

# The Impact of Poverty on Northern Nigeria's Development: A Comprehensive Analysis

Muhammad Tasiu Dansabo & Usman Ibrahim Dabai

Department of Sociology Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.808065>

Received: 25 June 2024; Revised: 16 July 2024; Accepted: 20 July 2024; Published: 30 August 2024

## ABSTRACT

Poverty in Nigeria significantly hampers the nation's developmental progress, with Northern Nigeria bearing the brunt of this socioeconomic issue. Despite the country's rich agricultural and natural resources and a relatively significant industrial sector, Nigeria remains one of the world's poorest countries, with up to 70% of its population living in poverty. This paper explores the multidimensional nature of poverty in Nigeria, utilizing data from the National Bureau of Statistics and other sources to provide an analysis and graphical representation of poverty rates. The 2022 National Multidimensional Poverty Index reveals that 63% of Nigerians, or over 133 million people, live in poverty, with a disproportionate impact on Northern Nigeria. Contributing factors include adverse economic policies, regional disparities, and demographic challenges. This analysis underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions to address the deep-rooted poverty in Northern Nigeria and foster sustainable development across the country. This paper examines the severe impact of poverty on Nigeria's development, focusing on the acute disparities between Northern and Southern regions. Despite Nigeria's abundant agricultural and natural resources and a relatively significant industrial sector, it remains one of the world's poorest countries, with up to 70% of its population living in poverty. Using data from the National Bureau of Statistics and other sources, the paper provides a comprehensive analysis and graphical representation of poverty rates. The 2022 National Multidimensional Poverty Index reveals that 63% of Nigerians, or over 133 million people, live in poverty, with Northern Nigeria experiencing the highest rates. Factors contributing to this include adverse economic policies, regional disparities, and demographic challenges. By integrating multiple sociological theories—structural functionalism, conflict theory, dependency theory, social exclusion theory, and human capital theory—the paper offers a thorough understanding of poverty's root causes in Northern Nigeria. It concludes with targeted recommendations for interventions to mitigate poverty and promote sustainable development across the country.

**Key words:** Poverty, Northern Nigeria, Development

## INTRODUCTION

Poverty remains one of the most pressing issues in Nigeria, significantly affecting the nation's development trajectory. Despite being endowed with abundant agricultural and natural resources, and a relatively significant industrial sector compared to other West African or Sub-Saharan African countries, Nigeria struggles with pervasive poverty. The complexities of the country's socioeconomic problems are a substantial barrier to harnessing these resources for development. According to Dansabo (2015), poverty in Nigeria undeniably affects the nation's development performance. The Human Development Index of 2013 classified Nigeria among the world's 20 poorest countries, a status that has shown little improvement over the years. Various estimates indicate that up to 70% of Nigerians live in poverty. Indicators such as literacy rates, access to safe water, nutrition, infant and maternal mortality, and the proportion of people living on less than \$2 per day (in current terms) consistently place Nigeria among the world's poorest nations. As per World Bank data from 2002, Nigeria lags behind countries like Kenya, Ghana, and Zambia in these critical indices of human development. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) plays a pivotal role in measuring and reporting on the poverty rate in Nigeria, primarily through the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The MPI evaluates poverty based on health, education, and living standards, identifying individuals as multidimensionally poor if they are deprived in at least one of these

dimensions. According to the World Bank Group (2019), the MPI provides a nuanced understanding of poverty that goes beyond income metrics alone.

In recent years, Nigeria has gained the unfortunate distinction of being labeled the world's poverty capital. The World Poverty Clock in November 2020 revealed that Nigeria had surpassed India in the number of people living in severe poverty, despite India's population being more than six times larger. Endpoverty.org reports that over 90 million Nigerians live in severe poverty, defined by the World Bank as living on less than \$1.90 per day. The prevalence of poverty is more pronounced in Northern Nigeria, where factors such as location, demographic structure, and lower educational attainment exacerbate the situation. The North faces fewer economic opportunities, leading to higher poverty rates regardless of individual or household characteristics. Additionally, households with more children and elderly persons are disproportionately affected, as the earnings of working-age adults are spread thin to support dependents. Gender disparities also play a role, with woman-headed households being more likely to live below the poverty line. The 2022 National Multidimensional Poverty Index highlights a troubling trend: 63% of Nigerians, or over 133 million people, are in poverty. This statistic reflects a retrogressive movement in the fight against poverty, influenced by adverse economic policies such as the naira redesign and the removal of subsidies without sufficient mitigating measures. These policies, implemented by the administrations of Presidents Muhammadu Buhari and Bola Ahmed Tinubu, have exacerbated the poverty situation, pushing more people below the poverty line.

