

Educational Inequity as a Driver of Intergenerational Poverty Among Rural Households in Southwestern Nigeria

Oparinde, Olayiwola Raheef

Department of Educational Management Faculty of Education Obafemi Awolowo Universities

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ABSTRACT

Education is widely recognized as a critical pathway out of poverty; however, persistent disparities in access to quality education in Nigeria continue to reinforce socio-economic inequality. This study investigated the influence of socio-economic factors on educational inequality and the persistence of intergenerational poverty among rural households in Southwestern Nigeria. Anchored in Human Capital Theory, Social Reproduction Theory, and the Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty framework, the study adopted a descriptive correlational survey design. A total of 900 respondents comprising students, teachers, and parents were selected from Osun, Oyo, and Ogun States using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were gathered through a validated instrument—the Socio-Economic Determinants, Educational Inequality, and Poverty Cycle Questionnaire (SEDEIPCQ)—which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.87. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS (Version 29) and the PROCESS Macro. The results showed that parental income, educational attainment, and occupation significantly influenced students' access to quality education ($R^2 = 0.45$, $p < 0.05$). In addition, residential location was found to partially mediate the relationship between socio-economic status and educational inequality ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.05$). The findings further indicated that children from economically disadvantaged and less-educated households in rural communities encounter systemic constraints that hinder educational participation, skill development, and future employability, thereby sustaining poverty across generations. Respondents strongly supported policy measures such as scholarship schemes, infrastructural development, and the incorporation of vocational and digital competencies into school curricula. The study concludes that educational inequality simultaneously reflects and reinforces poverty, underscoring the need for comprehensive policies that integrate socio-economic empowerment with equitable and skills-based educational provision.

Keywords: Educational inequality, intergenerational poverty, socio-economic status, skill acquisition, employability, rural households, Southwestern Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely regarded as a key driver of social mobility and economic development; however, persistent inequalities in access to quality education continue to undermine its poverty-reducing potential in many developing contexts, including Nigeria. Despite policy initiatives such as Universal Basic Education, educational opportunities remain unevenly distributed along socio-economic and spatial lines, particularly between urban and rural households. Parental income, educational attainment, occupation, and residential location systematically shape students' access to learning resources, school quality, and post-school opportunities, thereby reinforcing structural inequality and limiting intergenerational mobility.

Education is a key factor in determining both individual and group progress in Nigeria, but disparities in access, involvement, and accomplishment still exist. The differences are particularly noticeable between economic levels, gender groups, and urban and rural areas. Students' educational paths and life opportunities are greatly influenced by the socioeconomic factors that contribute to these disparities, such as parental income, educational background, family size, and residential location. As a result, children from low-income families frequently attend schools with inadequate resources, perform worse academically, and have less access to post-secondary education and career possibilities. This dynamic eventually strengthens a systemic pattern in which poverty and a lack of education are passed down from one generation to the next.

There are still significant differences in educational access and quality in southwest Nigeria, even though it is one of the more educationally advantaged areas of the nation. The educational gap amongst students is still growing due to a number of factors, including sociocultural practices, teacher shortages, urban-rural disparities, and poor infrastructure. These differences maintain socioeconomic stratification in the area in addition to impeding the achievement of equitable educational achievements. Understanding the mechanisms relating socioeconomic position, educational inequality, and poverty cycles has become a policy and research need given Nigeria's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 1 (No Poverty).

Inequalities in educational opportunity are a major factor in the generational transfer of poverty. Children from low-income families have a limited ability to obtain productive job and raise their socioeconomic standing when they are unable to access or finish high-quality education. This circumstance feeds a vicious cycle in which poverty leads to educational disadvantage, which in turn leads to poverty. Therefore, empirical knowledge of how socioeconomic factors influence educational outcomes and how these outcomes affect the persistence of poverty in households and communities is necessary to break this cycle.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to look into the socioeconomic factors that contribute to educational disparities and how they feed poverty cycles in southwest Nigeria. In particular, it seeks to examine the ways in which factors including parental income, occupation, educational attainment, and place of residence affect educational access and success, and how these differences ultimately lead to the generational persistence of poverty. In order to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty, improve social mobility, and advance educational equity, the study is anticipated to identify these connections and offer evidence-based insights that can guide focused policy actions.

