



Navigating Obstacles, Nurturing Opportunities: A Multidimensional Approach to Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper delves into the intricate web of factors perpetuating poverty in Africa's largest economy – Nigeria. Nigeria grapples with a significant population living in extreme poverty. The paper underscores the multifaceted factors contributing to poverty, including historical, economic, social, and institutional elements, and the exacerbating role of gender inequality. This paper does not just diagnose problems; it prescribes actionable solutions. The conceptualization and recommendations for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are very Western/European-centric. This paper takes an Africo-centric approach and perspective to the analysis and execution of SDG 1 (No Poverty). By synthesizing lessons from global best practices and homegrown innovations, the paper charts a path towards a more equitable Nigeria. Proposed strategies include gender-responsive initiatives, data-driven policies, and inclusive economic measures to address systemic inequalities and promote sustainable development. The paper also addresses the detrimental role of political patronage in poverty alleviation efforts and suggests countermeasures. It emphasizes the necessity for context-specific, data-driven approaches to poverty alleviation and robust institutional frameworks to ensure programme effectiveness and sustainability. The paper challenges



policymakers, development practitioners, and citizens alike to reimagine poverty alleviation, advocating for a holistic approach that addresses root causes while embracing cutting-edge solutions. In conclusion, the paper recommends further research into unconditional cash transfers, climate-resilient agriculture, and culturally sensitive poverty metrics to inform more effective poverty reduction strategies in Nigeria.

Keywords: Poverty Alleviation, Economic Development, Gender Equality, Digital Innovation, Sustainable Solutions

Introduction

In the heart of Lagos, Nigeria's bustling economic capital, Adebayo, a 32-year-old street vendor, struggles to feed his family of five on less than \$2 a day. His story echoes the plight of millions worldwide, caught in the relentless grip of poverty. As of 2021, an estimated 711 million people lived in extreme poverty, subsisting on less than \$1.90 per day (World Bank, 2022a). While this represents a significant decrease from 1.9 billion in 1990, the COVID-19 pandemic has reversed years of progress, pushing an additional 97 million people into extreme poverty (United Nations, 2022). Nigeria, once hailed as Africa's largest economy, now grapples with the dubious distinction of being home to the world's largest population of people living in extreme poverty, with an estimated 95.1 million Nigerians in this category as of 2022 (World Poverty Clock, 2022).

The trajectory of poverty in Nigeria presents a complex tapestry woven with historical, economic, and social threads. From a relatively low poverty rate of 15% at independence in 1960, the country has witnessed a dramatic surge, with rates peaking at 65.6% in 1996 (Kale, 2012). This rise coincided with political instability, economic mismanagement, and over-reliance on oil exports. Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, former Finance Minister and current Director-General of the World Trade Organization, notes, "Nigeria's poverty challenge is not just about income, but also about access to basic services and opportunities" (Okonjo-Iweala, 2018). The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) play a crucial role in global efforts to combat poverty. SDG 1, which aims to



"End poverty in all its forms everywhere" by 2030, is particularly relevant to Nigeria's situation. However, the implementation of SDG 1 in Nigeria faces unique challenges due to the country's specific socio-economic context. This study examines how Nigeria can adapt and implement SDG 1 through an Africo-centric lens, considering local realities and indigenous solutions.

The measurement and alleviation of poverty remain contentious, with debates centred around the adequacy of monetary-based poverty lines versus multidimensional approaches that consider factors such as education, health, and living standards (Alkire and Foster, 2011). These discussions underscore the need for nuanced, context-specific strategies to address Nigeria's poverty crisis, particularly in achieving SDG 1. This paper aims to contribute to this discourse by offering an in-depth analysis of the challenges and potential solutions to poverty in Nigeria, focusing on aligning these efforts with the broader framework of the SDGs while maintaining an Africo-centric perspective.

Theoretical Framework:

This study is grounded in the Capabilities Approach, pioneered by Amartya Sen (1999) and further developed by Martha Nussbaum (2011). The Capabilities Approach posits that poverty is not merely a lack of income but a deprivation of basic capabilities that allow individuals to lead the kind of life they have reason to value. This framework is particularly relevant to Nigeria's context as it emphasizes the multidimensional nature of poverty, encompassing factors such as education, health, political freedoms, and social opportunities (Sen, 1999). Focusing on capabilities rather than just resources allow for a more nuanced understanding of poverty in Nigeria, where high gross domestic product (GDP) figures often mask significant disparities in quality of life and access to opportunities (Alkire and Foster, 2011).

Complementing the Capabilities Approach, this study also employs the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) developed by Chambers and Conway (1992) and later refined by the Department for International Development (DFID, 1999). The SLF provides a holistic view of how



individuals and communities utilize various forms of capital (human, social, natural, physical, and financial) to build resilience against shocks and stresses. This framework is beneficial in analyzing poverty reduction strategies in Nigeria, as it considers the complex interplay between institutional structures, vulnerability contexts, and livelihood strategies (Scoones, 2009). By integrating the Capabilities Approach with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, this study provides a comprehensive theoretical basis for understanding and addressing poverty in Nigeria, emphasizing individual empowerment and systemic change.

Objective

The study offers insights and recommendations for overcoming challenges in poverty reduction in Nigeria. It examines factors contributing to poverty and proposes strategies such as gender-responsive initiatives, data-driven policies, and inclusive economic policies to address these issues.

Materials and Methods

This research leverages secondary data sources to explore Nigeria's complex dimensions of poverty. It includes a comprehensive review of academic literature, policy documents, reports, and grey literature from government agencies and civil society organizations focused on poverty reduction. Content analysis was used as the primary methodology.

