percent of households considered in this study.

Figure 4: Indicator Contribution to MPI
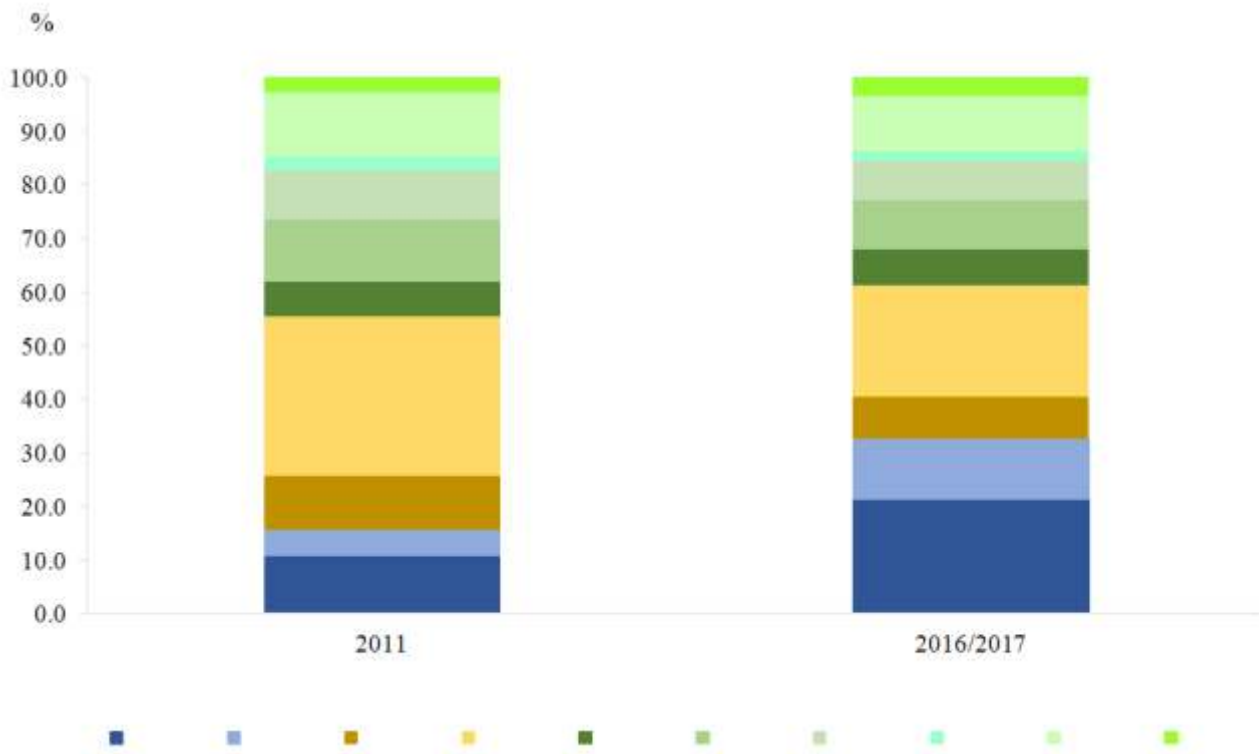
Source: MICS years 2011 and 2016, own calculations

Figure 5: MPI by Area of Residence

Source: MICS years 2011 and 2016, own calculations
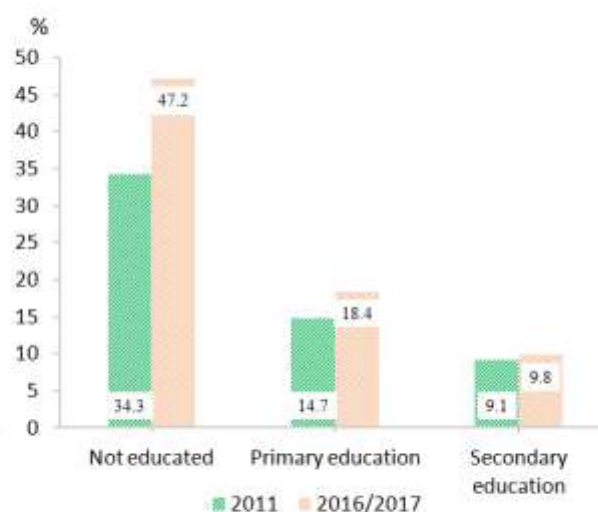
Figure 6: MPI by Sex of Household Head

Source: MICS years 2011 and 2016, own calculations

Figure 7: MPI by Household Size

Source: MICS years 2011 and 2016, own calculations

Figure 8: MPI by Education Level of Household Head

Source: MICS years 2011 and 2016, own calculations

and living standards in the region. Although the MPI was relatively low in the North Central, it increased marginally from 10.1 per cent in 2011 to 12.3 per cent in 2016.

In the South, MPI was relatively low and declined, albeit slowly, in the South East and South-South. The South-South had the highest MPI of 8.8 per cent in 2011 and 6.5 per cent in 2016. In the South East, MPI declined from 7.6 per cent in 2011 to 5.4 per cent in 2016. In the South West, MPI was lowest at 2.3 per cent in 2011 and 3.1 per cent in 2016. Child mortality ranks as top contributor to multidimensional poverty across the geo-political regions in Nigeria (see Figure 9).

4.3 Subnational Multidimensional Poverty Analysis

Most states in the North West had a higher multidimensional poverty rate in 2016. Zamfara State had the highest multidimensional poverty rate in 2011, while Kano had the least multidimensional poverty in the North West. However, in terms of poverty growth in 2016, Kano and Kebbi states had a significant increase in poverty. In Kano, multidimensional poverty increased by 28.9 per cent to 45.3 per cent in 2016, while in Kebbi it grew by 21.6 per cent to 46.6 per cent in 2016, higher than the national MPI. Kaduna is the only North West state with lower multidimensional poverty in 2016; here MPI declined by 6.5 per cent to 22.7 per cent in 2016, implying an improvement in the wellbeing of households in Kaduna.

Table 4: MPI by Geo-political Regions			
		2011	**2016**
North	North central	10.1	12.3
	North East	20.9	22.6
	North West	50.3	42.8
South	South East	7.6	5.4
	South-South	8.8	6.5
	South West	2.3	3.1
Source: MICS years 2011 and 2016, own calculations			

Multidimensional poverty is high in most North Eastern states. Yobe and Borno had the highest poverty rate in the North East region. In Yobe, multidimensional poverty increased marginally from 31.0 per cent in 2011 to 32.7 per cent in 2016, while in Borno it rose from 30.8 per cent in 2011 to 37.3 per cent in 2016. The high level of poverty in these states could be linked to the insurgency in those states. In Gombe, multidimensional poverty increased marginally by 2.3 per cent to 22.4 per cent in 2016. This implies that education, health and living standards worsened in Yobe, Borno and Gombe in 2016. Although the poverty rate was high in Bauchi (23.3 per cent), Taraba (17 per cent) and Adamawa (12.6 per cent) in 2011, it declined in 2016. This points to an improvement in education, health and living conditions of households in those states.

Multidimensional poverty was lower in most North Central states compared to states in the North West and North East. Niger had the highest growth in poverty among the North Central states; here MPI grew significantly by 20.7 per cent to 31.1 per cent in 2016. In Nasarawa, MPI grew by 1.3 per cent to 14.1 per cent in 2016. It increased by 2.9 per cent to 10.4 per cent in Plateau, while in the FCT Abuja it grew marginally by 0.9 per cent to 5.2 per cent in 2016. Benue, Kogi and Kwara experienced lower multidimensional poverty.

In the Southern region, multidimensional poverty is relatively low and declined in 2016. Specifically, multidimensional poverty declined in all states in the South East and South-South. This suggests that states in the South East and South-South experienced an improvement in education, health and living standards. In the South West, multidimensional poverty declined by 1.4 per cent and 0.1 per cent in Oyo and Ekiti states, while it remained constant at 2.6 per cent in Ogun State.

Other states such as Lagos, Osun and Ondo had a marginal increase in multidimensional poverty.