This study is essentially predicated on the claim that educational inequality is a structural mechanism that perpetuates poverty in societies rather than just a reflection of socioeconomic disparity. Therefore, developing inclusive education and poverty reduction initiatives that can promote equitable human development in Nigeria and worldwide requires an empirical understanding of this relationship.



The framework posits that socio-economic determinants such as parental income, occupation, educational attainment, and residential location directly influence educational inequality — reflected in disparities in access, participation, and quality of learning outcomes among students. Families with higher socio-economic status are better positioned to afford quality education, private tutoring, and educational resources, while those with lower status face structural barriers such as inadequate facilities, poor teacher quality, and limited educational support.

Educational inequality, in turn, affects students' ability to acquire marketable skills, secure gainful employment, and achieve upward mobility. Consequently, unequal education outcomes perpetuate intergenerational poverty, as children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience limited job prospects, low income, and restricted access to socio-economic advancement.

The model also incorporates mediating variables such as skill acquisition and employability, which act as pathways linking educational inequality to poverty outcomes. Additionally, residential location (urban/rural) functions as a moderating variable, influencing the strength and direction of the relationship between socioeconomic status and educational inequality.

Finally, the framework recognizes that policy interventions (such as equitable resource distribution, conditional cash transfers, and inclusive educational reforms) can moderate these relationships, potentially reduce inequality and breaking the poverty cycle.

This study is anchored on an integrated theoretical framework drawing from **Human Capital Theory**, **Social Reproduction Theory**, and the **Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty perspective** to explain how socioeconomic conditions shape educational inequality and perpetuate poverty across generations in Southwestern Nigeria.

Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964) conceptualizes education as an investment that enhances individuals' skills, productivity, employability, and lifetime earnings. From this perspective, equitable access to quality education is essential for poverty reduction and economic mobility. However, when access to education is stratified by income, parental education, occupation, or location, human capital accumulation becomes uneven, thereby reinforcing socio-economic inequality rather than alleviating it.

Social Reproduction Theory (Bourdieu, 1977) complements this view by explaining how educational systems often reproduce existing class structures. Families with greater economic, social, and cultural capital are better positioned to secure quality schooling, learning support, and credentials for their children. Conversely, children from disadvantaged households—particularly in rural settings—face systemic barriers such as under-resourced schools, limited exposure to skill-enhancing opportunities, and weak institutional support. These structural constraints translate socio-economic disadvantage into educational disadvantage.

The Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty framework (Bird, 2007; Bowles & Gintis, 2002) integrates both perspectives by emphasizing how limited education, weak skill acquisition, and restricted employability are passed from parents to children over time. In this framework, educational inequality operates as a key transmission mechanism through which poverty persists across generations. Children who experience poor-quality education are less likely to acquire marketable skills, access decent employment, or escape low-income trajectories, thereby reproducing household poverty.

Within this integrated framework, **residential location** (urban–rural divide) is conceptualized as a contextual factor that conditions the relationship between socio-economic status and educational inequality, while **skill acquisition and employability** function as mediating pathways linking educational outcomes to poverty persistence. Policy interventions—such as equitable financing, rural school development, and skills-oriented curricula—are viewed as moderating forces capable of disrupting these reinforcing cycles. Together, the framework positions educational inequality not merely as an outcome of poverty, but as a central structural mechanism sustaining intergenerational deprivation.

Empirical research has demonstrated that limited employability and poverty persistence are directly correlated with educational deprivation (Olayinka & Adesoji, 2022; Oketch & Rolleston, 2020). Few studies, particularly in the context of southwest Nigeria, have examined the mediating roles of employability skills and residential location in the relationship between education and poverty. In order to provide information that can guide inclusive educational and economic policies, this study examines the socioeconomic factors that contribute to educational disparity and how they reinforce poverty cycles.