Discussion

Nigeria's Economic Situation

Despite being Africa's largest oil producer, Nigeria's economy tells a tale of missed opportunities and structural imbalances. As of 2023, Nigeria's GDP stood at \$477.4 billion, making it Africa's largest economy (World Bank, 2024). However, this figure masks significant challenges. The country's economic growth has been sluggish, averaging just 1.1% between 2015 and 2023, far below the population growth rate of 2.5% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). This disparity has led to a decline



in per capita income, with GDP per capita falling from \$2,655 in 2014 to \$2,085 in 2023 (IMF, 2024). Nigeria's economy is like a giant on clay feet. Its potential is enormous, but structural weaknesses continue to hold it back.

To fully grasp the severity of Nigeria's poverty situation, it's crucial to examine it globally and historically. Table 1.0 provides a comparative view of poverty rates across various countries, with Nigeria showing the highest percentage (90.80%) of its population living under \$5.50 per day. This stark statistic underscores the magnitude of Nigeria's challenge compared to other developing nations. Furthermore, Table 2.0 presents a historical perspective of Nigeria's poverty rate from 1985 to 2018. While there have been fluctuations, the overall trend shows a persistently high poverty rate, with only marginal improvements over three decades. The slight increase from 89.50% in 2015 to 90.80% in 2018 is particularly concerning, indicating that recent economic policies have struggled to make significant inroads in poverty reduction. These data points reinforce the urgency of developing more effective, targeted strategies for poverty alleviation in Nigeria (Macrotrends, 2023).

A closer look at Nigeria's economic composition reveals a complex picture. While contributing only 5.7% to GDP in 2023, the oil sector accounted for over 80% of export earnings and 50% of government revenue (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2024). This over-reliance on oil has left the economy vulnerable to global price shocks. Meanwhile, the agricultural sector, employing about 35% of the workforce, contributed 25.1% to GDP in 2023 (NBS, 2024). The services sector, led by telecommunications and financial services, has been the main growth driver, accounting for 53.2% of GDP (NBS, 2024). However, the manufacturing sector remains underdeveloped, contributing just 9% to GDP, significantly lower than peer countries like South Africa (13%) and Kenya (7.5%) (African Development Bank, 2024). Moreover, Nigeria's economic indicators lag behind many of its African peers. Its unemployment rate of 33.3% in 2023 was one of the highest in Africa, compared to 32.6% in South Africa and 5.7% in Kenya (ILO, 2024a). Similarly, Nigeria's Human Development Index score of 0.539 in 2023



placed it 161st out of 189 countries, below the sub-Saharan African average of 0.547 (UNDP, 2024). These statistics underscore the urgent need for economic diversification and structural reforms to unlock Nigeria's potential.

Root Causes of Poverty in Nigeria

To comprehensively analyze the root causes of poverty in Nigeria, we can employ a multidimensional framework that considers historical, economic, social, and institutional factors. This framework draws on various schools of economic thought, from neoclassical theories emphasizing market failures to institutional economics highlighting the role of governance structures. As Nobel laureate Amartya Sen argues, "Poverty is not just a lack of money; it is not having the capability to realize one's full potential as a human being" (Sen, 2009). This translates to a need for more access to quality education, healthcare, and economic opportunities in Nigeria.

From a historical perspective, the legacy of colonialism and subsequent political instability have played significant roles in shaping Nigeria's economic landscape. The oil boom of the 1970s led to the "Dutch disease," causing neglect of other sectors and increasing vulnerability to external shocks (Ross, 2003). Institutionally, widespread corruption and weak governance have undermined development efforts. The World Bank estimates corruption costs Nigeria about \$10 billion annually (World Bank, 2022b). Economically, the overreliance on oil exports and underdeveloped manufacturing and agricultural sectors have limited job creation and economic diversification. Socially, rapid population growth, estimated at 2.5% annually (United Nations, 2023), has outpaced economic growth, straining resources and infrastructure. Gender inequality also exacerbates poverty, with women facing limited access to education, land, and formal employment. Addressing poverty in Nigeria requires a holistic approach that simultaneously tackles symptoms and root causes. Case studies illustrate these interconnected factors: in the Niger Delta, environmental degradation due to oil extraction has decimated traditional livelihoods, while in northern



Nigeria, climate change and conflict have displaced millions, pushing them into poverty. The case of Lagos's informal settlements, where over 60% of the population lives in slums (UN-Habitat, 2023), highlights the challenges of rapid urbanization without adequate planning and infrastructure development.

Table 1.0. Nigeria Poverty Rate (Macrotrends, 2023)

| Country Name | % Under US \$5.50 Per Day |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <u>Nigeria</u> | 90.80% |
| <u>Pakistan</u> | 84.50% |
| <u>India</u> | 82.60% |
| <u>Angola</u> | 78.00% |
| <u>Lao PDR</u> | 70.50% |
| <u>Kyrgyz Republic</u> | 66.10% |
| <u>Indonesia</u> | 62.80% |
| <u>Georgia</u> | 53.90% |
| <u>Philippines</u> | 53.40% |
| <u>.Honduras</u> | 51.30% |
| <u>Mongolia</u> | 38.30% |
| <u>El Salvador</u> | 33.00% |
| <u>Vietnam</u> | 22.20% |
| <u>Bolivia</u> | 19.10% |
| <u>Moldova</u> | 14.60% |
| <u>Ukraine</u> | 9.40% |



Table 2.0. Nigeria Poverty Rate – Historical Data (Macrotrends, 2023)

| Nigeria Poverty Rate - Historical Data | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------|
| Year | % Under US \$5.50 Per Day | Change |
| 2018 | 90.80% | 1.30% |
| 2015 | 89.50% | -1.00% |
| 2012 | 90.50% | -0.30% |
| 2010 | 90.80% | -3.20% |
| 2003 | 94.00% | 1.30% |
| 1996 | 92.70% | 0.30% |
| 1992 | 92.40% | -1.00% |
| 1985 | 93.40% | -1.00% |