The 2019/2020 Nigerian Living Standard Survey by the NBS shows that 82.9 million Nigerians, or 40.1% of the population, are poor. This figure has grown, with recent statistics indicating that 132.92 million people are multidimensionally poor, with the majority residing in Northern Nigeria. The region's poverty rates are higher than the national average, with 86.15 million people (55.5%) living in the North. Out of the 10 poorest states in Nigeria, eight are located in the North, particularly in the North-West.

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of poverty in Nigeria, focusing on Northern Nigeria. Using data from the NBS and other reputable sources, the paper will present an in-depth examination of the incidence and intensity of poverty across different regions and demographics. By understanding the underlying factors and current trends, this analysis seeks to highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions to address the deep-rooted poverty in Northern Nigeria and promote sustainable development across the country. This introduction lays the groundwork for a comprehensive exploration of poverty in Nigeria, particularly its impact on Northern regions. It outlines the nation's paradoxical situation of rich natural resources juxtaposed with staggering poverty rates, as highlighted by statistical data and multidimensional poverty indices. The introduction previews the paper's structured approach, which includes an analysis of socioeconomic factors contributing to poverty, insights from various theoretical frameworks such as structural functionalism and conflict theory, and empirical data from recent literature. By examining these components, the paper aims to provide a nuanced understanding of poverty in Nigeria and underscore the urgency of targeted interventions to alleviate poverty in Northern Nigeria while promoting sustainable development nationwide.

## Conceptual Definitions

### Poverty:

Poverty is a multidimensional condition characterized by a severe lack of resources and capabilities needed for individuals to maintain a minimum standard of living. It includes insufficient income, lack of access to basic services (such as healthcare, education, and clean water), poor living conditions, and vulnerability to economic, social, and environmental shocks. In the context of Nigeria, poverty affects a significant portion of the population, particularly in Northern regions.

### Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI):

The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is a measure used to assess poverty beyond income-based metrics, considering various deprivations that individuals face in health, education, and living standards. It identifies those who are deprived in at least one of these dimensions as multidimensionally poor. The MPI is a more holistic

approach to understanding poverty, capturing its complexity and providing a detailed analysis of poverty's various aspects.

### **Socioeconomic Problems:**

Socioeconomic problems refer to the challenges that arise from the interplay of social and economic factors, affecting the well-being of individuals and communities. These problems include unemployment, low income, inadequate education, poor healthcare, and lack of social services. In Nigeria, socioeconomic problems are compounded by corruption, poor governance, and regional disparities, which hinder development efforts.

### **Development Performance:**

Development performance is the measure of a country's progress in improving the well-being of its population through economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. It encompasses various indicators such as GDP growth, literacy rates, life expectancy, and poverty reduction. In Nigeria, development performance is significantly impacted by the high levels of poverty, particularly in the Northern regions.

### **Severe Poverty:**

Severe poverty, also known as extreme poverty, is defined by the World Bank as living on less than \$1.90 per day. It represents the most acute form of poverty, where individuals struggle to meet the most basic needs for survival, including food, shelter, and healthcare. In Nigeria, a substantial portion of the population, especially in the North, lives in severe poverty, facing extreme deprivation and vulnerability.

### **Economic Policies:**

Economic policies are the actions taken by a government to influence its economy through fiscal measures (taxation and spending), monetary policy (control of the money supply and interest rates), and regulatory practices. These policies aim to achieve macroeconomic stability, promote growth, and address issues such as inflation and unemployment. In Nigeria, certain economic policies, such as the naira redesign and subsidy removal, have had significant impacts on poverty levels and overall economic stability. Also issues of casual work and contract work affects economic policies in the country (Dabai & Novel, 20022)

### **Historical Factors of Poverty in Northern Nigeria**

Poverty in Northern Nigeria is the result of a combination of historical, socio-economic, and political factors that have evolved over time. Understanding these factors is crucial for addressing the persistent challenges in the region. Here are some key historical factors contributing to poverty in Northern Nigeria:

#### **Colonial Legacy**

##### **Indirect Rule and Administrative Practices:**

The British colonial administration implemented a policy of indirect rule, which reinforced the power of traditional leaders (emirs) and maintained existing feudal structures. This system did not prioritize education and economic development, particularly in rural areas, leading to long-term underdevelopment. The colonial administration's reliance on traditional rulers entrenched a socio-political structure that resisted modernization and educational reform (Acemoglu, Johnson, & Robinson, 2001).

##### **Economic Focus on the South:**

Colonial policies favored the southern regions for economic activities such as trade and resource extraction (e.g., oil in the Niger Delta). The north, predominantly agrarian, received less investment and infrastructure development, contributing to economic disparities. The legacy of these policies can still be seen today in the regional economic imbalances (Falola & Heaton, 2008).