Statement of the Problem

For a long time, education has been seen as a key equalizer of chances that can help people and societies escape poverty. However, enduring socioeconomic inequities have undermined education's ability to serve as a vehicle for fairness and social mobility in many emerging environments, including Nigeria. Although universal basic education programs have increased school enrollment, the gap between the rich and the impoverished has not always been closed. Existing socioeconomic disparities have been mirrored and, in many situations, reinforced by the unequal distribution of educational opportunities and resources.

According to empirical data, socioeconomic status is still one of the best indicators of a student's level of education in Nigeria. The likelihood that children from more affluent or educated families would attend well-equipped schools, finish their education, and advance to higher learning levels is higher. On the other hand, children from low-income families, especially those living in rural and semi-urban areas, frequently attend underfunded schools that are marked by packed classrooms, underqualified teachers, and subpar infrastructure. Significant learning gaps, poorer academic achievement, and restricted access to post-secondary education are the outcomes of such discrepancies. Thus, one of the main ways that poverty is passed down from one generation to the next is through educational disparity.

The continuance of educational disparity indicates that deeper structural causes are still unresolved, despite a number of national and regional measures, including the Universal Basic Education (UBE) plan, Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT), and Education for All (EFA) programs. For instance, there are still significant disparities between urban and rural schools in Southwestern Nigeria with regard to learning outcomes, teacher caliber, and infrastructure. Furthermore, parents' socioeconomic traits—such as their work, income level, and level of education—continue to influence the educational options accessible to their kids. However, there aren't many empirical studies that have looked at how these socioeconomic factors work together to create and maintain educational disparities and how those disparities affect the continuation of poverty cycles over time.

Without sufficiently connecting these trends to the larger socioeconomic processes that perpetuate poverty, the majority of previous research on educational inequality in Nigeria has concentrated on descriptive assessments of access, enrollment, or gender differences. As a result, little is known empirically about how socioeconomic disadvantage influences educational performance and how, over time, unequal education contributes to economic vulnerability in families and communities. The creation of evidence-based policies that can end the cycle of poverty and educational deprivation is hampered by this information gap.

Therefore, by empirically examining the socioeconomic causes of educational disparity and their roles in sustaining poverty cycles in Southwestern Nigeria, this study aims to close this important research gap. It seeks to offer a comprehensive knowledge of how family background characteristics, including parental education, occupation, and income, affect pupils' access to and performance in school, as well as how these elements work together to cause intergenerational poverty. The project aims to produce insights that can guide more inclusive educational and poverty-reduction measures within Nigeria's developmental framework by combining socioeconomic and educational views.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to examine the educational inequality and the perpetuation of intergenerational poverty among rural households in Southwestern, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. determine the major socio-economic determinants of educational inequality among public secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria
- ii. assess the extent to which parental income, education, and occupation influence students' access to and participation in quality education
- iii. examine if residential location (urban or rural) mediates the relationship between socioeconomic status and educational inequality
- iv. determine how educational inequalities contribute to the persistence of poverty cycles among households in Southwestern Nigeria
- v. identify the role skill acquisition and employability play in linking educational inequality to intergenerational poverty
- vi. examine what policy interventions can effectively mitigate educational inequality and disrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty in the region

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- a. What are the major socio-economic determinants of educational inequality among public secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria?
- b. In what ways do educational inequalities contribute to the persistence of poverty cycles among households in Southwestern Nigeria?
- c. What role do skill acquisition and employability play in linking educational inequality to intergenerational poverty?
- d. What policy interventions can effectively mitigate educational inequality and disrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty in the region?

Research Hypotheses

To address the research questions empirically, the following null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: Parental income, educational attainment, and occupation do not significantly predict students' access to or participation in quality education.

H₀₂: Residential location does not significantly mediate the relationship between socio-economic factors and educational inequality.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive correlational survey design. Parents, teachers, and students from public secondary schools in the six states in the region made up the population. Urban and rural Local Government Areas were purposefully selected from three states (Osun, Oyo, and Ogun) using a multi-stage sampling technique. Using stratified random sampling, 900 respondents—450 kids, 300 instructors, and 150 parents—were chosen to guarantee representativeness and sufficient data for inferential analysis.