Gender-Related Challenges in Poverty Alleviation

Recent data paints a stark picture: women make up 65% of Nigeria's poorest population, with a poverty rate of 70% compared to 51% for men (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). In education, while the national literacy rate is 62%, there's a significant gender gap, with 71% literacy for men versus 53% for women. This disparity widens in rural and northern regions, where female literacy plummets to 20% in some states (UNESCO, 2023). Economically, women's labour force participation rate is 48%, compared to 64% for men, with women predominantly engaged in informal, low-paying sectors (ILO, 2024b). Empowering Nigerian women is not just a matter of rights; it's an economic imperative. We're leaving half of our potential on the table.



The intersectionality of gender with other factors like ethnicity, religion, and region further compounds these challenges. In the predominantly Muslim north, cultural practices like early marriage and limited female mobility interact with gender to exacerbate poverty. For instance, 43% of girls in the north-west are married before 18, compared to 10% in the south-east (NDHS, 2023). Similarly, in conflict-affected areas of the northeast, displaced women face heightened risks of exploitation and limited access to resources. The effectiveness of existing gender-focused poverty alleviation programmes has been mixed. The Nigeria for Women Project, launched in 2018, has shown promise, reaching over 500,000 women with financial services and skills training (World Bank, 2018). However, critics argue that such programmes often fail to address structural barriers. We need to move beyond micro-interventions to tackle the systemic issues that keep women in poverty - from discriminatory laws to unequal access to land and credit. The National Gender Policy, while comprehensive on paper, has faced implementation challenges due to limited funding and cultural resistance. A more holistic approach, integrating gender considerations into all poverty reduction strategies and addressing intersectional challenges, is crucial for achieving sustainable and inclusive development in Nigeria.

Overcoming Political Patronage

In the oil-rich Niger Delta region, a community development project stands abandoned, its funds siphoned off through a complex web of political connections. This scene, unfortunately, is all too common in Nigeria, where political patronage often undermines poverty alleviation efforts. The impact of patronage on poverty reduction is multifaceted and pervasive. For instance, the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), designed to lift millions out of poverty, has been marred by allegations of politicization. A 2022 audit revealed that over 30% of beneficiaries were selected based on political affiliations rather than need (Office of the Auditor-General, 2023). Similarly, the distribution of agricultural inputs under the Anchor Borrowers' Programme has been



skewed towards political supporters, leaving many smallholder farmers without access to crucial resources. Political patronage in Nigeria doesn't just divert resources; it erodes trust in institutions and perpetuates a cycle of poverty and dependency.

However, successful anti-patronage measures from other countries offer hope. Rwanda's performance-based financing in the health sector, which ties funding to measurable outcomes rather than political connections, has significantly improved healthcare delivery and reduced corruption (Basinga et al., 2021). In India, biometric identification in the Public Distribution System has reduced leakage of subsidized food grains by 47%, ensuring benefits reach the intended recipients (Muralidharan et al., 2023). Civil society plays a crucial role in combating political patronage. In Nigeria, organizations like BudgIT and Connected Development (CODE) have leveraged technology to track public spending and expose instances of patronage-based allocations. Their "Follow The Money" campaign has recovered over ₦500 million in misappropriated funds for community projects (CODE, 2024). International NGOs have also contributed; Transparency International's Integrity Pacts, implemented in 20 countries, have shown promise in reducing corruption in public contracting (Transparency International, 2023). Civil society is the conscience of our nation. By demanding transparency and holding leaders accountable, we can gradually dismantle the patronage networks that have held our development hostage. The path to overcoming political patronage in Nigeria's poverty alleviation efforts is challenging but not impossible. It requires a combination of institutional reforms, technological solutions, and active civic engagement to create a more equitable and effective resource allocation system.

Case Studies

Looking beyond Nigeria's borders, other African countries offer valuable lessons in innovative poverty alleviation. Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) utilizes satellite imagery and machine learning to predict drought-induced food insecurity, allowing for proactive cash



transfers to vulnerable households. This approach has reduced the need for emergency food aid by 25% in targeted areas (World Bank, 2023). In Ghana, the "One District, One Factory" initiative has established 232 factories nationwide, creating over 150,000 jobs and promoting rural industrialization (Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, 2024). However, not all initiatives have been unqualified successes. Tanzania's Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) program, while successful in reaching 1.1 million households with cash transfers, has faced challenges in its public works component due to delayed payments and inadequate project selection (TASAF, 2023).

Similarly, Nigeria's own TraderMoni program, which provided micro-loans to petty traders, has been criticized for its high default rates and potential for political manipulation (CBN, 2024). The key to successful poverty alleviation lies in innovative ideas, robust implementation, continuous monitoring, and the willingness to learn from successes and failures. These case studies underscore the importance of context-specific, data-driven approaches to poverty alleviation and the need for robust institutional frameworks to ensure program effectiveness and sustainability.