5.0 Conclusion and Policy Recommendation

THIS paper computes the multidimensional poverty rate in Nigeria using the MICS4 (2011) and MICS5 (2016) data. Results from the study reveal that national multidimensional poverty increased in 2016. Also, multidimensional poverty is higher among households in the rural areas and those with large size. Furthermore, the results reveal that multidimensional poverty is more concentrated among households in the North compared to the South. Based on our findings, this study recommends that pro-poor programmes aimed at lifting people out of poverty should identify and focus more on deprived households in the rural areas, especially those in the lagging geo-political regions in Nigeria.
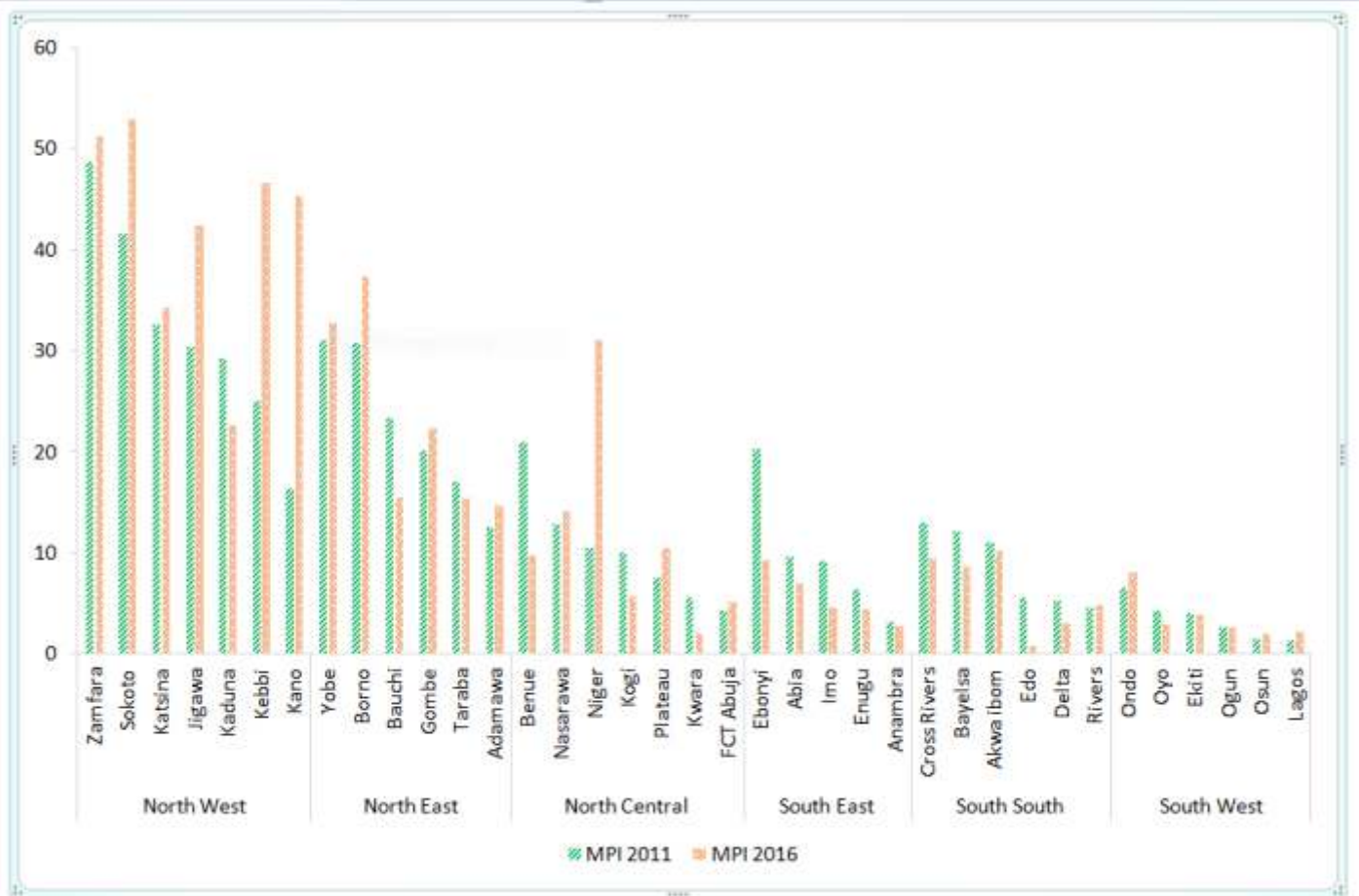

Figure 9: Contribution to MPI across Geopolitical zones
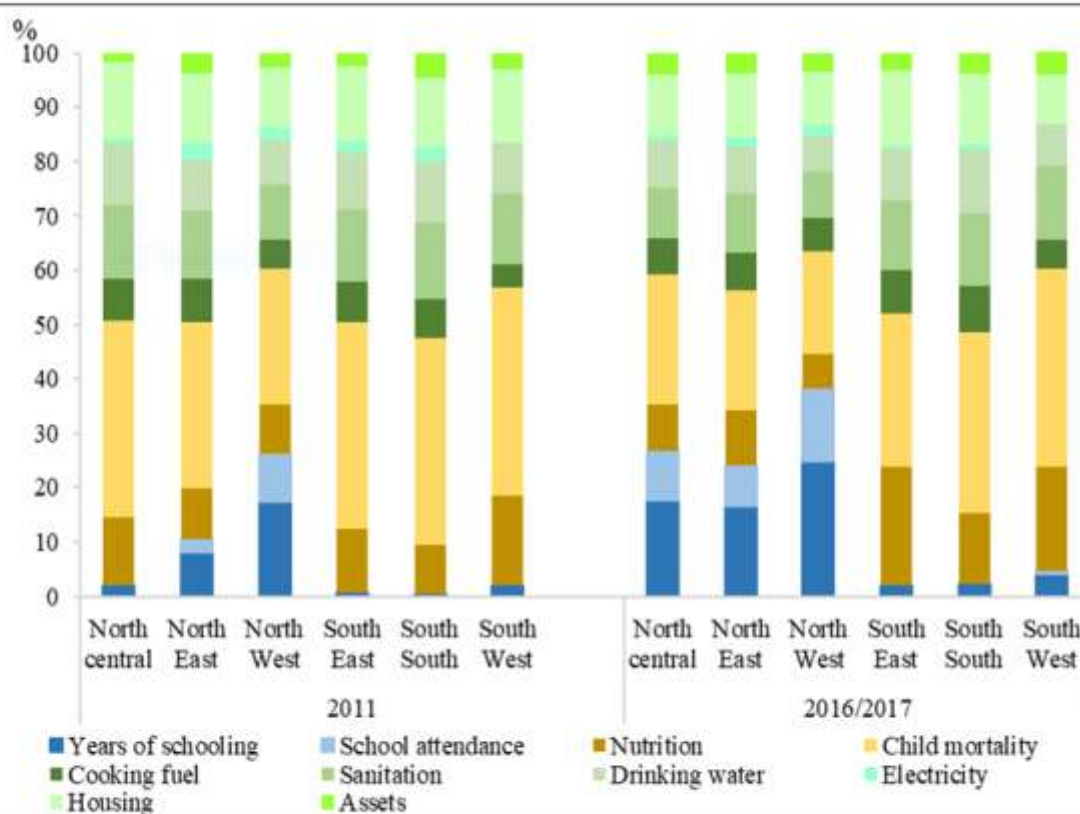
Source: MICS years 2011 and 2016, own calculations

[12]with exception of Rivers states where it increased marginally by 0.2 percent.

Figure 10: MPI across States in Nigeria

Source: MICS years 2011 and 2016, own calculations

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Appendix

Table 1a: MPI across States in Nigeria

	2011				2016		
	H	M0	pop share		H	M0	pop share
Abia	25	9.6	3.6		18.1	6.9	2.4
Adamawa	32.3	12.6	3.7		34.9	14.6	2.6
Akwa Ibom	28.8	11	4.3		26.6	10.2	3.5
Anambra	8.7	3.2	3.5		6.8	2.7	2.5
Bauchi	54.9	23.3	2.1		38.2	15.5	2.6
Bayelsa	32.4	12.2	2.5		22.9	8.6	2.1
Benue	51.5	21	2.4		25.8	9.7	1.8
Borno	62.7	30.8	2.4		74.8	37.3	1.7
Cross Rivers	32.9	13	1.8		24	9.5	1.9
Delta	14	5.3	2.8		8.5	3	2.3
Ebonyi	49.1	20.3	2.5		24	9.3	1.5
Edo	16.1	5.6	2.9		2.1	0.8	2.2
Ekiti	10	4	1.2		10.1	3.9	1.1
Enugu	14.9	6.4	1.1		12.2	4.4	1.3
Gombe	48.7	20.1	2.7		45.7	22.4	2.6
Imo	25.3	9.2	2.2		12	4.6	2.3
Jigawa	60.3	30.4	3.5		75.9	42.4	3.6
Kaduna	59.8	29.2	5.1		49.1	22.7	4.2
Kano	38.7	16.4	3.3		79.6	45.3	11.6
Katsina	65.5	32.6	4.1		65.3	34.2	4.6
Kebbi	58.2	25	2.1		75.8	46.6	3.5
Kogi	25	10	1.2		15.7	5.7	1.3
Kwara	15.7	5.6	1.6		5.9	2	1.5
Lagos	3.4	1.4	3.4		5.7	2.2	5.1
Nasarawa	33.9	12.8	2.6		32.5	14.1	2.5
Niger	26.3	10.4	3.2		56.1	31.1	2.5
Ogun	6.8	2.6	3.8		6.3	2.6	2
Ondo	18.8	6.6	1.5		20.5	8.1	1.3
Osun	4.3	1.5	2.2		5.6	2	1.4
Oyo	10.7	4.3	1.3		8.2	2.9	1.5
Plateau	20.3	7.5	1.6		25	10.4	1.6
Rivers	12.5	4.6	2.4		13.3	4.8	1.8
Sokoto	76.4	41.5	2.9		86.1	52.8	3.8
Taraba	42.9	17	2.8		34.5	15.3	1.3
Yobe	64.1	31	2.2		66	32.7	2.3
Zamfara	82.8	48.7	4.1		80.6	51.2	5.4

Introduction: **An Assessment of Nigeria's Implementation of the "Gender Equality" Goal**

GENDER equality is often identified as a key issue in the economic development of emerging economies. Over the years, it has been observed that the world's worst countries for gender equality have failed to develop because they do not provide the same opportunities for women as are available for men. The implication is that there can be no sustainable development without gender equality.