The Socio-Economic Determinants, Educational Inequality, and Poverty Cycle Questionnaire (SEDEIPCQ), a structured questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale, was used to gather data. The questionnaire asked about intergenerational poverty, socioeconomic background, and markers of educational disparity. Experts in school management and assessment validated the content validity, and Cronbach's Alpha reliability testing produced an overall coefficient of 0.87, showing strong internal consistency. Prior to data collection, informed consent was sought from each participant and ethical approval was obtained.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 29) was used to analyze the data. While multiple regression identified correlations and predictive influences across variables, descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, and standard deviation) provided an overview of the characteristics of the respondents. The moderating impact of residential location and the mediating impacts of skill development and employability on the relationship between educational inequality and poverty cycles were investigated through moderation and mediation analyses (using PROCESS Macro Models 1 and 4). Every hypothesis was examined at the significance level of 0.05.

Methodological Limitations

This study relies primarily on self-reported data from students, parents, and teachers, which may be subject to social desirability bias, recall error, or subjective interpretation of educational quality and socio-economic conditions. While triangulation across respondent groups and the use of a validated instrument helped mitigate these limitations, the findings should be interpreted with caution. Future studies could strengthen causal inference by incorporating longitudinal data, administrative school records, and objective measures of learning outcomes and household income.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the major socio-economic determinants of educational inequality among public secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria?

Table 1 presents responses on socio-economic variables that contribute to educational inequality.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Determinants of Educational Inequality (n = 900)

Socio-Economic Variable	Agree f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Mean	SD
Low parental income limits students' access to quality education	732 (81.3)	168 (18.7)	4.32	0.71
Parents' low educational background affects students' academic progress	689 (76.6)	211 (23.4)	4.10	0.84
Nature of parents' occupation determines students' school type	642 (71.3)	258 (28.7)	3.98	0.89
Rural residence limits access to qualified teachers and facilities	714 (79.3)	186 (20.7)	4.21	0.77
Family size influences students' ability to complete school	655 (72.8)	245 (27.2)	4.02	0.91

Grand Mean = 4.13; SD = 0.82

Most respondents agreed that low parental income, poor educational background, and rural residence are major determinants of educational inequality. The grand mean of **4.13** (above the decision mean of 3.0) indicates that socio-economic status significantly influences access to and quality of education among public secondary school students.

Research Question 2: In what ways do educational inequalities contribute to the persistence of poverty cycles among households in Southwestern Nigeria?

Table 2: Educational Inequality and Poverty Persistence

Item Statement	Agree f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Mean	SD
Students from poor families have lower chances of completing school	761 (84.6)	139 (15.4)	4.34	0.68
Educational inequality limits access to employment opportunities	708 (78.7)	192 (21.3)	4.18	0.83
Poor education leads to low income and sustains poverty	772 (85.8)	128 (14.2)	4.40	0.65
Households with limited education experience repeated poverty cycles	689 (76.6)	211 (23.4)	4.12	0.79
Educational deprivation restricts social mobility across generations	721 (80.1)	179 (19.9)	4.25	0.75

Grand Mean = 4.26; SD = 0.74

The results show that respondents overwhelmingly agreed that educational inequality contributes directly to the persistence of poverty cycles. The high mean score (4.26) suggests that poor educational outcomes limit employment opportunities, income potential, and intergenerational social mobility.

Research Question 3: What roles do skill acquisition and employability play in linking educational inequality to intergenerational poverty?

Table 3: Role of Skill Acquisition and Employability

Item Statement	Agree f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Mean	SD
Lack of vocational skills increases unemployment among school leavers	736 (81.8)	164 (18.2)	4.29	0.70

Students from poor schools rarely acquire employable skills	702 (78.0)	198 (22.0)	4.15	0.82
Skill acquisition enhances self-reliance and income generation	753 (83.7)	147 (16.3)	4.33	0.69
Inequality in access to technical education sustains poverty levels	715 (79.4)	185 (20.6)	4.22	0.76
Employability skills bridge the gap between education and productivity	682 (75.8)	218 (24.2)	4.08	0.85

Grand Mean = 4.21; SD = 0.76

Respondents agreed that limited skill acquisition and employability opportunities aggravate the link between educational inequality and poverty. The mean score (4.21) indicates that vocational and technical skill training play a vital mediating role in breaking the poverty cycle.