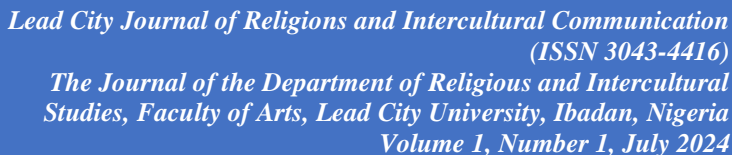
Effective poverty reduction also relies on robust data collection and analysis, as seen in India's Aadhaar system, which has improved the efficiency and targeting of social welfare programmes (Masiero and Soumyo, 2019). Finland's focus on education and essential services has also led to high social mobility and low poverty rates (Morgan, 2014). Nigeria can adopt these strategies by investing in quality education, essential services, and data-driven policies tailored to the needs of its vulnerable population. Furthermore, Rwanda's progress in women's empowerment highlights the importance of gender-responsive policies (Burnet, 2011). By incorporating these best practices, Nigeria can develop comprehensive and effective poverty alleviation initiatives, ensuring sustainable and inclusive poverty reduction.



Findings

A structured framework that categorizes obstacles into four interconnected dimensions, institutional, economic, social, and environmental, can be employed to navigate these challenges effectively. Institutional obstacles encompass governance issues, corruption, and weak policy implementation. Economic barriers include high unemployment, inflation, and limited access to credit. Social challenges comprise inequality, inadequate education, and health services. Environmental obstacles involve climate change impacts and resource degradation. Poverty in Nigeria is multifaceted. Any effective solution must address these interlinked challenges simultaneously.

This multidimensional approach, however, reveals potential trade-offs and conflicts between different poverty reduction strategies. For instance, rapid industrialization to boost economic growth may conflict with environmental sustainability goals. Similarly, cash transfer programmes might provide immediate relief but could create dependency and strain fiscal resources needed for long-term investments in education and infrastructure. To address these challenges, policymakers should consider the following actionable recommendations: 1) Implement a comprehensive data collection and analysis system to inform targeted interventions (World Bank, 2024). 2) Adopt a "whole-of-government" approach to poverty reduction, ensuring policy coherence across ministries (OECD, 2023). 3) Leverage technology for transparent and efficient service delivery, as exemplified by India's Aadhaar system (Gelb and Mukherjee, 2023). 4) Invest in climate-resilient agriculture and renewable energy to create sustainable livelihoods (FAO, 2024). 5) Strengthen public-private partnerships to mobilize resources and expertise for poverty alleviation projects (AfDB, 2023a). Analysis has revealed that poverty in Nigeria is not merely a lack of income but a complex interplay of historical legacies, poor governance, institutional weaknesses, economic imbalances, social inequalities, and environmental challenges. We've seen how political patronage undermines poverty alleviation efforts while gender disparities exacerbate vulnerabilities. Nigeria's path out of poverty lies



Conclusion

However, the future is not predetermined. Nigeria stands at an inflexion point where targeted interventions and bold policy choices could tip the scales towards a more equitable and prosperous future. Innovative approaches, such as leveraging blockchain for transparent governance or using artificial intelligence to optimize resource allocation, offer unprecedented tools in the battle against poverty. Moreover, Nigeria's youthful population represents a demographic dividend that, if properly harnessed, could drive economic growth and social progress. Nigeria's path will have ramifications far beyond its borders, potentially serving as a model for poverty alleviation across Africa. As the nation navigates these crucial years ahead, the collective efforts of government, private sector, civil society, and international partners will be instrumental in



determining whether Nigeria realizes its potential to become a beacon of hope in the global fight against poverty. The time for decisive action is now, and the choices made today will echo through generations, shaping the legacy of Africa's most populous nation.

Recommendations

Several areas demand further research and policy development for a more positive outcome. First, investigating the long-term impacts of unconditional cash transfers on economic behaviour and social mobility in the Nigerian context could inform more effective social protection strategies. Second, exploring the potential of climate-resilient agriculture and renewable energy in creating sustainable livelihoods for rural communities presents an exciting frontier for poverty alleviation efforts. Finally, developing more nuanced, culturally sensitive poverty metrics that capture the multidimensional nature of deprivation in Nigeria's diverse socio-economic landscape could enhance targeting and impact assessment of interventions. The key to unlocking Nigeria's potential lies in harnessing the power of partnerships—between government, private sector, civil society, and most importantly, the people themselves. Only through collective action can we hope to build a Nigeria where poverty is truly a thing of the past. By pursuing these research avenues and translating findings into actionable, context-specific policies, Nigeria can chart a course towards a more equitable and prosperous future for all its citizens.

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Addressing Parental Responsibilities as a Nexus for Nigeria's Sociocultural Revolution

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Abstract

This paper investigates the pivotal role of parental guidance in shaping Nigeria's sociocultural landscape and explores the effects of parental failure on youth behaviour, societal values, and national development. Employing a qualitative methodological approach, the study examines the narratives and lived experiences of Nigerian families, drawing from extensive literature reviews, case studies, and cultural analyses. Grounded in Attachment Theory, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of how parenting impacts societal outcomes. The findings highlight that parental failure manifests in various forms, including lack of supervision and engagement, cultural and economic pressures, negligence of parental responsibilities, and deficiencies in educational background. In this context, parental failure refers to the inability or unwillingness of parents to adequately nurture, guide, and provide for their children, resulting in a range of negative outcomes for individuals and society. These manifestations contribute to widespread social issues such as juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, and the erosion of ethical values. The study underscores the importance of addressing parental failure as a catalyst for sociocultural transformation in Nigeria, arguing that a more cohesive and progressive society can be cultivated by empowering parents and tackling the root causes of parental failure through collaborative efforts from government, NGOs, and community leaders. Key recommendations include implementing parental education programs to equip parents with effective parenting skills, establishing economic support systems to alleviate financial burdens, and promoting cultural reorientation to encourage active and engaged parenting.