## **Educational Disparities**

### **Late Introduction of Western Education:**

Western education was introduced later in the northern region compared to the south. The resistance from traditional leaders and the prioritization of Islamic education meant that the region lagged behind in literacy and educational attainment, impacting employability and economic opportunities (Mustapha, 2006).

### **Gender Inequality in Education:**

Cultural and religious norms in many parts of Northern Nigeria have historically limited girls' access to education. This has perpetuated cycles of poverty, as women with limited education have fewer economic opportunities. The gender disparity in education remains a significant barrier to socio-economic development (UNESCO, 2020).

## **Economic Policies and Agricultural Challenges**

### **Decline of Agriculture:**

The post-independence era saw a decline in agricultural productivity due to various factors, including poor government policies, lack of investment, and environmental challenges such as desertification. Given that the northern economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, this decline has had significant negative impacts. Mismanagement and neglect of agricultural policies have exacerbated rural poverty (World Bank, 2019).

### **Inadequate Infrastructure:**

The region suffers from poor infrastructure, including roads, electricity, and water supply, which hampers economic activities and access to markets. This infrastructure deficit is a legacy of both colonial neglect and subsequent government policies (NBS, 2021).

## **Political Instability and Conflict**

### **Ethno-Religious Conflicts:**

Northern Nigeria has experienced recurring ethno-religious conflicts, which have disrupted economic activities, displaced populations, and deterred investment. These conflicts are often rooted in competition for resources and political power. The persistent instability has profound economic consequences (Albert, 2001).

### **Boko Haram Insurgency:**

Since the early 2000s, the Boko Haram insurgency has devastated parts of the northeast, leading to widespread displacement, destruction of infrastructure, and loss of livelihoods. This has exacerbated poverty and hindered development efforts. The conflict has significantly strained humanitarian and developmental resources (International Crisis Group, 2019).

## **Governance and Corruption**

### **Poor Governance:**

Governance issues, including corruption and inefficient public administration, have contributed to the misallocation of resources and inadequate provision of public services. This has hampered efforts to address poverty and promote development in the north. The lack of accountability and transparency in governance continues to undermine development initiatives (Transparency International, 2020).

## **Environmental Factors**

### **Climate Change and Desertification:**

Northern Nigeria is increasingly affected by desertification and climate change, which reduce arable land and agricultural productivity. These environmental challenges further strain the livelihoods of communities dependent on farming and livestock. The impact of climate change on agricultural yields is a growing concern (FAO, 2018).

Addressing poverty in Northern Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach that considers these historical factors. Efforts should focus on improving education, investing in infrastructure, promoting good governance, and fostering economic diversification to create sustainable development and reduce poverty.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Poverty in Northern Nigeria can be understood through a multi-theoretical lens, incorporating structural functionalism, conflict theory, dependency theory, social exclusion theory, and human capital theory. Each of these theories offers unique insights into the underlying causes and dynamics of poverty in the region, contributing to a comprehensive analysis.

### **Structural Functionalism**

Structural functionalism helps explain how the persistence of poverty in Northern Nigeria is linked to the dysfunctions within various social institutions. According to this perspective, inadequate educational systems, ineffective healthcare services, and poor governance structures all play a role in maintaining societal stability, even as they perpetuate poverty (Thwala, 2022). These institutions are interdependent, and their failure to function effectively contributes to the overall equilibrium of society, thereby sustaining poverty levels.

### **Conflict Theory**

Conflict theory provides a critical perspective on the power dynamics and inequalities that contribute to poverty in Northern Nigeria. This theory argues that economic and political power is concentrated among a few elites, who exploit and oppress marginalized groups (Akinwale, 2021). In Nigeria, this is evident in the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities, with the Northern regions often being disadvantaged. The power struggles and corruption within the political system exacerbate these inequalities, leading to higher poverty rates in the North.

### **Dependency Theory**

Dependency theory posits that the underdevelopment of Northern Nigeria is a result of its dependent relationship with more developed regions and countries. This theory highlights how historical colonization and contemporary economic policies have created a dependency that hinders sustainable development (Okonkwo, 2020). Northern Nigeria's economic activities are often geared towards serving the interests of more developed regions, leading to persistent poverty and underdevelopment.

### **Social Exclusion Theory**

Social exclusion theory focuses on how certain groups are systematically marginalized from participating fully in economic, social, and political life. In Northern Nigeria, social exclusion is manifested in various forms, including discrimination, limited access to education and healthcare, and regional disparities (Ibrahim & Hassan, 2023). This exclusion prevents individuals and communities from accessing opportunities and resources, thereby perpetuating poverty.