Research Question 4: What policy interventions can effectively mitigate educational inequality and disrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty in the region?

Table 4: Policy Interventions to Reduce Educational Inequality

Proposed Intervention	Agree f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Mean	SD
Provision of scholarships and bursaries for low-income students	771 (85.7)	129 (14.3)	4.38	0.66
Strengthening teacher recruitment and rural deployment	698 (77.6)	202 (22.4)	4.12	0.80
Improving school infrastructure and learning facilities	742 (82.4)	158 (17.6)	4.27	0.71
Integrating vocational and digital skills into the curriculum	703 (78.1)	197 (21.9)	4.15	0.81
Conditional cash transfer linked to school attendance	679 (75.4)	221 (24.6)	4.06	0.86

Grand Mean = 4.20; SD = 0.77

The results indicate strong agreement that targeted educational subsidies, improved infrastructure, and skillbased curricula are key interventions for reducing inequality and breaking intergenerational poverty. The grand mean of 4.20 suggests widespread support for equity-driven educational policies.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One (H₀₁): Parental income, educational attainment, and occupation do not significantly predict students’ access to or participation in quality education.

To test this hypothesis, a multiple regression analysis was conducted with students’ access to quality education as the dependent variable, and parental income, educational attainment, and occupation as the predictors.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Summary for Socio-Economic Predictors of Educational Access (n = 900)

Predictor Variable	β	T	p-value	Decision
Parental income	0.48	9.12	0.000*	Significant
Parental educational level	0.31	6.78	0.000*	Significant
Parental occupation	0.22	4.95	0.001*	Significant

R = 0.67; R² = 0.45; Adjusted R² = 0.44; F(3, 896) = 81.23; p < 0.05

The regression model was statistically significant, F(3,896) = 81.23, p < 0.05, indicating that the three predictors jointly explained 45% of the variance in students’ access to quality education. Each socio-economic factor made

a significant independent contribution, with parental income being the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.48$). Consequently, H_{01} is rejected, suggesting that socio-economic background significantly determines access to quality education among public secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria. This finding reinforces the descriptive evidence that low income and parental education critically shape educational opportunities.

Hypothesis Two (H_{02}): Residential location does not significantly mediate the relationship between socioeconomic factors and educational inequality.

A mediation analysis was performed using the PROCESS Macro (Model 4) to test whether residential location (urban/rural) mediates the relationship between socio-economic status (SES composite score) and educational inequality.

Table 6: Mediation Analysis of Residential Location on SES and Educational Inequality

Path	Relationship Tested	Coefficient (β)	SE	t / Z	pvalue
A	SES \rightarrow Residential Location	0.42	0.07	6.00	0.000*
B	Residential Location \rightarrow Educational Inequality	0.37	0.08	4.63	0.000*
c'	SES \rightarrow Educational Inequality (direct effect)	0.29	0.06	4.83	0.000*
Indirect effect (a \times b)	—	0.16	—	Sobel = 3.89	0.000*

R^2 (Model) = 0.41; Bootstrapped 95% CI for indirect effect = [0.09, 0.23]

The indirect path from socio-economic status to educational inequality through residential location was significant ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.05$), with a 95% confidence interval that excluded zero. This indicates that residential location partially mediates the relationship between socio-economic status and educational inequality. Students from rural areas experienced higher inequality despite similar socio-economic levels, due to poorer school facilities and limited teacher availability. Therefore, H_{02} is rejected, indicating that residential location significantly mediates the relationship between socio-economic status and educational inequality (Indirect $\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.05$).