Keywords: Parenting, Parental Failure, Juvenile Delinquency, Socio-cultural Revolution



Introduction

Parental guidance plays a fundamental role in the development of children and the shaping of societal norms and values. In Nigeria, the family unit is often seen as the bedrock of society, where cultural values and social norms are transmitted from one generation to the next. However, the effectiveness of this transmission is increasingly being questioned due to numerous instances of parental failure. Parental failure, in this context, refers to the inability or unwillingness of parents to adequately fulfill their roles in nurturing, guiding, and providing for their children, leading to a range of negative outcomes for individuals and society at large.

Parental failure in Nigeria can be attributed to several factors, including economic hardships, cultural pressures, and inadequate education. Economic challenges often force parents to work long hours or multiple jobs, limiting the time they can spend with their children (Egbo, 2012). This lack of parental presence and engagement can lead to emotional and psychological neglect, which in turn affects children's development. Cultural pressures, such as the expectation for children to be obedient without question, can stifle open communication and critical thinking (Oyeniya, 2013). Furthermore, many parents lack the necessary educational background to provide adequate support and guidance for their children's academic and personal growth (UNICEF, 2018).

The consequences of parental failure are profound and multifaceted. Children who grow up without proper parental guidance are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour, drop out of school, and develop substance abuse problems (Adegoke, 2015). These issues contribute to broader social problems, including increased crime rates and a general decline in moral and ethical standards. The erosion of societal values is particularly concerning in Nigeria, where traditional values such as



respect for elders, communal living, and moral integrity have historically been integral to the social fabric (Falola, 2001).

This paper explores the nexus between parental responsibilities and Nigeria's sociocultural evolution, proposing that addressing these failures is essential for fostering a sociocultural revolution. By examining the root causes of parental failure and its impacts on youth behavior and societal values, the study seeks to provide a framework for systemic change.

The qualitative methodological approach adopted in this study involves an in-depth analysis of existing literature, case studies, and cultural narratives to uncover the underlying factors contributing to parental failure in Nigeria. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between individual, familial, and societal factors. By exploring the lived experiences of Nigerian families, the study aims to provide actionable insights and recommendations for fostering a sociocultural revolution.

Addressing parental failure is crucial for Nigeria's sociocultural revolution. By empowering parents through education, support, and cultural reorientation, Nigeria can cultivate a more cohesive and progressive society. This paper calls for collaborative efforts from government, NGOs, and community leaders to spearhead initiatives that reinforce the importance of effective parenting in national development. Through such efforts, Nigeria can lay the groundwork for sustainable development and social cohesion, ultimately achieving a brighter future for its children and society as a whole.

Literature Review

Parental Failure and Child Development

The role of parents in child development has been extensively studied, with consensus pointing towards the critical impact of parental behavior on various aspects of a child's life. According to Attachment Theory developed by John Bowlby in 1969 children form attachments with their caregivers, which serve as a foundation for their emotional and social development. Secure attachments are formed when parents are



responsive and sensitive to their children's needs, whereas insecure attachments result from inconsistent or neglectful caregiving. Insecurely attached children are at a higher risk of developing behavioural problems and mental health issues (Ainsworth, 1979).

Economic Challenges and Parental Failure

Economic hardship is a significant factor contributing to parental failure in Nigeria. Parents facing financial difficulties often work long hours or multiple jobs to make ends meet, resulting in limited time and energy for parental engagement (Egbo, 2012). The stress associated with economic instability can also affect parental mental health, further impairing their ability to provide adequate care and support for their children (Conger, et al., 1992). Studies have shown that economic hardship is correlated with increased instances of child neglect and abuse, as well as poorer educational outcomes for children (Wadsworth & Santiago, 2008).

In Nigeria, the economic challenges are compounded by a lack of social support systems and adequate public policies. The absence of robust welfare programs means that many families lack access to essential resources such as healthcare, education, and housing, exacerbating the effects of poverty on family dynamics (Oyeniyi, 2013). The intersection of economic hardship and parental failure creates a vicious cycle where children from impoverished families are less likely to receive the support and opportunities needed to break out of poverty.

Cultural Influences on Parenting

Cultural norms and values play a crucial role in shaping parenting practices and expectations in Nigeria. Traditional Nigerian culture places a high value on respect for elders and hierarchical family structures, often emphasizing obedience and conformity over individual expression and autonomy (Falola, 2001). While these values can foster strong family bonds and community cohesion, they can also limit open communication and critical thinking, particularly in parent-child relationships (Omoegun, 2007).



Cultural expectations can also contribute to parental failure by placing undue pressure on parents to conform to traditional roles and responsibilities. For example, gender norms that assign primary caregiving responsibilities to mothers can limit fathers' involvement in parenting, leading to imbalanced parental roles and increased stress on mothers (Olutayo & Bankole, 2002). Additionally, cultural stigmas surrounding issues such as mental health and parenting support can prevent parents from seeking help when needed, exacerbating the challenges they face (Gureje et al., 2006).

Educational Deficiencies and Parenting

Educational attainment is a significant determinant of effective parenting. Parents with higher levels of education are generally better equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to support their children's development (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). In Nigeria, however, many parents have limited educational backgrounds, which can hinder their ability to provide appropriate guidance and support for their children (UNICEF, 2018). This issue is particularly pronounced in rural areas, where access to quality education is often limited (Onyukwu, 2011).

Educational deficiencies in parents can also impact their children's academic achievement and aspirations. Research has shown that parental education levels are positively correlated with children's educational outcomes, suggesting that parents who lack education may struggle to foster a conducive learning environment for their children (Fan & Chen, 2001). This creates a cycle of educational disadvantage, where children from less educated families are less likely to succeed academically and attain higher levels of education themselves.

The Interplay of Parental Failure and Societal Outcomes

The cumulative effects of parental failure have significant implications for broader societal outcomes in Nigeria. Children who grow up in environments characterized by neglect, abuse, or lack of support are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour, including criminal



activities and substance abuse (Adegoke, 2015). This behaviour contributes to higher crime rates and social instability, posing challenges to national development and social cohesion (Blum et al., 2000).