### **Human Capital Theory**

Human capital theory emphasizes the importance of education and skills in improving economic outcomes and reducing poverty. In Northern Nigeria, the lack of investment in human capital development, such as education

---

and healthcare, significantly contributes to high poverty rates (Eze & Okoye, 2022). Improving human capital through better education and healthcare services is essential for reducing poverty and fostering economic development in the region.

### Poverty Profile in Northern Nigeria

It is undeniable that poverty in Nigeria affects the nation's development performance (Dansabo, 2015). The country has all it needs to develop, but it is unable to do so owing to the complexities of the country's socioeconomic problems. The country possesses abundant agricultural and natural resources, as well as a comparatively significant industrial sector as compared to other West African or Sub-Saharan African countries. According to the 2013 Human Development Index, Nigeria is one of the world's 20 poorest countries. According to estimates, up to 70% of Nigerians live in poverty. Using poverty indices such as literacy, access to safe water, nutrition, infant and maternal mortality, and the proportion of people living on less than \$2 per day (in the present day), Nigeria is shown to be one of the world's 25 poorest countries, trailing Kenya, Ghana, and Zambia (World Bank, 2002).

Poverty is measured using numerous indices. In Nigeria, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) undertakes the task of generating data on the poverty rate in the country. Such statistics are usually released as the Multidimensional Poverty Index. In the context of this inaugural lecture, the poverty index generated by the National Bureau of Statistics will be utilized to provide an analysis and graphical representation of the poverty rate in Nigeria. Multidimensional poverty is measured using indicators of health, education, and living standards. Individuals are identified as multidimensionally poor if they are deprived in at least one of the three dimensions (World Bank Group, 2019).

World Poverty Clock in November (2020) revealed that Nigeria will be the world's poverty capital. The estimate showed that Nigeria had surpassed India, which, according to United Nations figures, had 1.3 billion people - more than six times Nigeria's population. Endpoverty.org reports that over 90 million out of about 200 million Nigerians live in severe poverty. It is estimated that over 86 million people live in poverty in Nigeria, which is approximately 41 per cent of the country's population. The World Bank defines "**severe poverty**" as living on less than \$1.90 per day (₦3,000 equivalent). The World Bank reported that the poor are more likely to live in the north, in rural areas, and large households and to have lower educational attainment. Both location and the demographic structure of the household play a significant role in defining a person's poverty status. The risk of being poor is greater in the North irrespective of individual or household characteristics, perhaps indicative of fewer economic opportunities. Individuals with higher education have significantly lower chances of being poor, which reflects higher household incomes. Persons living in households with more children and elderly persons are also more likely to be poor because the earnings of the few working-age adults are needed to support the many dependents. Though men show a higher probability of being poor than women, individuals living in woman-headed households are more likely to be living below the poverty line. In addition, poor housing conditions and low asset ownership are correlates of poverty. There are large gender gaps in Nigeria across the domains of human capital, economic empowerment, and voice and agency. These gaps tend to be more pronounced in the north (World Bank Group 2019).

Currently, the 2022 National Multidimensional Poverty Index puts Nigeria's rate at 63% which implies that over 133 million Nigerians are in poverty (NBS, 2022). This statistic is suggestive of a retrogressive trend in the fight against poverty. This is not unconnected with the adverse economic policies of Muhammadu Buhari's administration such as the naira redesign and the most recent economic uncertainties foisted on Nigerians by the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration as regards subsidy removal and floating the nation's legal tender which have all worsened the poverty situation in the country. The sudden removal of subsidy without any provision to cushion the knock-on effects has devastated many Nigerians and still pushed more people below the poverty line (Abubakar et.al. 2023).

2019/2020 Nigerian living standard survey released by the National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, shows that 82.9 million (40.1%) Nigerians are poor with food inflation, heightened insecurity, and corruption slowing growth and increasing poverty (Eggi et.al, 2022). Sliding into an extreme condition, statistics published by the NBS (2022) reveal that 132.92 million people are multi-dimensionally poor in Nigeria, while 86.15 million people

