

# Analysing Poverty Profile in Gombe State: A Projection for Reduction Strategies

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## Abstract

Poverty is a phenomenon that is affecting our society negatively. Its scorch keeps on biting harder despite the rate in which revenue is rising in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic (1999-2020). Gombe State is one of the states that is categorised among the poorest in Nigeria for a decade. Poverty is affecting the socioeconomic and political wellbeing of Gombe State in many perspectives. This paper examined the issues and perspectives of poverty in Gombe State particularly the causes, manifestations and strategies of reduction. The work used primary and secondary sources of data collection where some respondents were selected through a simple random sampling for questionnaire administration and other key stakeholders were identified for an in-depth interview. The secondary source involves documents such as books, reports, journals and internet sources. The data obtained were presented and analysed using statistical tools such as tables and charts where applicable. The paper concludes that; poverty is caused mainly due to poor government's macro and micro economic policies and that poverty level in Gombe State has reached an unbearable index of 74.6 % according to the research and also the National Bureau of Statistics report which ranked the State the fourth poorest State in the country in 2019. The paper recommends that, for poverty to be alleviated in Gombe State, there should be a comprehensive and integrated approach via well designed policies such as Conditional Cash Transfer, development of agricultural sector, small scale industrialisation and youth empowerment schemes. It is also recommended that some models like Brazilian Bolsa Familia Prograssme and Malaysian social investment and empowerment should be considered.

**Keywords:** Analysing, Gombe State, Poverty, Poverty Profile, Poverty Perception Index, Poverty Reduction Strategies.

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## INTRODUCTION

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Poverty amidst plenty is the world's greatest challenge and it's expected to be fought with passion and professionalism by all nations. Poverty is one of the major challenges facing Nigeria today. According to a 2004 survey by the National Bureau of Statistics, 54% of Nigerians lives in poverty. Though this figure represents a reduction

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from the 65.5% that was given in 1996, it is still an unacceptable high percentage (Kpakol, 2007). By 2006, the percentage of those living in poverty rose to 64.4%, 70.6% in 2007, and 70% in 2010 and 2012 respectively (UNDP 2012 and NBS 2012). The percentage of those living in poverty in Nigeria keeps on rising from 70% to 72.6% in 2017 and by 2019, Nigeria was declared the headquarters of poverty in the world ahead of India and China (National Bureau of Statistics 2019).

Nigeria is one of the countries that are noted for the prevalence of absolute poverty in all its characteristic features. Poverty in these countries is massive, pervasive and chronic, engulfing a large proportion of the society. Concern about poverty in most of these countries, including Nigeria is great (Orji, 2008). The Nigerian situation is a paradox because a rich country is inhabited by majority poor. Gombe State is one of the poorest states in Nigeria having a poverty level of 74.6 % in 2015 and the State emerged as the fourth poorest according to a data released by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2019). The 2019 poverty report by National Bureau of Statistics indicates that Gombe State is among the top five poorest states in the country with a poverty incidence of 73.4% (NBS, 2019). This work examined the poverty profile in Gombe State which consists of nature and dimensions of poverty, causes, manifestations and reduction strategies. The State is one of the least populated with low level of revenue generation but it is endowed with higher economic opportunities in terms of geographical location, resources, land and business chances.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Concept of Poverty**

The issue of poverty was first given much attention by classical political economists in their attempt to explain economic growth, development and international trade. Adam Smith (1759) in his book “An Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations” identified poverty as a psychic pain which distresses the poor. This in turn cause real hardship, the deprivation of goods per se hardly entered the picture. He stressed that what oppressed a man in poverty was not a lack of physical comfort or health but a sense of social isolation and inferiority. In Smith’s words, the poor man is ashamed of his poverty. He feels that it either place him out of the sight of mankind, or that if they take any notice of him, they have, however, scarcely any feeling with the misery and distress which he suffers (Smith, 1759:170).

Sen (1997) believes that poverty is the worst form of human deprivation and can only be understood as manifest from the life one lead and that, it is anti-progress and anti-development. In his words, poverty is, in many ways, the worst form of human deprivation. It can involve not only the lack of necessities of material well-being, but also the denial of opportunities of living a tolerable life. In poverty, life could be prematurely shortened, made hard, painful, or hazardous, deprived of understanding and communication, and robbed of dignity, confidence and self-respect. It is ultimately in the poverty of the lives that people can lead that poverty manifest itself (Sen., 1997:5).