Moreover, the erosion of ethical and moral values associated with parental failure undermines the social fabric of Nigerian society. Traditional values such as respect, communal living, and integrity, which have historically been pillars of Nigerian culture, are increasingly being compromised (Falola, 2001). This cultural shift has profound implications for social interactions, community cohesion, and national identity.

Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that considers the broader systemic and cultural contexts in which families operate. By understanding and addressing the root causes of parental failure, Nigeria can pave the way for a sociocultural revolution that promotes positive values, ethical behavior, and sustainable development.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on Attachment Theory. This theory provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of parental failure and its impact on child development within the sociocultural context of Nigeria.

John Bowlby's Attachment Theory underscores the crucial role of early relationships between children and their primary caregivers in shaping emotional and social development (Bowlby, 1969). The theory posits that the quality of attachment formed during infancy and early childhood profoundly impacts a child's future relational and psychological well-being. Secure attachments, characterized by consistent and responsive caregiving, foster healthy emotional regulation, resilience, and social competence. Conversely, insecure attachments, which arise from neglectful or inconsistent parenting, can lead to a range of developmental challenges such as anxiety, behavioural issues, and difficulties in forming stable interpersonal relationships.



In the context of Nigeria, socio-economic pressures and cultural norms often disrupt the formation of secure attachments. Economic constraints, such as financial instability and high rates of poverty, can compel parents to prioritize survival over nurturing, thereby impacting their ability to provide consistent and responsive caregiving. Additionally, cultural expectations and traditional norms sometimes place unrealistic demands on parents, further exacerbating the challenge of meeting their children's emotional needs. These factors contribute to a cycle of insecure attachments, which can perpetuate issues such as juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, and erosion of ethical values within the society.

Addressing parental responsibilities through the lens of Attachment Theory presents a critical opportunity for Nigeria's sociocultural revolution. By emphasizing the importance of secure attachments and the role of responsive caregiving, interventions can be designed to support parents in creating nurturing environments. This includes implementing parental education programs to enhance understanding of attachment principles, providing economic support to alleviate financial stress, and fostering cultural reorientation to emphasize the value of emotional availability and consistent caregiving. Such comprehensive efforts can help break the cycle of insecure attachments and contribute to the development of a more cohesive and progressive society.

Impacts of Parental Failure on Sociocultural Revolution

Parental failure has profound implications not only for individual child development but also for the broader sociocultural fabric of society. In Nigeria, where traditional values and social structures are deeply embedded, the repercussions of parental failure extend beyond the household, influencing community dynamics and national development. This section explores how parental failure impedes sociocultural revolution in Nigeria, hindering the country's progress towards modernization, ethical integrity, and social cohesion.



Erosion of Traditional Values and Ethical Standards

Traditional Nigerian society is built on values such as respect, communal living, and moral integrity. These values are primarily transmitted through family structures and parenting practices. However, when parents fail to provide a stable and nurturing environment, these core values are compromised. The breakdown of traditional family roles and the rise in single-parent households, often resulting from economic pressures and social instability, lead to weakened family bonds and a decline in the transmission of cultural norms (Falola, 2001). Children growing up in such environments may lack the guidance needed to internalize these values, leading to an erosion of societal ethical standards.

Moreover, the prevalence of neglect and abuse within families can contribute to a culture of violence and disrespect. Children who experience or witness domestic violence are more likely to adopt aggressive behaviour and view violence as a normative means of conflict resolution (Jaffee et al., 2003). This perpetuates a cycle of violence that undermines social harmony and ethical conduct, posing significant challenges to societal stability and cohesion.

Impact on Education and Skill Development

Educational attainment is a critical factor in driving sociocultural revolution. It empowers individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for innovation, economic development, and social progress. However, parental failure, particularly in the form of neglect and lack of support for education, severely hampers children's academic performance and future prospects (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). In Nigeria, many children from disadvantaged backgrounds do not receive the encouragement or resources needed to succeed in school, leading to high dropout rates and limited access to higher education (UNICEF, 2018).

This educational deficit has long-term implications for the country's workforce and economic development. A poorly educated population is less capable of contributing to technological advancements and



economic growth, which are essential components of a sociocultural revolution. Furthermore, the lack of educational opportunities exacerbates social inequalities, creating a divide between the educated elite and the underprivileged masses. This social stratification hinders national unity and the collective effort needed for transformative social change.

Perpetuation of Gender Inequality

Gender norms and expectations play a significant role in shaping parenting practices and, consequently, the impact of parental failure. In Nigeria, traditional gender roles often dictate that women are primarily responsible for child-rearing, while men are seen as breadwinners (Olutayo & Bankole, 2002). These norms can limit the involvement of fathers in parenting and place disproportionate stress on mothers, particularly in the context of economic hardship.

Parental failure, influenced by these gendered expectations, can perpetuate gender inequalities by limiting educational and career opportunities for girls. Girls in families where parents are unable or unwilling to support their education are more likely to be kept at home for domestic duties or married off at an early age (Omoegun, 2007). This not only curtails their personal development but also reinforces the cycle of poverty and gender discrimination. For a sociocultural revolution to take place, it is imperative to address these deep-rooted gender biases and promote equal opportunities for all children, regardless of gender.

Increase in Antisocial Behaviour and Crime

One of the most immediate and visible impacts of parental failure is the increase in antisocial behaviour and crime among youth. Children who grow up in environments characterized by neglect, abuse, or lack of supervision are more likely to engage in criminal activities (Adegoke, 2015). The absence of positive role models and the exposure to harmful behaviour create a predisposition towards delinquency and substance abuse.