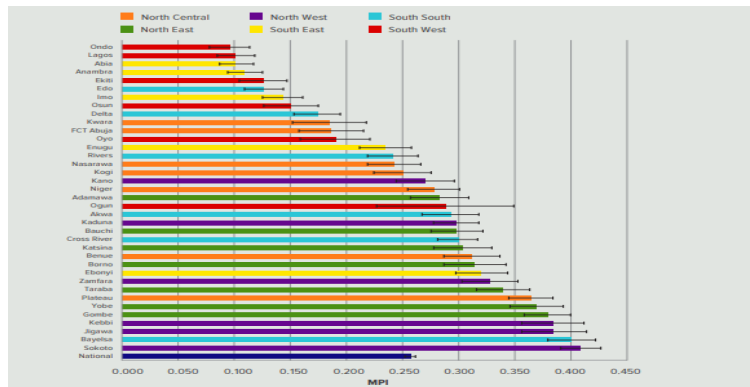
(55.5%) are found in northern Nigeria. This rate of poverty in northern Nigeria exceeds the 2019/2020 statistics of overall 82.9 million poor Nigerians. The statistics further show that out of the 10 poorest states in Nigeria, 8 are found in northern Nigeria and 4 states in the north-west. This explains how poverty is rife in the region. Below is a graphical presentation of the level of poverty in the region.

Table 1: Multi-dimensional poverty by zone in Nigeria

| Area          | MPI   | Incidence (H, %) | Intensity (A, %) | Population share (%) | Number of poor people (million) |
|---------------|-------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| National      | 0.257 | 62.9             | 40.9             | 100.0                | 132.92                          |
| North Central | 0.272 | 66.3             | 41.0             | 14.4                 | 20.19                           |
| North East    | 0.324 | 76.5             | 42.4             | 12.7                 | 20.47                           |
| North West    | 0.324 | 75.8             | 42.7             | 28.4                 | 45.49                           |
| South East    | 0.183 | 49.0             | 37.3             | 10.5                 | 10.85                           |
| South South   | 0.250 | 62.6             | 39.8             | 14.8                 | 19.66                           |
| South West    | 0.151 | 40.0             | 37.7             | 19.2                 | 16.27                           |

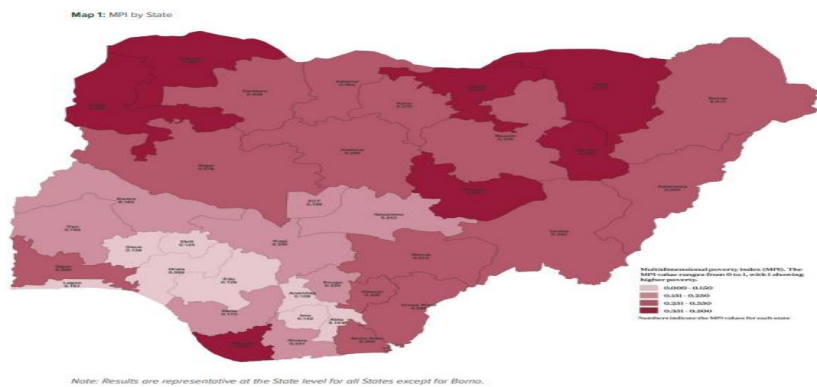
Source: NBS 2022

Table 1 shows that 65% of poor people—86 million people—live in the North, while 35%—nearly 47 million—live in the South. In general, a disparity between North and South is evident in both the incidence and intensity of multidimensional poverty, with the North being poorer. North-west was evident to be poorer, even though the north-west has the highest human population, the representative sample drawn across all states and used in drafting the report shows that the region is underserved and deprived of human infrastructure sufficient to alleviate the poverty majority of its population.



Source: NBS 2022

Fig. 1: Multidimensional Poverty Index by states in Nigeria



Source: NBS 2022

Fig 2: Multidimensional Poverty Index by states in Nigeria

The figure shows that poverty levels across States vary significantly. In terms of the incidence of multidimensional poverty, in Ondo, Lagos and Abia, less than 30% of the population is multidimensionally poor; in Sokoto, 91% of the population is multidimensionally poor.

### **Comparative Analysis of Poverty in Northern and Southern Nigeria**

Poverty in Nigeria exhibits significant regional disparities, with Northern Nigeria experiencing higher poverty rates compared to the Southern regions. This comparative analysis explores these differences by examining statistical data and applying relevant sociological theories. The analysis highlights the socioeconomic factors, structural inequalities, and historical contexts that contribute to these disparities.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reveals stark contrasts in poverty levels between Northern and Southern Nigeria. The 2022 National Multidimensional Poverty Index indicates that 63% of Nigerians, or over 133 million people, live in poverty. This statistic includes significant regional differences:

- Northern Nigeria: 65% of poor people, or approximately 86 million individuals, reside in the North.
- Southern Nigeria: 35% of poor people, or nearly 47 million individuals, live in the South (NBS, 2022).

The incidence of multidimensional poverty varies considerably among states:

- Northern States: Sokoto, with 91% of its population living in multidimensional poverty, is the poorest state.
- Southern States: States like Ondo, Lagos, and Abia have less than 30% of their populations living in multidimensional poverty (NBS, 2022).