It is against this background that gender equality and women's empowerment are at the centre of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Specifically, "Gender Equality", which is goal number 5 of the 17 SDGs for transforming the world, enjoins UN-member countries, including Nigeria, to "end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere" by 2030. According to the UN, gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous world.

The UN emphasises that:

"Providing women and girls with equal access to education, healthcare, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large."

Even before the adoption of the 17 global goals, the relevance of gender mainstreaming to development issues has been on the front burner of the international development agenda for decades. Indeed, since the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which set a landmark global agenda for women's human rights, gender equality and empowerment, gender mainstreaming has become a topical issue internationally, and has heightened the level of studies on women's roles in development.

The growing level of international debates such as United Nations Agenda for Elimination of Inequality and Discrimination between Men and Women as well as Women and Development (WAD), highlights the need to move economies and societies onto more sustainable paths by linking gender equality to sustainable development.

According to Ekpe, Alobo and John (2014), this linkage is important for several reasons. On the one hand, it is a moral and ethical imperative to realizing a just and sustainable world. On the other hand, it is necessary to address the disproportionate impact of economic, social and environmental stress on women which undermine their vital roles in sustaining their families and communities. It is also important to build up women's capabilities to create better synergies, equality and development outcomes.

Elegbede, (2012) notes that gender equality does not mean that women and men have become the same, but that their behaviour, aspirations and opinions are equally valued and that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on their gender differences which is a social construction of identity. Equality means that men and women are able to enjoy equal status, entitlement, rights, access to assets and services without the limitations imposed by gender norms and stereotypes.

Clearly, SDG 5 represents a new window of opportunity to tackle structural constraints that have held women back, forcing them to lag behind men in most measures of economic opportunities and preventing them from making meaningful contributions to socio-economic and political development around the world.

As might be expected, Nigeria remains a focus of global policy leaders and stakeholders in the quest for Gender Equality. This is essentially because the world's most populous black nation is one of the many countries where tradition, custom, sexual stereotyping of social roles and cultural prejudice militate against the enjoyment of rights and full participation of women on an equal basis with men in national development. Because there is little evidence of any conscious or sustained effort to eliminate the entrenched societal norms, rules and values that stack the odds against women and in favour of men. Nigeria features on the list of countries whose fortunes are likely to change for the better with gender equality.

As a member of the United Nations, Nigeria has signed and ratified various relevant international instruments, treaties and conventions that require member-nations to establish mechanisms to eliminate gender discrimination and to ensure the equality and human dignity of all men and women.

Ifemeje and Ikpeze (2012) observe that despite Nigeria's ratification of virtually all international instruments on the protection and promotion of gender rights and equality, she has failed to domesticate most of them. Consequently, the pace of women's emancipation in Nigeria has been slowed down. The failure has also denied women's rights activists in Nigeria a wider and stronger platform from which to agitate for the enforcement of the rights of women.

Nigeria was also among the nations that ratified the convention that made gender mainstreaming a veritable strategy in societal development. But at the end of 2015, when the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) elapsed, the UN scored the country low in the attainment of its eight core targets.

Following the adoption of the SDGs by the UN General Assembly in September 2015, Nigeria subscribed to and pledged to actualise the Gender Equality Goal. Three years after the endorsement of the SDGs by the Nigerian leader, President Muhammadu Buhari, it has become imperative to evaluate the progress so far made by the country in the implementation of SDG 5.

However, before delving into the level of implementation of SDG 5 under the Buhari administration, it is necessary to highlight some of the programmes articulated by successive governments in Nigeria to drive the process.

Gender Equality: Policies and Programmes of Successive Governments

In Nigeria, the awareness about the role of women in the development of a nation became pronounced in the 1980s. Since then, some of the policies and programmes put forward to bridge the gender gap in Nigeria are as follows:

· Better Life for Rural women (1987)
· Family Support Programme (1994)
· Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) (1997)
· National Policy on Women (2000)
· National Gender Policy (2006)
· Establishment of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (1999).

Better Life for Rural Women (BLF) launched in 1987 by Maryam Babangida, wife of Nigeria's then military dictator and self-styled President, General Ibrahim Babangida was aimed at empowering women through the development of skills that would improve their status of amongst other objectives. This programme targeted rural women. The goal was to empower women irrespective of their background, location or their level of education.

BLF was followed by the Family Support Programme (FEAP) initiated by Maryam Abacha, wife of General Sani Abacha, the military dictator who succeeded Babangida. FEAP was a micro credit scheme whose primary goal was to create investment opportunities for the rural dwellers, especially women. The aim was to foster greater economic advantages to the poor in rural communities on the understanding that extending services to the rural areas would be beneficial to the women there (Akintola, 2001).

FEAP gave way to the establishment of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in 1999 by President Olusegun Obasanjo, (himself a former military dictator) following Nigeria's return to civilian rule. According to Bola (2005), the ministry was specifically created to deal with issues of empowerment and poverty alleviation of women and to cater for and improve their wellbeing. Most importantly, the ministry was intended to provide an avenue for women to advance in the field of politics because it is specially created to facilitate the mobilization and involvement of women in National, State and Local Government affairs (Effiong, 2008).

Nigeria's Gender Policy

The National Policy on Women (2000) was a policy formulated as a means of ensuring justice, freedom, basic human rights and most of all equality across gender. In 2006, it was replaced with the National Gender Policy adopted by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs. In line with various international commitments, the Nigerian Government had developed a National Gender Policy that focuses on gender mainstreaming, women empowerment and eliminating discriminatory practices that are harmful to women. It was designed to equip stakeholders with strategic skills for engineering the levels of social change required for the empowerment of all citizens to participate actively in the country's socio-economic and political development, and was one of the cardinal objectives of the MDGs which preceded the SDGs.

The key principles upon which the policy is premised are:

1. Commitment to gender mainstreaming as a development approach and tools for achieving the economic reform agenda, evidence based planning, value re-orientation and social transformation.

2. Recognition of gender issues as central to and critical to the achievement of national development goals and objectives and a requirement for all policies to be reviewed to reflect their gender implications and strategies as contained in the gender policy and

implementation modalities specified in the National Gender Strategic Framework;

3. Realization that effective and results focused policy implementation demands the cooperative interaction of all stakeholders.

4. Promotion and protection of human rights, social justice and equality.

Gender equality drive: From 1999 to 2015

Right from the inception of the current democratic dispensation in 1999, the Obasanjo administration and its successors made spirited efforts to address the problem of Nigeria's huge gender imbalance. According to Fatile and Ejalonibu (2016), progress towards gender equality was initially slow. However, progress was accelerated internationally in 2000 by the adoption of MDG 3. When Obasanjo assumed office in 1999, he did not accord much priority to gender equality as he appointed only six women as ministers out of 42 positions, two women as special advisers out of 21, 10 women Ambassadors out of 106 Nigerian foreign missions, and 30 women National Conference delegates out of 492 available positions. This few statistics shows that at the initial stage of the Obasanjo administration, women were marginalised and poorly represented.

Nevertheless, the Obasanjo administration improved on its gender equality record a few years later. Muhammed (2006) believes that the Obasanjo gave the Nigerian women the impetus to forge a higher vision within Nigeria's development space with the drafting of the National Gender Policy as well as the appointment of many women to high profile government agencies and organs.

Corroborating Muhammed's position, Adujie (2006) argues that the Obasanjo administration "dented, in a very big way, the age-old and perennial neglect of women" by appointing more than 27 women as ministers and many more in significant other top positions between 1999 and 2006.

President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, who succeeded Obasanjo in 2007 declared a 7-Point Agenda, aimed at keying into the objectives of the MDGs, goal 3 of which is promoting gender equality and empowering women. But the implementation of the agenda was short-lived by the sudden demise of Yar'Adua, whose term had to be completed by President Goodluck Jonathan.

On assumption of office, Jonathan realised that a major tool for the required social transformation in Nigeria was the systematic approach of promoting gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in all public policies and programmes. He therefore made conscious efforts to promote gender equality. A major component of Jonathan's policy was the empowerment of women in politics. There was an increase in political consciousness of women aided by growing activity in the field by civil society organisations and women associations (Fatile and Ejalonibu, 2016).

Although the Jonathan administrations failed to take concrete steps to address certain structural issues that undermine gender equality in Nigeria, women played prominent roles in the political arena of the time. It is on record that 31 per cent of ministers in his cabinet were women. In his handover note to President Muhammadu Buhari on the 29th of May, 2015, the Jonathan stated that his administration made giant strides in its gender mainstreaming efforts:

> ## In Nigeria, the awareness about the role of women in the development of a nation became pronounced in the 1980s.