The rise in youth crime poses a significant barrier to sociocultural revolution, as it diverts resources away from development initiatives and



towards policing and criminal justice. Additionally, high crime rates create an atmosphere of fear and instability, discouraging investment and community engagement. Addressing the root causes of antisocial behavior through improved parenting practices and supportive family environments is crucial for fostering a safe and productive society.

Implications for National Development and Social Cohesion

The cumulative effects of parental failure extend to national development and social cohesion. Children who do not receive adequate care and support are less likely to become productive and responsible citizens. This affects the overall human capital of the nation, reducing its potential for economic growth and social progress (Blum et al., 2000). Furthermore, the breakdown of family structures and the erosion of cultural values can lead to social fragmentation, where communities become polarized and distrustful.

A sociocultural revolution requires a collective effort towards shared goals and values. Parental failure undermines this collective spirit by fostering environments of neglect, inequality, and conflict. To achieve meaningful social transformation, it is essential to strengthen family units and promote positive parenting practices that support the holistic development of children.

Parental failure has far-reaching implications for Nigeria's sociocultural revolution. It erodes traditional values, hampers educational and skill development, perpetuates gender inequality, increases antisocial behaviour and crime, and ultimately undermines national development and social cohesion.

Case Studies of Parental Failure and Implications

Examining case studies of parental failure provides valuable insights into the complexities and consequences of inadequate parenting practices in Nigeria. These case studies shed light on the diverse factors contributing to parental failure and the multifaceted implications for child development, societal well-being, and national progress. This section presents case studies highlighting different manifestations of



parental failure and their implications for individuals and communities, including a scriptural example from the Bible.

Eli's Parental Failure and the Moral Decline of His Sons

Eli, a high priest and judge of Israel, serves as a poignant biblical example of the repercussions of parental failure on both the family and the broader community. Eli's inability to discipline his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, led to severe moral and spiritual decline, affecting not only his household but also the entire nation of Israel.

Background

Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, served as priests under their father's leadership. Despite their sacred roles, they engaged in corrupt practices, such as taking the best portions of sacrifices for themselves and committing sexual immorality with women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting (1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22). Eli was aware of his sons' misconduct but failed to take decisive action to correct their behavior, merely rebuking them without enforcing any meaningful consequences (1 Samuel 2:22-25).

Implications

The parental failure of Eli had far-reaching consequences for his family and the community:

1. *Moral and Spiritual Decline:* Eli's failure to discipline his sons led to a significant decline in moral and spiritual standards among the priests, which undermined the integrity of religious practices and disillusioned the people of Israel. The priests' corruption eroded public trust in religious institutions, contributing to a broader societal crisis of faith.
2. *Divine Judgment and Family Tragedy:* The lack of effective parental guidance and discipline resulted in severe divine judgment. God pronounced judgment on Eli's household, declaring that both Hophni and Phinehas would die on the same day as a sign of His displeasure (1 Samuel 2:27-36). This



*The Journal of the Department of Religious and Intercultural
Studies, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria
Volume 1, Number 1, July 2024*

3. *National Consequences:* The moral failings of Eli's sons and the subsequent loss of the Ark of the Covenant had profound national implications. The Israelites' defeat and the capture of the Ark symbolized a spiritual low point for the nation, leading to a period of instability and despair. This event highlighted the critical importance of strong, ethical leadership and the devastating impact that parental failure can have on a community's spiritual and moral health.

Case Study: David's Parental Failure and Its Implications

Background

David had several children by multiple wives, which often led to complex family dynamics and rivalries. His failure to address these issues effectively, coupled with his inability to discipline his children appropriately, resulted in serious consequences.



1. *The Incident with Amnon and Tamar:* One of the most notable instances of David's parental failure involves his children Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom. Amnon, David's eldest son, developed an inappropriate desire for his half-sister Tamar. Despite the serious nature of the offense, David's response was passive and inadequate, showing leniency towards Amnon (2 Samuel 13:1-21). This lack of decisive action led to further familial strife.
2. *Absalom's Rebellion:* Absalom, Tamar's full brother, was enraged by David's failure to punish Amnon. This led him to take matters into his own hands, eventually killing Amnon (2 Samuel 13:22-29). Absalom fled and later returned, harboring resentment towards David. This unresolved tension culminated in Absalom leading a rebellion against his father, causing a significant civil conflict within Israel (2 Samuel 15:1-12).

Implications

David's parental failures had far-reaching implications, affecting not only his family but also the kingdom of Israel and its sociocultural development.

1. *Family Dysfunction and Breakdown:* David's inability to manage his children's conflicts and enforce discipline resulted in a dysfunctional family environment. The lack of parental authority and guidance led to severe sibling rivalries and violence. This breakdown in family structure highlights the importance of effective parenting in maintaining family harmony and stability.
2. *Social and Political Instability:* Absalom's rebellion against David had significant political repercussions. The civil war that ensued disrupted the kingdom, causing widespread instability and suffering. This period of turmoil weakened the nation's cohesion and diverted resources from development efforts, illustrating how familial conflicts can escalate to national crises.
3. *Erosion of Moral and Ethical Standards:* David's failure to hold Amnon accountable for his actions sent a negative message about



justice and accountability. This erosion of moral and ethical standards can undermine societal values, leading to a culture of impunity and lawlessness. In David's case, his actions (or lack thereof) set a precedent that influenced the behavior of others within the kingdom.

4. *Long-term Sociocultural Impact:* The turmoil within David's family and the ensuing political instability had long-term implications for Israel's sociocultural development. The civil unrest weakened the central authority, leading to periods of vulnerability and division. This environment hindered the nation's ability to progress and develop cohesively, impacting future generations.