Theoretically, Structural functionalism suggests that poverty in Northern Nigeria results from dysfunctions in social institutions such as education and healthcare. The North's inadequate educational systems and poor healthcare services contribute to its higher poverty rates. Thwala (2022) emphasizes that these institutional failures disrupt societal equilibrium and maintain high poverty levels in the region.

Conflict theory highlights the role of power dynamics and resource inequalities in perpetuating poverty. In Nigeria, political corruption and economic exploitation disproportionately affect the North. Akinwale (2021) argues that the concentration of economic and political power among elites in the South exacerbates resource distribution disparities, leading to higher poverty rates in the North.

Dependency theory explains that Northern Nigeria's underdevelopment is partly due to its dependent economic relationship with more developed Southern regions and external economies. Okonkwo (2020) points out that Northern Nigeria's economic activities often serve the interests of more developed regions, limiting local economic growth and perpetuating poverty.

Social exclusion theory focuses on the systematic marginalization of Northern Nigerians from full participation in economic, social, and political life. Ibrahim and Hassan (2023) highlight how regional discrimination and limited access to education and healthcare services in the North contribute to high poverty rates, reinforcing social and economic inequalities.

Human capital theory underscores the importance of investing in education and healthcare to improve economic outcomes. Eze and Okoye (2022) note that the North's lag in educational attainment and healthcare access significantly contributes to its higher poverty rates compared to the South. Enhancing human capital through better education and healthcare is crucial for poverty reduction in Northern Nigeria.

### **Comparative Analysis**

- Economic Opportunities: The South benefits from better economic opportunities, infrastructure, and investment, leading to lower poverty rates. In contrast, the North suffers from limited economic activities and opportunities, exacerbated by political and social instability.



- Education and Healthcare: Southern Nigeria has better educational and healthcare facilities, contributing to lower poverty rates. The North's inadequate services in these sectors are major factors in its higher poverty levels.
- Governance and Corruption: Corruption and poor governance disproportionately impact the North, where political instability and resource mismanagement are more pronounced. This situation hinders economic development and poverty alleviation efforts.
- Social and Cultural Factors: Cultural practices and social norms in the North, such as early marriages and gender disparities in education, further limit economic participation and contribute to higher poverty rates.

The comparative analysis of poverty in Northern and Southern Nigeria reveals significant regional disparities driven by structural, economic, and social factors. Addressing these disparities requires targeted interventions that focus on improving education, healthcare, and economic opportunities in the North. By understanding the multifaceted nature of poverty through various sociological theories, policymakers can develop more effective strategies to reduce poverty and promote equitable development across Nigeria.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of poverty in Nigeria, particularly in the Northern regions, reveals a complex interplay of structural, economic, and social factors that contribute to persistent and multidimensional poverty. The stark regional disparities between Northern and Southern Nigeria are evident in various metrics, including education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and governance. By applying multiple sociological theories, we gain a comprehensive understanding of how institutional dysfunctions, power dynamics, economic dependencies, social exclusion, and inadequate human capital investments perpetuate poverty in Northern Nigeria.

Structural functionalism highlights the role of dysfunctional social institutions, while conflict theory emphasizes power imbalances and resource inequalities. Dependency theory explains the historical and ongoing economic dependencies that hinder development, and social exclusion theory sheds light on the systemic marginalization of Northern Nigerians. Human capital theory underscores the critical need for investments in education and healthcare to improve economic outcomes and reduce poverty.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the multifaceted nature of poverty in Northern Nigeria, the following recommendations are proposed:

### Strengthening Educational Systems

- Investment in Education: Increase funding for primary, secondary, and tertiary education in Northern Nigeria. Building more schools, training qualified teachers, and providing educational materials can help improve educational outcomes.
- Vocational Training: Implement vocational and technical training programs to equip individuals with skills that match the labor market demands, thereby enhancing employability and economic self-sufficiency.

### Improving Healthcare Services

- Healthcare Infrastructure: Invest in healthcare infrastructure, including building new hospitals and clinics, especially in rural areas of the North. Ensure these facilities are well-equipped and staffed with qualified healthcare professionals.
- Access to Services: Improve access to essential healthcare services, including maternal and child health services, vaccinations, and preventive care. Implement community health programs to reach underserved populations.

## **Enhancing Economic Opportunities**

- **Agricultural Development:** Given the North's agricultural potential, invest in modern agricultural practices, provide access to farming inputs, and support agribusiness initiatives. This can boost productivity and income for rural households.
- **Entrepreneurship Support:** Promote small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by providing access to microfinance, business training, and mentorship programs. Support entrepreneurial initiatives that create jobs and stimulate local economies.