"We have promoted gender-mainstreaming with commensurate priority and opportunities for our womenfolk, beginning with ensuring that not less than 30 per cent of key federal appointments go to women. Other initiatives that we have taken include: the National Gender Policy, Establishment of Gender Units in Federal MDAs, Women Empowerment Training Programmes, Micro-Credit for Women, Social Safety Net Programmes and the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Scheme."

Statistical report on Nigeria's Gender Equality records (1999 – 2015)

The *Statistical Report on Women and Men in Nigeria* published by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) vividly captures how Nigeria fared between 1999 and 2015 in terms of improving the status of women in critical areas of concern that required their empowerment if the goal of full gender equality is to be achieved. Some of the critical areas covered by the report include education, gender-based violence, power and decision making.

Education: Enrolment in school

The NBS 2015 Statistical Report on Women and Men in Nigeria shows a slight improvement in girls' access to education, as female enrolment in primary schools increased from 45.7 percent in 2010 to 48.6 per cent in 2015. The percentage of females enrolled

TABLE 1: Total Enrolment in Secondary Schools by Year and Sex		
Year	Male	Female
2010	3,980,621	3,303,022
2011	4,341,694	3,564,982
2012	5,003,301	3,975,671
2013	5,177,358	4,651,882
2014	6,339,001	4,975,671
2015	6,358,177	5,351,882
Source: National Bureau of Statistics		

women, statistics from the NDHS for 2008 and 2013 indicate that of the total number of women who have undergone FGM, most experienced it when they were less than five years old. During the period under survey, the percentage of girls and women who have undergone FMG was 39.9 per cent.

Child marriage: According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), out of the top 20 countries with the highest rates of child marriage across the globe, Nigeria ranks at number 11. A 2017 report by UNICEF indicated that 43 per cent of Nigerian girls are married off before their 18th birthday, while 17 per cent were married off before they turn 15. The prevalence of child marriage in Nigeria varies from region to region, with figures as high as 76 per cent in the North Western region and as low as 10 per cent in the South Eastern region. The report indicated that the girl-child was more at risk of vesico-vaginal fistula (VVF) and HIV/AIDS through early marriage, factors which impede her growth and development.

in secondary schools increased from 45.3 per cent in 2010 to 45.7 per cent in 2015. (See Table 1)

Violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls violates their human rights and hinders development. Most of such violence is perpetrated by intimate partners.

Data compiled by the NBS under the Nigerian Demographic and Health Surveys (NDHS) between 2008 to 2013, shows that women in the 25-29 years age group experienced the highest levels of physical violence, 23.8 per cent in 2008, decreasing to 21.1 per cent in 2013. At 22.6 per cent, high levels were also recorded among the 30-39 years age group in 2008. These two age groups (25-29 and 30-39) had the same levels of physical violence, 23.8 per cent, in both 2008 and 2013. At 2.5 per cent, sexual violence was highest for the 20-24 years age group in 2008, decreasing to 2.1 percent in 2013. (See Table 2)

Female genital mutilation: Concerning the harmful practice of female genital mutilation (FGM/cutting), which is another human rights violation and form of violence against girls and

Human trafficking: Human trafficking disproportionately affects women and girls. According to the National Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), between 2010 and 2015, females trafficked reached the highest proportion (79.8 per cent) of trafficked persons in 2012, but reduced to 58.9 per cent in 2015. Trafficking in persons occurred most in the 26-35 years age bracket where females constituted over 90.0 percent of the total trafficked, followed by the 16-25 years age group of which females accounted for 88.7 per cent of the total number of persons trafficked in 2012. The proportion of females in the 0-5 years age group, increased from 48.5 per cent of the total number trafficked in 2010, to 53.8 per cent in 2012, and dropped to 42.4 per cent in 2015. The proportion of females in 6-15 years age group increased from 67.3 in 2010, to 69.4 in 2012, and dropped to 59.1 in 2015.

Power and decision making

Despite the efforts of successive governments in Nigeria since 1999 to promote the contribution of women in the domain of politics and decision making, women have continued to record low representation at all tiers and levels of government, although

TABLE 2: Violence against women and girls in Nigeria (2008 – 2013)								
	Physical Violence Only		Sexual Violence Only		Physical and Sexual Violence		Physical or Sexual Violence	
Age	2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013
15-19	21.9	22.7	1.8	1.8	4.8	3.5	28.5	28.3
15-17	21.2	22.4	1.7	1.7	4.4	3.3	27.3	27.3
18-19	22.8	23.3	2	2.1	5.3	6.4	30.2	29.9
20-24	22	22.6	2.5	2.1	6.2	6.4	30.7	29.2
25-29	23.8	21.1	1.6	1.9	6.2	6.6	31.7	29.5
30-39	22.6	23.8	1.5	1.5	4.8	6.2	29	31.5
40-49	21.4	19.9	1.8	1.5	4.4	5.2	27.4	36.6
Source: NDHS 2008 & 2013								

they constitute almost half of the electorate. The high-level disparities between the population of men and women in the domain of politics and decision-making limit women's political, social and economic opportunities. Women have continued to suffer in all facets of politics and leadership positions, despite the recognition of the importance of women's political empowerment within the framework of the SDGs.

Representation at the Executive Arm

Nigeria as an entity runs federal system of government with a replica of similar structure in the state and local governments. Women have never been the President or the Vice President in the history of Nigeria.

Available data also show that the representation of women, as governors or deputies governors is still low compared to the number of candidates who showed interest at candidacy level. Although deputy governor Virginia Etiaba became governor of Anambra State during the three months before the substantive governor's impeachment and removal was overturned by the court, no woman had been elected governor in any of the states of the federation, but a few had been elected as deputy governors in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015. Females had the highest representation (with eight deputy governors) in 2011, but this decreased to six in 2015.

Representation at the Legislative Arm

Findings of the NBS reveal that males constituted 94.71 per cent and females 5.76 per cent at the National Assembly (national parliament) from 1999 to 2015. Females and males constituted 5.50 per cent and 94.50 per cent of the Senate (upper house) respectively. The percentages of females and males in the House of Representatives (lower house) were 5.83 per cent and 94.17 per cent respectively.

From the return of democracy in 1999 to 2015, women had the highest representation of 7.2 per cent in 2007-2011 and the lowest of 3.2 per cent in 1999-2003 for both houses.

State Houses of Assembly (state legislatures) were 5.29 per cent female and 94.71 per cent male from 1999 – 2015. In the same period 1999 – 2015, at the local government level, 9 per cent were female and male 91 per cent were male. Councillors were 5.9 per cent female as against 94.1 per cent male.

In federal courts, 29.38 per cent of judges were female while 70.62 per cent were male according to 2011 – 2016 National Judicial Council.

In terms of appointive ministerial political positions, women have not fared much better. Appointive positions cut across the three levels of government, that is, the federal, state and local government. However, available data shows that out of a total of 341 ministers who served from 1999 to 2015, only 47 (14 per cent) were female, while 294 (86 per cent) were male. Though the number of females appointed as ministers in 2011 increased slightly, the 2003 appointments showed the lowest level of female representation.

Gender Equality: Nigeria's Progress Report under Buhari's Administration

During his campaigns for the 2015 presidential election, President Buhari had promised to implement the 2005 National Gender Policy, which makes provision for women to occupy 35 per cent appointive positions, and said it would serve as a roadmap for the promotion of gender equality:

> "We shall commit ourselves to merit based affirmative action, to level the playing field for women and provide them with opportunities to be part of decision making and governance at all levels."

Based on his pledge and the fact that he was one of world leaders who adopted the SDGs in September 2015 with Gender Equality as number 5, the expectation was that his administration would be gender sensitive. However, the first signal that his administration was not fully committed towards bridging the gender gap in Nigeria manifested on November 11, 2015 when he swore in 36 ministers and only six women made it into his cabinet,

Figure 1: Female Representation as Governor and Deputy Governor by Year										
	1999		**2003**		**2007**		**2011**		**2015**	
	F	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*
Office of Governor	0	36	0	37	0	40	0	41	0	36
Office of Deputy Governor	1	36	3	36	4	35	8	39	6	33
Source: NCWD/NBS Collation of data on Women and Men										

Figure 2: Appointive Ministerial Political Positions by Sex (1999-2015)									
1999		2003		2007		2011		2015	
M	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*
89	11	38	4	83	12	53	15	31	5

Source: NCWD/NBS Collation of data on Women and Men

2018 Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) by the World Economic Forum (WEF), places Nigeria 133rd out of 149 countries investigated across the world. The GGGR is a framework for capturing the magnitude and scope of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress over time. According to the report, "while this is partially due to newly available data revealing a larger-than-before gender gap among legislators, senior officials and managers, the country also sees some reversal of past progress on educational attainment and in healthy life expectancy." The report shows that there are still significant gender gaps in education, economic empowerment and political participation.

meaning that only 16 per cent of his cabinet members are women. Ogbonna describes this as a "violation of the national gender policy which requires a minimum of 35 per cent female representation on the President's cabinet."