David's parental failures had profound implications for his family and the kingdom of Israel. His inability to address serious issues within his household led to significant familial conflict, social instability, and a decline in moral and ethical standards. These events underscore the critical role of effective parenting in fostering stable family environments and promoting national development.

Solutions to Parental Failure

Addressing parental failure in Nigeria requires practical solutions that empower parents, support families, and promote positive parenting practices.

1. *Parenting Education and Support Programs:* Implementing parenting education and support programs can empower parents with the knowledge and skills needed to provide nurturing and supportive environments for their children. These programs can include workshops, seminars, and counseling sessions focused on topics such as child development, communication, discipline, and stress management. By equipping parents with the tools and resources they need, these programs can help prevent parental failure and promote positive parent-child relationships.
2. *Economic Empowerment Initiatives:* Creating economic empowerment initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty and providing financial stability for families can reduce the risk of



parental failure. These initiatives can include job training programs, microfinance loans, and income-generating opportunities targeted at low-income families. By improving economic opportunities for parents, these initiatives can strengthen family resilience and enable parents to better provide for their children's needs.

3. *Accessible and Affordable Childcare Services:* Expanding access to affordable and high-quality childcare services can support working parents and reduce the burden of caregiving. This can include establishing daycare centers, after-school programs, and early childhood education facilities in communities across Nigeria. By providing safe and nurturing environments for children, these services can enable parents to pursue employment or education opportunities while ensuring their children receive the care and support they need.
4. *Community Engagement and Support Networks:* Promoting community engagement and support networks can create a sense of belonging and social connectedness for parents and children alike. This can involve establishing parent support groups, community centers, and neighborhood initiatives that provide opportunities for families to connect, share resources, and access social support. By fostering a sense of community and collective responsibility, these networks can help strengthen family bonds and prevent social isolation.
5. *Strengthen Parental Education and Support:* Implement comprehensive parental education programs that equip parents with effective discipline strategies, moral guidance techniques, and communication skills. These programs should be accessible and culturally relevant, addressing the specific challenges faced by families in Nigeria.
6. *Promote Ethical and Spiritual Leadership:* Encourage parents to model ethical behavior and spiritual leadership within their households. Faith-based organizations and community leaders



can play a pivotal role in promoting values that foster moral integrity and accountability.

7. *Develop Community Support Systems:* Establish robust community support systems that provide resources, counseling, and mentorship for families struggling with parental challenges. By fostering a supportive community environment, parents can receive the assistance they need to guide their children effectively.
8. *Implement Accountability Mechanisms:* Create and enforce accountability mechanisms within religious and community institutions to address misconduct and ensure ethical standards are upheld. This can help prevent moral decline and maintain public trust in leadership.
9. *Parental Accountability:* Encourage parents to take an active role in addressing and resolving conflicts within their families. Accountability and decisive action are essential in maintaining discipline and justice.
10. *Conflict Resolution Training:* Implement conflict resolution training programs for parents and community leaders. These programs can provide the skills needed to manage disputes effectively and prevent escalation.

By implementing practical solutions, Nigeria can create a supportive and nurturing environment for children to thrive. These efforts are essential for driving sociocultural revolution and building a more inclusive and equitable society.

Summary

Parental failure in Nigeria poses significant challenges to child development, societal well-being, and the country's progress towards sociocultural revolution. Economic hardship, cultural norms, educational disparities, and family structure are among the key factors contributing to parental failure. The implications of parental failure are far-reaching, affecting ethical values, educational attainment, gender equality, and social stability. However, practical solutions such as



parenting education programs, economic empowerment initiatives, accessible childcare services, and community support networks can mitigate the impact of parental failure and promote positive outcomes for children and families.

Conclusion

In conclusion, addressing parental failure in Nigeria is essential for fostering sociocultural revolution and building a more inclusive and equitable society. By implementing targeted interventions that empower parents, support families, and promote positive parenting practices, Nigeria can create a nurturing environment where children can thrive and fulfill their potential. These efforts require collaboration between government agencies, civil society organizations, community leaders, and other stakeholders to ensure comprehensive and sustainable solutions. With concerted action, Nigeria can overcome the challenges of parental failure and pave the way for a brighter future for its children and generations to come.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and insights presented in this paper, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1. Intentional Investment in Parental Education:* Parenting education programs are essential for equipping parents with the necessary knowledge and skills to create nurturing and supportive environments for their children, ultimately fostering healthier development and well-being.
- 2. Promotion of Economic Empowerment:* Economic empowerment initiatives are critical for addressing poverty and providing financial stability for families. Programs such as job training, microfinance loans, and income-generating opportunities play a vital role in improving the socioeconomic status of families.
- 3. Expansion of Access to Childcare Services:* Expanding access to affordable and high-quality childcare services, including daycare centres, after-school programs, and early childhood education facilities,



is crucial. This support enables working parents to balance their responsibilities and reduces the caregiving burden.

4. *Strengthening of Community Support Networks*: Community engagement and support networks are instrumental in fostering connections among families. These networks offer opportunities for resource sharing and social support, promoting social cohesion and a sense of collective responsibility.

5. *Advocacy for Policy Reform*: Policy reforms that address economic disparities, cultural norms, and educational inequalities are necessary to support families. Such reforms aim to create an environment where children and families can thrive, addressing the root causes of parental challenges.

Implementing these recommendations will require coordinated efforts from government agencies, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, and other stakeholders. By prioritizing the well-being of children and families, Nigeria can overcome the challenges of parental failure and realize its aspirations for sociocultural revolution and national development.

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