## **Addressing Governance and Corruption**

- **Transparent Governance:** Implement policies that promote transparency and accountability in governance. Strengthen institutions that combat corruption and ensure that public funds are used effectively for development projects.
- **Decentralization:** Decentralize decision-making processes to empower local governments, allowing for more context-specific and effective poverty alleviation strategies.

## **Reducing Social Exclusion**

- **Inclusive Policies:** Develop policies that address the specific needs of marginalized groups, including women, ethnic minorities, and rural communities. Ensure that these groups have equal access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. This will minimize the double exploitation suffered by marginalized group (Lyndon & Dabai, 2024)
- **Community Engagement:** Engage local communities in the planning and implementation of development projects. This participatory approach ensures that interventions are culturally appropriate and meet the actual needs of the people.

## **Fostering Human Capital Development**

- **Health and Nutrition Programs:** Implement programs that address malnutrition and improve overall health, particularly for children and pregnant women. This is crucial for enhancing cognitive development and educational attainment.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Promote lifelong learning opportunities, including adult education and continuous professional development, to help individuals adapt to changing economic conditions and job markets. Also provide opportunities for personal growth of workers like additional qualifications, workshops and training can motivate poor people and bring about growth and development (Ibrahim & Lyndon, 2023)

## **Digital Literacy and Education:**

Implement comprehensive digital literacy programs aimed at youth and adults to equip them with essential technological skills. Increased digital literacy can enhance employability and open up new job opportunities in the tech sector. Similar initiatives have been successful in other developing regions, such as India's Digital India program, which aims to bridge the digital divide (Ghosh, 2020). Expand e-government services to streamline administrative processes and improve access to government services. Reduced bureaucratic inefficiencies and increased transparency in public service delivery. Estonia's e-government model, which has significantly reduced corruption and improved public service delivery (Margetts & Naumann, 2017). Invest in expanding internet infrastructure, especially in rural and underserved areas. Enhanced connectivity can facilitate access to information, online education, and e-commerce opportunities. Rwanda's investment in broadband infrastructure has been pivotal in promoting ICT and boosting economic activities (Nsengimana, 2015).

### **Establish and Expand Microfinance Institutions:**

Encourage the establishment and expansion of MFIs to provide small loans and financial services to underserved populations. Increased access to credit for small-scale entrepreneurs and farmers can stimulate local economic activities. The Grameen Bank model in Bangladesh has successfully lifted millions out of poverty through microloans (Yunus, 2007). Implement financial literacy programs to educate people on managing finances, savings, and investment. Better financial management can lead to improved economic stability and reduced poverty rates. Financial literacy initiatives in Kenya have helped improve financial inclusion and economic outcomes for the poor (Wambua & Datche, 2013). Promote the use of mobile banking and digital payment platforms to increase financial inclusion. Enhanced financial inclusion can facilitate easier access to banking services and reduce transaction costs. M-Pesa in Kenya has revolutionized financial transactions and improved economic conditions for many (Jack & Suri, 2011).

### **Entrepreneurship Training and Support Programs:**

Establish entrepreneurship training programs to provide skills and mentorship to aspiring entrepreneurs. Increased entrepreneurial activity can lead to job creation and economic diversification. Programs like the Youth Entrepreneurship Support (YES) program in Ghana have successfully fostered entrepreneurial skills among youth (Owusu-Ansah & Poku, 2012). Create funds and grants specifically targeted at supporting startups and small businesses. Access to capital is critical for business growth and sustainability. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) provides funding and support to SMEs, fostering economic growth (SMEDAN, 2020). Facilitate access to local and international markets through trade fairs, online platforms, and networking events. Expanded market access can lead to increased sales and business expansion. Alibaba's e-commerce platform has enabled small businesses in China to reach global markets, significantly boosting their revenues (Qiang et al., 2013).

Addressing the entrenched poverty in Northern Nigeria requires a multifaceted and coordinated approach that targets the root causes identified through various sociological theories. By strengthening education and healthcare systems, enhancing economic opportunities, promoting good governance, reducing social exclusion, and investing in human capital development, Nigeria can make significant strides in reducing poverty and promoting equitable development across its regions. These efforts will not only improve the quality of life for millions of Nigerians but also contribute to the overall stability and prosperity of the nation. References