To make matters worse, the 2015 general elections recorded a significant reduction in the number of women elected to political offices in the country. In the National Assembly elections, only eight women (7.3 per cent) were elected to the 109-member Senate, while 23 (6.4 per cent) managed to secure seats in the 360-member House of Representatives. In all, the proportion of women elected to the National Assembly fell to 5.6 per cent in 2016 from above 7 per cent in the previous session. (See Table 3). The 2015 governorship elections produced only four women – as deputy governors.

Besides the noticeable absence of women in the new political dispensation, the Buhari administration has remained largely indifferent to issues relating to gender equality and women empowerment. Indeed, recent reports capture the reality that Nigeria's gender gap is widening. The

The 2018 GGGR aligns with the findings of the NBS recently published as the 2017 Statistical Report on Women and Men in Nigeria. The report indicates that literacy rate among young women and men aged between 15 and 24 years in 2017 was 59.3 per cent and 70.9 per cent respectively (MICS5, 2016/17). The national literacy rate was 65.1 per cent.

Available data from the Federal Ministry of Education shows that enrolment rate of school-aged girls in primary education was 48.6 per cent in 2014 but it decreased to 47.3 in 2015 and slightly bounced back to 47.5 in 2016. Also, the completion rate for girls in primary, junior and senior secondary school in 2016 was 64.8 per cent, 38.9 per cent and 28.7 per cent respectively, showing a

TABLE 3: Representation in National Parliament by Year and Sex (1999 – 2019)										
	1999 – 2003		2003 – 2007		2007 – 2011		2011 – 2015		2015 – 2019	
SENATE	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Male	106	97.2	106	97.2	100	91.7	102	93.6	101	92.7
Female	3	2.8	3	2.8	9	8.3	7	6.4	8	7.3
Total	**109**	**100**	**109**	**100**	**109**	**100**	**109**	**100**	**109**	**100**
HOUSE OF REPS.										
Male	348	96.7	339	94.2	335	93.1	336	93.3	337	93.6
Female	12	3.3	21	5.8	25	6.9	24	6.7	23	6.4
Total	**360**	**100**	**360**	**100**	**360**	**100**	**360**	**100**	**360**	**100**
BOTH HOUSES										
Male	454	96.8	445	94.9	435	92.8	438	93.4	438	93.4
Female	15	3.2	24	5.1	34	7.2	31	6.6	31	6.6
Total	**469**	**100**	**469**	**100**	**469**	**100**	**469**	**100**	**469**	**100**

Source: National Assembly, Abuja

decreased completion rate as the student progresses.

The report further reveals that between 2016 and 2017, the literacy rate of most young women and men in the Southern Nigeria was higher (over 90 per cent) than Northern Nigeria. In the Northern region, the percentage of women who are literate was between 38.0 – 62.0 per cent, while it was between 53.1 and 76.4 per cent for men. (See the Table 4).

In terms of the harmful practice of female genital mutilation (FGM/cutting),the report shows that women of the 45-49 age group had the highest percentages of FGM/C compared to other age groups, while women of 15-19 age group had the lowest (12.3 per cent), MICS5, 2016/17.

Based on these reports, it is clear that under the Buhari administration, discriminatory laws and practices, violence against women and gender stereotypes continue to stall progress towards gender equality in Nigeria.

Impediments to the promotion of gender equality in Nigeria

Although successive governments in Nigeria have always pledged to address the gender imbalance in the country, there are no noticeable changes in the gender equation in Nigeria thus far. The following are some of the impediments to the promotion of gender equality in Nigeria:

Patriarchy system

In general, Nigeria remains a patriarchal society where men dominate all spheres of national affairs as well as women's lives. The patriarchal culture of male supremacy is embedded, obscured and protected within traditional institutions and structures held in abeyance and relative sacredness. This culture is still in-grained in men and it is demonstrated both consciously and unconsciously, despite the general drive for a meaningful change in gender relations through policy initiatives and actions as well as sundry international conventions and accords to which Nigeria is a signatory (Ejumudo, 2013).

Despite the fact that a great number of women who have distinguished themselves in their various professional and business careers during the last decade, a high proportion of women's employment is still restricted to low income activities, concentrated within the lower levels of the unregulated and the informal sector.

Table 4: Percentage of Nigerian women and men aged 15 – 24 years who are literate (2016 – 2017)		
Zone	**Female**	**Male**
North West	38	57.5
North East	41.9	53.1
North Central	62	76.4
South West	92.6	93.7
South South	94.8	95
South East	95.4	94.3
Source: MICS5, 2016/17		

Gender gaps in the 1999 Constitution

Despite a general commitment to the principle of non-discrimination enshrined in Chapter 2 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, governments at all levels have largely been unable or unwilling to fulfil the responsibility of giving male and female citizens equal opportunities in all aspects of national life.

Several negative aspects of gender relations, such as gender-based division of labour, disparities between male and female in terms of access to power and resources, and gender biases in rights and entitlements, remain pervasive in Nigeria.

For instance, while Section 43 of the 1999 Constitution permits both male and female Nigerians to own and acquire movable and immovable property, a large number of women in Nigeria are barred from owning land by customary laws of inheritance.

There are also gender gaps in the Nigerian constitution. As Archibong, Bassey and Nwagbara (2018) rightly observe, the language in which the constitution is written betrays its seeming desire to continue with the patriarchal tradition of the Nigerian society. The pronoun "he" appears in the 1999 constitution 235 times (FGN constitution, 1999) and the word women was used only two times. See section 26(2)(a) and 29(4)(b) (1999, constitution).

In terms of indigene-ship, there is a continued ambiguity about the "origin" of a woman who marries a man from other ethnic or geographical area to hers. The reality of most women in this category is that they lack any definitive claim to the area they left or that to which they married into. In some instances, women have been denied their rights to appointive or political positions due to the fact that they can no longer claim their original place of origin or that of their husbands (Morley, 2012).

Furthermore, speaking of the right to dignity of womanhood, section 34 of the 1999 constitution generally speaks to right of dignity of human persons. However, it does not touch on the specificity of women's rights to be free from harmful traditional practices which includes widowhood practices, female genital cutting, forced marriages and others which have constituted a continuing threat to the lives of women in Nigeria.

Gender-based norms

Gender-based norms which ascribe to women the responsibility of carrying out tasks related to household management or chores such as cooking, cleaning, caring for children and the elderly, which do not diminish when women engage in paid employment, has remained unchanged in Nigeria. No new law or policy has been designed by government to address this dual burden which prevents women from pursuing their careers and reach management and decision-making positions at the same pace and rate as their male colleagues.

Legal and Human Rights

Like most nations, Nigeria possesses a body of laws which regulate and govern various aspects of both public and private life. For instance, marriage is regulated by and can be contracted under statute, customary law or Islamic (Sharia) law.

However, the manner in which such laws are interpreted and applied is often inconsistent and frequently varies based on subjective considerations, particularly in cases where women seek redress for violations committed by their spouses or when intestate customary inheritance issues arise. This is further complicated by unwritten family customs and traditions which discriminate against women, especially in cases related to divorce, child custody and the inheritance of properties.

Non-implementation of 35 per cent Affirmative Action

Although women constitute about half of the projected population of Nigeria, this numerical strength has never found a corresponding expression or representation in Nigeria's political public life. The Beijing conference of 1995 recommended 35 per cent allocation for women in political positions, power and decision making. This has not been the case of Nigeria where women can barely boast of five per cent.

However, the minimal rise in gender participation in the country has been attached to appointive positions since women have failed to win elective posts (Conyok, 2015).

According to Ezeilo (2012), the level of violence, thuggery, and monetization of Nigerian politics provides a significant disincentive for women to take part as candidates in elections.

Recommendations

From the foregoing, it is quite glaring that despite the fact that the Nigerian government has pledged to advance gender equality, in compliance with the recommendations of the United Nations as embedded in SDG 5, the country is lagging behind in terms of implementation. Indeed, gender inequalities in the Nigerian system have occasioned an intense marginalization and the subjugation of Nigerian women to the background, in virtually every sphere of life.

To fast-track the implementation of the SDG Gender Equality goal in Nigeria, scholars recommend that government and non-governmental organizations should collaborate and implement far reaching programmes on women's rights that will bring about the desired changes through public awareness, enlightenment and education. According to Ifemeje and Ikpeze (2012), new strategies should be adopted by gender rights activists in combating institutionalized discriminations against women:

"The strategies include; an urgent review of all gender discriminatory laws in Nigeria, sensitization of Nigerian women on their legal rights through intensified aggressive advocacy and enlightenment, establishment of more gender violation monitoring agencies in Nigeria. The sensitization of Nigerian law enforcement agents and judges on the need for a stricter enforcement of women's rights, immediate abolition by the Nigerian government of all harmful cultural practices that impede women's rights, an urgent domestication of all international Treaties, Nigeria has ratified, and enactment of more specific gender friendly based legislations."