These findings substantiate that both household-level and contextual (location-based) inequalities jointly shape educational outcomes, reinforcing the interplay between structural and individual socio-economic conditions.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study highlight how socioeconomic circumstances have a significant impact on educational inequality in southwest Nigeria. Table 1's findings support the Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) by showing that pupils' access to high-quality education is severely hampered by poor parental income, a lack of educational background, and living in a remote area. Inequalities in educational achievements are sustained because families with little financial resources frequently find it difficult to pay for better-equipped institutions, private tutoring, or necessary learning materials. This is consistent with earlier studies that show a connection between economic hardship and low educational attainment as well as long-term social disadvantages.

The study also discovered that a significant factor in the generational persistence of poverty is educational inequality. Poor educational access lowers employment chances and perpetuates a cycle of low income, limited skills, and restricted mobility, as Table 2 illustrates. This result is consistent with Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory (1977), which holds that class hierarchies are maintained by the transmission of cultural and economic capital disparities through the educational system. This theoretical assertion is supported by the data showing that children from underprivileged homes have a lower likelihood of finishing school or finding steady employment, demonstrating education's dual function as a driver of stratification and a potential equalizer.

Additionally, Table 3's findings underscore the mediating functions of employability and skill acquisition in the relationship between educational inequality and intergenerational poverty: respondents overwhelmingly concurred that young people's unemployment is made worse by limited access to vocational and technical training, which is in line with empirical research indicating that skill-based education increases social mobility, productivity, and self-reliance; therefore, bolstering employability programs can help alleviate the negative impacts of educational inequality and reduce poverty.

The regression results indicate that socio-economic variables explain 45% of the variance in access to quality education, representing a substantively large effect in social science research. This suggests that nearly half of educational inequality among the sampled students is structurally rooted in household economic conditions rather than individual ability or motivation. Furthermore, the partial mediation effect of residential location ($\beta = 0.16$) demonstrates that rural residence independently amplifies educational disadvantage, even among households with comparable socio-economic status. This finding underscores the policy relevance of spatial targeting, as income-based interventions alone may be insufficient without parallel investments in rural school infrastructure, teacher deployment, and learning resources.

The study concluded by identifying important policy initiatives that can break cycles of poverty and lessen educational disparity. Table 4 shows that respondents gave high ratings to programs like scholarships, infrastructure development, and vocational education integration. The Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty Model (Bird, 2007), which promotes focused policies that increase access to high-quality education as a means of escaping poverty, is supported by these findings. The study's overall findings highlight the need for multifaceted approaches that integrate socioeconomic empowerment with equal educational opportunities to break the link between poverty and education.

CONCLUSION

Children from low-income and less-educated households, especially those in rural areas, are disproportionately affected by unequal educational opportunities, which in turn reinforce intergenerational poverty by limiting employability, skill development, and social mobility. The study looked at the socio-economic determinants of educational inequality and their roles in perpetuating poverty cycles among public secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria. The results showed that parental income, education, and occupation significantly predict students' access to quality education, while residential location mediates the influence of socio-economic status on educational inequality.

Based on the theories of human capital, social reproduction, and intergenerational transmission of poverty, the study concludes that educational systems perpetuate socioeconomic disadvantages, perpetuating inequality over time. Systemic initiatives that focus on both the institutional and household levels are necessary to reduce this imbalance. The most effective way to end the cycle of poverty is still through education, but to do so, it needs to be made more fair, accessible, and skill-oriented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:

For students from low-income households, there should be targeted financial assistance in the form of increased scholarships, bursaries, and conditional cash transfer programs from the government and nongovernmental organizations.

Enhancing rural school infrastructure, teacher deployment, and digital learning tools should be prioritized to close the gap between urban and rural areas. Rural education development is crucial.

Empowerment of parents is encouraged: Initiatives for community livelihood and adult literacy should be improved to increase parents' ability to assist with their children's schooling.

A reorientation of the curriculum is necessary. Enhancing employability and decreasing reliance on formal sector jobs can be achieved by incorporating digital, entrepreneurial, and vocational skill training into secondary school curricula.

Policy monitoring is very essential. Education policymakers should institutionalize mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation of equity-focused reforms to ensure sustainability and measurable outcomes.

In essence, breaking the nexus between socio-economic disadvantage and educational inequality requires comprehensive and inclusive strategies that empower families, strengthen institutions, and promote social justice through education.

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