## **REFERENCES**

1. Abubakar, A.D., Yahaya, U.S., Musa, Y.J., Abdulhamid, J.B., Kabiru, S.S. (2023). A Sociological Insight on the Factors Responsible for Persistence of Poverty in Nigeria. *Jalingo Journal of Social and Management Sciences*. 5(1): 277-290.
2. Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., & Robinson, J. A. (2001). The Colonial Origins of Comparative
3. Development: An Empirical Investigation. *American Economic Review*, 91(5), 1369-1401.
4. Akinwale, A. A. (2021). The Political Economy of Poverty in Nigeria: A Conflict Theory Perspective. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 15(3), 76-89.
5. Albert, I. O. (2001). Explaining the Intensification of Ethnic Conflicts in Nigeria. In I. O. Albert (Ed.), *Introduction to Third-Party Intervention in Community Conflicts*.
6. Dabai, I. U., & Novel, L. (2022). Curbing casualisation of labour in the financial institutions: A
7. study of banks in Sokoto, Nigeria. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 14(2), 47-54.
8. Dansabo, M.T. (2015). Assessing the Development Impact of Poverty Reduction Programme in Sokoto, *The Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 13(1), 34-67.
9. Dansabo, M. T., Dabai, U. I., & Jabbar, I. R. A. (2024). Institutional Mitigation Strategies in
10. Quitting Banditry: Pathways, Options and Way Forward. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 8(1), 2558-2569.
11. Eze, P., & Okoye, U. (2022). Human Capital Development and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria: A Regional Analysis. *Economics of Education Review*, 41(2), 103-117.
12. Falola, T., & Heaton, M. M. (2008). *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge University Press.

13. Mustapha, A. R. (2006). Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Nigeria. UNRISD Research Paper.
14. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2018). The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World.
15. Ghosh, A. (2020). Digital India: Vision, Challenges and Opportunities. International Journal of Science and Research.
16. Science and Research.
17. Ibrahim, J., & Hassan, M. (2023). Social Exclusion and Poverty in Northern Nigeria: Implications for Development Policy. International Journal of Social Welfare, 32(1), 58-73.
18. Ibrahim, U. D., & Lyndon, N. (2023). Why Casualisation of Labour in Cement Company of Northern Nigeria Plc, Sokoto-Nigeria. International Online Journal of Language, Communication, and Humanities, 6(1), 101-111.
19. Northern Nigeria Plc, Sokoto-Nigeria. International Online Journal of Language, Communication, and Humanities, 6(1), 101-111.
20. International Crisis Group. (2019). Facing the Challenge of the Islamic State in West Africa Province.
21. Jack, W., & Suri, T. (2011). Mobile Money: The Economics of M-Pesa. NBER Working Paper.
22. Lyndon, N., & Dabai, U. I. (2024). Exploring the performance of casual workers of banks in Sokoto-Nigeria. Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development, 8(4), 3305.
23. Sokoto-Nigeria. Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development, 8(4), 3305.
24. Margetts, H., & Naumann, A. (2017). Government as a Platform: What Can Estonia Show the World? European Policy Analysis.
25. World? European Policy Analysis.
26. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2022). National Multidimensional Poverty Index.
27. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2021). Nigerian Poverty Report.
28. National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy. Washington, D.C.
29. Nsengimana, J. (2015). Rwanda's ICT Sector: An Overview. World Bank.
30. Owusu-Ansah, F. E., & Poku, K. (2012). Entrepreneurship Education, a Panacea to Graduate Unemployment in Ghana? International Journal of Humanities and Social Science.
31. Unemployment in Ghana? International Journal of Humanities and Social Science.
32. Okonkwo, R. O. (2020). Globalization and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Dependency Theory Approach. Journal of Developing Societies, 36(2), 145-162.
33. Qiang, C. Z., Clarke, G. R., & Halewood, N. J. (2013). The Role of Information and Communication Technology in Small and Medium Enterprise Development. World Bank.
34. SMEDAN. (2020). Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria: Annual Report.
35. Thwala, W. D. (2022). Poverty in Developing Countries: Structural Functionalist Perspective. Journal of Social Development in Africa, 37(1), 45-62.
36. Transparency International. (2020). Corruption Perceptions Index.
37. UNESCO. (2020). Global Education Monitoring Report.
38. Wambua, F., & Datche, E. (2013). Financial Literacy and Financial Inclusion: A Case Study of Kenya. Journal of Economics and International Finance.
39. Kenya. Journal of Economics and International Finance.
40. World Bank (2002). World Development Report, 2000/2001 Washington DC.
41. World Bank Group (2019). Nigeria on the Move: A Journey to Inclusive Growth.
42. World Bank, (2022). Nigeria Poverty Assessment. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/03/21/afw-deep-structural-reforms-guided-by-evidence-are-urgently-needed-to-lift-millions-of-nigerians-out-of-poverty>. Accessed on 10/8/2022.
43. World Bank. (2019). Nigeria Economic Update.
44. Yunus, M. (2007). Creating a World Without Poverty: Social Business and the Future of Capitalism. Public Affairs.