Ifemeje and Ikpeze also recommend that to ensure effective implementation of SDG 5 in Nigeria, government should prioritise the economic empowerment of women. They propose that government should embark on initiatives to get more women into top jobs in economic decision making. Furthermore, female entrepreneurship and self employment should be promoted by making loans available to women on lenient terms.

Furthermore, Ifemeje and Ikpeze posit that compulsory girl-child education is a useful strategy that should be adopted to bridge gender gaps in Nigeria:

"Education of a girl-child, in the long run, would equip her future participation in key decision

> **Despite the efforts of successive governments in Nigeria since 1999 to promote the contribution of women in the domain of politics and decision making, women have continued to record low representation at all tiers and levels of government.**

making in the government and also enable her influence gender friendly policies."

With regards to how to deal with the issue of political underrepresentation of women, Nkwachukwu, Orji and Agbanyim (2018) propose that Nigeria should introduce electoral gender quota for the recruitment and election of female candidates as the most appropriate institutional change required to enhance gender equity in political representation. Additionally, in line with the National Gender Policy, the Nigerian Constitution should be amended to state that women should occupy 35 percent of elected and appointed positions.

Conclusion

From all indications, in the past four years, the Nigerian government has been paying lip service to gender development because for now, there have been few concrete actions geared towards achieving SDG 5 by 2030. For Nigeria to make the desired progress in the implementation of the Gender Equality goal, it has become imperative for government to demonstrate the political will to end all forms of discriminations against women and make concerted efforts to bridge the gender gaps in education, economic empowerment and political participation.

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SDG 5: The Journey so far towards Achieving Gender Equality in Nigeria

Background and Introduction

WOMEN and girls represent half of the world's population and by inference, they constitute half of its potential (United Nations, 2019). As a consequence, their role in societal development and nation-building should no longer remain undermined, as no nation can achieve its full potential with the exclusion of its female populace from full and equal participation at all levels of its development. Over the decades, gender equality has transformed from a merely human rights issue, to a development strategy that seeks to end poverty in all its ramifications in the lives of both men and women (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2006). It is also a means to achieve peaceful societies where the full potential of all humans are utilised in attaining sustainable development (Peace Corps, 2018; United Nations, 2019; The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2006). Hence, efforts to address inequality, especially in the global south, have been a feature of the world scene for several decades.

In the vanguard of spreading the agenda for gender equality and women empowerment is the United Nations (UN). As far back as June 21, 1946, the UN established the Commission on the Status of Women as an instrument with the sole responsibility of promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Fifty (50) years later, in 1996, the Commission's mandate was expanded to include monitoring, reviewing progress and implementing the Beijing Declaration and Plan for Action which had been adopted in Beijing, China the previous year. Its mandate was further expanded to include monitoring the progress of other instruments and treaties that were adopted and ratified by member-states in later years, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 (UN Women, n.d. a), and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), also known as the international bill of rights for women, which was adopted in 1979 (United Nations, 2019). The Convention consists of a preamble and 30 articles which define what constitutes discrimination against women and sets an agenda for national action to end such discrimination (UN Women, n.d. b).

The push against gender inequality intensified and remained a frontline programme for the international community, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the United Nations, culminating in the adoption of the eight MDGs in 2000. The MDGs were targeted at eradicating extreme poverty and global inequality. MDG 3 was specifically targeted at achieving gender equality and women empowerment by 2015. While some appreciable progress was made towards attaining gender equality in areas such as eliminating disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education, increased participation and representation in government, and increased work opportunities outside agriculture; women continue to experience significant gaps in terms of poverty, labour market and wages, as well as participation in private and public decision-making and increased violence (United Nations, n.d.)

Following the expiration of the MDGs in 2015, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as Agenda 2030, were adopted in 2016 to ensure that the achievements of the MDGs would be sustained, in addition to continuing the quest to eliminate all forms of global inequality. The 17 goals reflect challenges faced in development with

an emphasis on the underlying key drivers of sustainable development (Jaiyesinmi, 2016). One of such key drivers is gender equality, addressed by SDG 5. The goal seeks to address the gaps that were created during the implementation of MDG 3. Its main focus is to eliminate all the root causes of gender discrimination that diminish women's rights in the private and public spheres (UN Women, n.d. c).

By signing and accepting the above instruments and agreements, member-states of the United Nations, such as Nigeria, commit to undertake a series of measures to end and protect women from all forms of discrimination in their laws and legal systems, tribunals, and other public institutions, and from discrimination by persons, organisations or enterprises. Despite this, there remain some critical factors embedded in the Constitution, legal system, customs and tradition, and religious belief systems that uphold gender discrimination and thereby constitute a threat that is likely to impede Nigeria in its quest to fully achieve SDG 5 of Agenda 2030 within the prescribed period.

This essay will attempt to define the terms 'gender' and 'gender equality' so as to give meaning in the context of this discourse. It will also highlight some critical factors that propagate gender inequality in Nigeria. Some of the Federal Government's efforts to promote gender equality will be discussed, and some recommendations that should help the nation achieve gender equality by 2030 will be reviewed.

Section 1 - Gender and Gender Equality

The term 'gender' refers to a social construct that defines the roles, responsibilities and relationships between men and women (Peace Corps, 2018). In some contexts, the word gender can be fluid, and as pointed out by the World Health Organisation (WHO), it can be changed from society to society. However, it is generally accepted that one's sex at birth defines one's gender; that is, one is either born a male or female, and this fact often determines the behaviour pattern, roles and responsibilities that should be assumed by each person to fit into any given societal construct (World Health Organisation, n.d.). Gender is also a socio-cultural divide that puts people into categories, and may create biases in favour of one group over the other (Sibani, n.d.).

'Gender issues' and 'gender equality' are terms used to discuss the equality and human rights of other vulnerable groups within the society, particularly women and girls. The topic is often considered a sensitive one, and is handled carefully, depending on the society in which the discussion is being held. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this conversation, 'gender' and 'gender equality' refer to issues that affect women and girls, and the relationship between women and men. The Peace Corps provides the most appropriate summary of gender equality, which is that men and women should have equal power and equal opportunities for financial independence, education, and personal development. It is worth noting that men and boys in every society also have an important and very active role to play in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of their womenfolk (Peace Corps, 2018).

Gender inequality is a major concern in most parts of the world. In fact, a UN Women report on achieving gender equality by 2030 reveals that gender inequality is deeply rooted and present across all countries (Turning Promises Into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2018). Women experience gross inequality and discrimination, they have fewer opportunities than men, and this limits their representation in economic, political, social spheres (Peace Corps, 2018). In order to achieve SDG 5 by 2030, immediate action must be taken to protect women and girls from gender-based disadvantages, including (but not limited to) the abolition of laws, legislation, culture and religious practices that discriminate against them. For instance, 49 countries still lack laws protecting women from domestic violence. Data gathered from across 87 countries in another UN Women report reveals that one in five women and girls under the age of 50 had experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner (UN Women, n.d. c). In some parts of the world, harmful practices such as child marriage still occur: the report revealed that 15 million girls under the age of 18 are given away in marriage every year. In some societies, it is expected that women should be cared for by their husbands, and therefore, should earn less than their male colleagues. Many also suffer from the unfair balance of unpaid care and domestic work. In some circumstances, women are denied the right to make their own decisions about sexual relations, contraceptive use and health care (*ibid*).

The global statistics on the performance of women across the 17 SDGs is a clear indication that they are lagging far behind. For every 100 men between the ages of 25-34 living in extreme poverty, there are 122 women aged between 25-34 living in extreme poverty (Turning Promises Into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2018). In nearly two thirds of all countries, women are more likely than men to report food insecurity. In 2015, it was recorded that 303,000 women died from pregnancy-related causes. Although there is a decline in the rate of pregnancy-related deaths, it is too slow to achieve

target 3.1 of SDG 5, which is to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births. Fifteen (15) million girls of primary-school age will never get the chance to learn to read or write in primary school compared to 10 million boys. In 18 countries, across the world, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working; in 39 countries, daughters and sons do not have equal inheritance rights (*ibid*).

Statistics that reflect the proportion of women living in extreme poverty against the number of men living in the same condition confirm that economically, women are more disadvantaged than men. 93.7 million Nigerians live in extreme poverty, that is, 47.7% of the Nigerian population (World Poverty, 2019) and of these, 80 per cent are women (Women, Peace and Security in Nigeria, 2017). This is as a result of several factors, including religious and socio-cultural practices that restrict the economic empowerment of women (*ibid*). The poor situation of women and girls in Nigeria is further worsened by their low levels of education and literacy (Women, Peace and Security in Nigeria, 2017).

Section 2 - Critical factors that propagate Gender Inequality in Nigeria

Although Nigeria has signed and ratified several national policies, international conventions, treaties and protocols on discrimination against women, gender inequality remains a critical issue. There are certain factors that circumvent every effort to achieve gender equality. Although section 42 of the Nigerian Constitution guarantees freedom from discrimination on the basis of gender as a fundamental right, and Chapter II of the Constitution make freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex one of the "Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy", the triple legal system that recognises Sharia and Customary Laws alongside statutory laws in some cases preserves laws that legitimise male dominance and create an unequal balance of power between men and women.(The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2006; Sibani, 2017; Param-Mallam 2006). This inequality, low literacy and poverty are some of the reasons behind the low representation of women in politics (PLAC, 2018; p.19). The result is that women are disadvantaged, vulnerable yet excluded from decision-making in matters that concern them, a situation that not only denies them their fundamental human rights, but also prevents them from achieving their full potential.

National Constitution and Legal Framework

In principle, section 17(2) and (3) of the Nigerian Constitution promote the equality of all Nigerians. In practice, however, gender discrimination and inequality are protected, if not institutionalised in the legal system. Nigeria's triple legal system leaves women vulnerable and marginalised in areas such as inheritance, property rights, and marriage laws (Param-Mallam, 2006; Sibani, 2017). Even the Constitution – in section 26(2)(a) – attempts to discriminate against women in the area of acquisition of citizenship by marriage, although this is one area where the provisions of the Interpretation Act, which provides that "the male includes the female and *vice versa*", work in favour of Nigerian women.

Laws on domestic violence and rape are state laws, and as such, there is considerable variation across the country. However, many states still retain the colonial classification which leaves domestic violence to be treated only under 'common assault', while in states which have retained or not amended the Penal Code (applicable across the defunct Northern Region), section 55 permits a husband to beat his wife, provided that he does not inflict grievous hurt such as permanent loss of sight, bone fracture or tooth dislocation. Most states do not recognise marital rape as an offence.

Religion

Christianity and Islam are the two dominant religions in Nigeria and they play a vital role in forming the culture and belief system, since religion influences the socio-economic and political direction of society (Sibani, 2017; p. 433). In particular, religion is one of the main factors that inform the apportioning of roles to gender. Many of the world's religions maintain male dominance with a subservient role for women, who are often barred from leadership positions in places of worship. For example, women are not ordained as priests in the Roman Catholic Church, or made Imams who can lead prayers. Within Muslim communities, women are not allowed to enter the mosque during their menstrual periods and pregnancies. *(ibid*; p. 434). The practice of female seclusion such as purdah in the Islamic religion, which forbids married women to be seen in public, restricts their ability to engage in productive ventures or personal development opportunities, compounding their inequality and financial exclusion (Param-Mallam, 2006; p.413).

Patriarchal norms and customs, and harmful practices

Nigeria has many norms, customs and traditions that subjugate women and expose them to extreme cases of discrimination by men and by other women. Patriarchal norms reinforce the subordination of women in the areas of inheritance and ownership of land or even the right to farm (Param-Mallam, 2006; p.411), although the Supreme Court of Nigeria has struck down some of these customs as anti-Constitutional.

Gender inequality and discrimination is also reflected in harmful practices and rituals which infringe on the human rights of women and girls, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), widow's rituals, early and forced marriages and domestic violence (Jegede, 2012).

Section 3 - Federal Government's efforts to achieve Gender Equality in Nigeria

In spite of the critical factors that confirm the existence of discrimination against women and girls, it is no longer debatable in most parts of the world that gender equality is a *sine qua non* for sustainable development. In line with global best practises, regional and continental treaties and agreements, the Nigerian Government is increasing its efforts to achieve gender equality by instituting programmes and policies, and by bolstering the institutional and legal framework necessary for sustainable development in the country.

Prior to the return to democratic rule in 1999, there had been several women-centred poverty alleviation programmes such as the Better Life For Rural Women Programme (BLP), established under General Ibrahim Babangida's administration in 1987, which focused on improving the lives of rural women. The programme was replaced by Family Support Programme (FSP), (Bola, 1994; Jegede, 2012). Bola (1994) argues that the programmes lacked the strategy required to address gender inequalities and discrimination against women in Nigeria. Their failure stemmed from the fact that they remained at the micro-level and did not address the real issues that could have reformed policies, legal frameworks, religious and socio-cultural practices that sustained inequality and discrimination against women. Sokefun (2010) also argues that these programmes masked the government's failure to accord women's issues the attention they deserved. Gender issues were treated with levity as the interventions were gender-blind, gender-neutral or gender-biased. In terms of their structure, these programmes adopted the Women in Development (WID) and the Women and Development (WAD) approaches which concentrated on women as the centre of the problem. Therefore, the solution should have been to design empowerment interventions to remedy their exclusion from the development process, but the issue of sustainable development through women's equal participation was ignored (The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2006). On the other hand, there were arguments that did not condemn either of the WID or WAD approaches. For instance, Bola (1994) explained that the emphasis of WID was on 'equity and empowerment' of women, which in itself was good. However, it was considered (by men) as a threat, because that emphasis challenged societal norms that subordinate women, and advocated their economic emancipation and self-

> **Although Nigeria has signed and ratified several national policies, international conventions, treaties and protocols on discrimination against women, gender inequality remains a critical issue.**

reliance. By inference, the previous women empowerment programmes were more lip service than actual attempts to solve gender inequality and discrimination against women. More recently, the government began to infuse approaches such as Gender In Development (GID) and Gender and Development (GAD) into its development strategies. These approaches were focused on the relationship between men and women, and addressed the unequal relationship of power that prohibits women and vulnerable groups from achieving equitable development and attaining their full potential in society (Sokefun, 2010; pp. 2-3). After 1999, policies and programmes on women and girls started to become more coordinated in their response to gender inequality. In 2000, guided by the global Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its protocols, and the Nigerian 1999 Constitution, President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration enacted the National Policy on Women (NPW), (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2006). This era saw the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming by the Federal Government and created an impetus in national gender awareness and advocacy. In addition, mechanisms were established to assess the impact of this on women and other vulnerable groups (Jegede, 2012).

National Policy on Women (NPW)

President Obasanjo's 2000 National Policy on Women was designed to facilitate the full integration of women into the social, economic, and political life of the nation and national development. The policy emphasizes section 17(2) and (3) of 1999 Constitution which states: "Every citizen shall have equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law" and "All citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment." The goal of the policy

was to raise national awareness of citizens' constitutional rights, and to mobilise and educate the public on human rights in order to remove legal, cultural, religious and other constraints against the attainment of social justice and equity in society. The policy also challenged patriarchy, socio-cultural belief systems, religion and legal frameworks that gave men predominance in inheritance, authority and decision-making. It also addressed critical areas where women and girls faced discrimination such education, health, employment, agriculture, politics and decision-making, among others (Sokefun, 2010). However, the policy was not embraced. Rather, it was treated with suspicion and seen as a Western plot to liberate women and topple generally accepted male dominance, and led to clashes between religious conservatives and the proponents of the NPW development agenda. (Param-Mallam, 2006; p.410).

National Gender Policy

The National Gender Policy was approved in 2006 under the regime of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2006). It drew from the Beijing Platform of Action (BPA) which paved the way for women to become a critical part of the decision-making process in matters relating to economic, political, and social advancement (The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2006; p.xvii). The central focus of the BPA was the reduction of poverty among women. It touched 12 critical areas of women's concerns such as health, violence against women, access to education, improved economic and political participation and empowerment. Its goal was to eliminate all barriers and discrimination preventing women from enjoying their rights and full participation in national development (*ibid*). The policy was also guided by CEDAW and its optional protocols.

> For Nigeria to achieve sustainable development, it can no longer continue to deny the full participation of its female populace in the process of nation-building.

Job Creation and Economic Empowerment of Women

In order to enhance job creation among women, the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan implemented the Women Entrepreneurship Development Programme (WEDP). This was an initiative designed to empower the businesses of 3,700 women in the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) with a view to creating jobs for women (Jegede, 2012).

Poverty Eradication Programmes

Poverty is a serious impediment to sustainable development. As previously mentioned, 80% of the population of women in Nigeria is living in extreme poverty (Women, Peace and Security in Nigeria, 2017). Several poverty eradication programmes have been established. For example, the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) was established by Act No.11, 1997 to empower locally based producers of goods and services and potential entrepreneurs in the area of the establishment of cottage industries. In 2001, the Obasanjo administration established the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) to replace the existing Poverty Alleviation Programme (Anyebe, 2014).

Despite the efforts of government, the poverty rate remains high, the living standard of Nigerians continues to decline (*ibid;* p.21), and the number of poor women in both rural and urban areas has continued to increase (Love *et al*; p.5). Gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls have not been eliminated either. Government policies and programmes have been unable to tackle key factors that prevent them from being effective in eradicating gender inequality and bias against women. Table 1 illustrates a few areas where women are lagging behind in the SDGs, despite the government's efforts to eliminate discrimination against them.

Section 4 - Recommendations

Like most African countries, Nigeria faces challenges in implementing the SDGs. According to Jaiyesinmi (2016), these include financial constraints, security, progress measurement and accountability. Instituting a system to address these four main challenges will form the basis for actions to tackle gender inequality and all the other problems that the various SDGs were established to address. For instance, in the areas of progress measurement and accountability in achieving SDG 5, it is important that the government establishes a mechanism to measure its efforts to reduce gender inequality and discrimination against women, and also creates a clear system of accountability to ensure that responsibilities are carried out as prescribed. Although some attempts have been

TABLE 1: Inequalities in SDG related outcomes for different groups of women and girls, Nigeria, 2013

Sustainable Development Goal	Nature of Discrimination
1 - No poverty	Out of the 93.7 million Nigerians living in extreme poverty, 80 % of them are women living on below $1.90 per day.
2 - Zero Hunger	Slightly more women suffer from food insecurity than men 53.57% of women as against 52.82% of men who are food insecure between 2014 - 2015.
3 - Good Health and Wellbeing	About 95% of women living in the rural areas of Northern Nigeria consisting of Hausa/Fulani communities have no say in deciding their health.
	Maternal Health: 9.2 million women and girls become pregnant each year. Maternal death ratio is 1 in 13. 40,000 die annually from childbirth-related issues, accounting for 14% of the world total.
	Only 60.6% of pregnant women recorded use skilled prenatal care services; 35.8% have access to hospitals with facilities and 41.9% use post-natal care.
4- Quality Education	Literacy rate for women is 59.3% and 79.9% for men age 15-24.
	7 in 10 women aged 15-49 are married. 23% have no formal education; 14.4% have primary school education, 36.3% have secondary school, while 10.2% have tertiary education.
5- Gender Equality	Early Marriages: 18.5% of marriages are to girls under the age of 15. 44% of women aged 20-49 married before the age of 18.
	Female Genital Mutilation: 18.4% of women have had some form of genital mutilation.
	Domestic Violence: 1 in 3 women justify domestic violence by a husband/partner on the basis of gender bias beliefs, culture and practices.
	Decision-making: 50.8% women aged 15-49 make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and healthcare (survey between 2007 - 2015).
6 - Clean Water and Sanitation	Almost all women living in the poorest urban and rural communities have no access to clean water. Women bear the burden and responsibility of fetching water for the use of the family.
11- Sustainable Cities and Communities	62.26% of women and girls aged 15-49 live in slums where they lack clean sources of water, and have no improved sanitation facilities, durable housing and sufficient space (2013 survey).

Turning Promises Into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN Women Report; The Nigeria Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS5) 2016 - 2017 and African Population and Health Research Centre. Maternal Health in Nigeria, Facts and Figures. June 2017

made by various governments to uphold gender equality, the critical factors that legitimize gender inequality described above must be addressed to protect women and girls. To this end, the following recommendations should be implemented to enable the country to make meaningful progress towards achieving SDG 5 by 2030.

Review of the Nigerian Constitution and Legal System

Nigeria must review its 1999 Constitution to enshrine gender equality, while those parts of the legal system that subjugate women and girls must be made subject to the constitutional guarantee of equality of the sexes. Such a review should be organised with some key major stakeholders, including (but not limited to) representatives of the Women Affairs Commission, Human Rights Commission, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working with women and girls, and women leaders from various communities, industries and organisations. Also, State Governments should address aspects of State, Customary and Sharia Laws that legitimize the subordination of and discrimination against women, or places them at a disadvantage intellectually, economically or otherwise. In any event, the Constitutional guarantee of equality must always take pre-eminence over State, Sharia and Customary Laws in matters relating to gender equality and discrimination against women and girls.

In addition, because of the economically disadvantaged position of women, government should ensure that legal aid and funds to facilitate access to justice are available to women so that they may have legal representation before any court.

Implementation of the Policies on Women

It is clear that the problem is not the dearth of policies that protect women from discrimination and inequality, the real issue is in their implementation. Take for instance, the National Policy on Women that was designed to facilitate the full integration of women into the social, economic, and political life of the nation and national development. The policy emphasizes the equality of rights, obligations and opportunities of women before the law and abhors all forms of discrimination that result in their economic disadvantage. The goal of the policy clearly spells out how the government should tackle the subject from critical points, such as reforming the legal system and abolishing religious, cultural, patriarchal norms, rites and customs that hinder the attainment of social justice and equity by women.

Nigerian women face exclusion from active participation in nation-building, politics, decision-making and in the public sphere in general. Implementing the 2006 National Gender Policy would address some of these issues. The policy provides a unique opportunity for women to become a critical part of the decision-making process in matters relating to economic, political, and social advancement. Its central focus is poverty reduction among women, as this is still very much prevalent in Nigeria. The policy also covers 12 critical areas of women's concerns such as health, violence against women, access to education, as well as improved economic and political participation and empowerment, among others. Implementing these two policies will put the right mechanisms to overcome gender discrimination and inequality in the nation in place.

In addition, the government should enforce the 30 per cent women's representation in decision-making unanimously agreed to in 1995 under the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA). This should also be reflected in political representation of women in the country. Currently, the representation of women in political offices is very poor, in fact one of the lowest in Africa. The government can achieve the prescribed 30 per cent representation by introducing

"an electoral gender quota for the recruitment and election of female candidates as the most institutional change required to enhance women's political representation. Related to this is the adoption of strong quota regulations and sanction for non-compliance." (PLAC, 2018).

Abolition of harmful customs, rites and practices

The government needs to abolish harmful customs, rites and practices used to discriminate against women and infringe on their fundamental human rights. Practices such as child marriage, widows' rituals and female genital mutilation (FGM) should be completely abolished. Sections 22-24 of the Child Rights Act of 2003 prohibit the marriage or betrothal of any child below the age of 18 years and provide penalties for any breach of this provision. However, the question whether the restriction in this federal law applies to the States needs to be clarified to completely end child marriage. Governments at all levels need to address the causes of child marriage which include some of the following: poverty, low level of education, religion, communal crises and lack of opportunities for the girl child (Nwonu and Ifidon, 2014, p.122). Widows' rituals which subjects women to harmful practices such drinking the fluid from the body of the deceased husband, shaving of bodily hair, confinement and denial of inheritance (Nwogu, 2015) should be completely abolished as this is dehumanising and infringes on their rights to freedom of movement, association and life. Despite the ban on female genital mutilation, the act is still rife in Nigeria. Government should criminalise all harmful acts against women and

offenders should be charged and tried, and the prescribed penalties applied to serve as a deterrent to others in society.

Organising awareness and enlightenment campaigns

One of the main causes of gender inequality and discrimination against women is lack of awareness. Governments in Nigeria should increase their efforts to carry out enlightenment campaigns at various levels to religious communities and places of worship, particularly, churches and mosques, to educate them on the benefits of integrating women into leadership positions and decision-making. Religious leaders should be made champions to forge gender equality and respect for women, especially in Northern Nigeria where Islam and Sharia law form part of the culture.

Enlightenment campaigns should also be carried out among men and women in various communities, and among their leaders, to encourage them to desist from customs and rites that subordinate women and discriminate against them. Men and boys should be made aware that they have an important and very active role to play in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women within their societies.

Governments in Nigeria should, through their Ministries of Education include gender studies and the need to integrate women in nation-building as a strategy for sustainable development in the curriculum at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Enlightenment campaigns across various educational institutions on gender equality and discrimination against women should be carried out to foster discussion among citizens.

Prioritising Gender Responsive Investments

Governments in Nigeria should make it a priority to increase investments in programmes and policies that will eliminate gender discrimination and empower women to realise their full economic and social potential.

Improving the collection of data, statistics and analysis on gender

Nigeria is one of the places in the world where data collection and management is poor. The lack of data, statistics and analysis on gender makes it very difficult to measure any progress made in achieving gender equality and meeting any of the other SDGs.

Conclusion

Being a member-state of the United Nations, Nigeria has signed and ratified several agreements, treaties, conventions and instruments that safeguard the rights of women and protect them from all forms of discrimination in the laws and legal systems, tribunals, and other public institutions, and discrimination by persons, organisations or enterprises. However, the country has failed to live up to its international commitments as can be seen from the continuing discrimination against women in its legal system and the survival of critical factors such as patriarchal norms, customs, traditions, and religious belief systems that maintain gender discrimination, and pose a threat to achievement of SDG 5 in Agenda 2030.

Some of the gender biases that women suffer results from the stereotyping of their societal roles and other prejudices that prevent them from attaining their full economic and socio-political potential. They also face exclusion from decision-making in domestic, social, political and economic spheres that determine their future. These critical factors combine to oppress and deprive them of their human rights.

Despite several attempts by the Federal Government of Nigeria to tackle the issue of gender inequality, the problem remains prevalent, as most of the interventions did not fully address the critical issues that could have led to the reformation of policies, legal frameworks; religious and socio-cultural practices that foster gender inequality. The government will need to increase its efforts to combat the issue from its root causes; failure to do so will prevent the nation from benefiting from the contributions of half of its human capital assets. Finally, for Nigeria to achieve sustainable development, it can no longer continue to deny the full participation of its female populace in the process of nation-building.

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