Mahbub ul Haq (1999:2) identifies poverty as a bomb which was never defused in high growth periods, and can easily explode in a period of slow growth, high inflation, rising unemployment and deteriorating social services. Poverty mis-governance, and unevenly distributed growth are today locked in a fatal embrace. Mahbub ul Haq (1999) opines that poverty of opportunity is the problem and not poverty itself because poverty is a result of poverty of opportunity. According to him, but for poor people, poverty means poverty of opportunity not just poverty of income. Income poverty is only one of many deprivations, other human deprivations include lack of education, ill health, social exclusion, discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender or religion and political repression, poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, not a single dimensional issue (Mahbub ul Haq 1999:1). Poverty deprived its victims to the extent that preventable and curable diseases can easily kill due to lack of access to healthcare and financial support (Platt, 2015).

Poverty is a global phenomenon which is a major policy concern at both domestic and international level. It is a form of deprivation that creates inequality which requires an address urgently because it is possible to do so with sincerity of purpose. The increasing level of poverty and inequality particularly in the developing world compelled for researches by scholars and international agencies on how to resolve the menace. There is an increasing concern that economic growth is not leading to declining poverty and inequality in most developing countries and the gap between the rich and poor countries is widening (Sachs, 2015:7). Poverty is a social problem because it is a persistent phenomenon and those that are in poverty today are severely poor. Poverty is a relative deprivation and social exclusion of the poor. Poverty is contemporarily pervasive because many members of the society are vulnerable to it, they live in societies without economic cushion and where even economic growth is not remedying the situation. The whole situation has been turned into a question of social justice (Royce, 2019). Royce (2019) presented three theories of poverty and their models of poverty reduction. For instance, the first theory is the Biogenetic Theory of Poverty and Inequality which emphasises on genes, IQ and intelligence as the inbuilt natural

mechanisms that determine an individual's prosperity or poverty. However, this theory of poverty and inequality has been demystified by the author owing to individualistic bias and inequality of opportunity. The second theory is Cultural Theory of Poverty and Inequality which perceives poverty as a deviance and a culture of poverty that is inherent in the poor which keeps them perpetually as poor due to practices and beliefs. However, Royce (2019), suggests that Cultural Theory of Poverty and Inequality is not plausible in explaining the real poverty and its causes because the submission ignores other factors and besides, even the rich are engaged in cultural practices related or similar to that of the poor yet, they remain rich, then why? Perhaps, a need for a better explanation that is practical. The last theory is Human Capital Theory of Poverty and Inequality which emphasises on education as the key to success, acquiring human capital, converting human capital and utilisation of skills. This theory is more plausible in poverty reduction strategies. Royce (2019) further argues that poverty has its own economic, political, cultural and social structures involving institutions that should be identified and handled strategically for a better policy making that will target poverty reduction.

The most affected region in the world by poverty incidence is Sub-Saharan Africa. The pervasive and chronic nature of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa created a wider vacuum for infrastructure and human development projects (Estache & Wodon, 2014). Growth and economic recovery have been witnessed in Sub-Saharan Africa but the issue is the nature in which these growths and economic progress failed to translate into welfare of the inhabitants of these countries (Arnt, McKay & Tarp, 2016). Nigeria is one of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa which is paradoxically poor despite being rich with abundant natural mineral resources endowment and human resource availability in addition to robust geographical landscape suitable for agricultural and industrial activities. Nigeria is rich being the tenth largest oil producing country and with possession of diverse rich mineral resources in addition to human resources with a population that is also seventh in the world currently estimated at 200 million, majority of Nigerians amounting to 70% lives in poverty spending less than USD 2 per day because of many failed policies and lack of political will to initiate genuine policies that will extricate many individual households from poverty into a better and prosperous life (National Bureau of Statistics 2017 and Human Development Report 2017, UNDP).

## **Causes of Poverty**

The causes of poverty in third world countries have been debated. According to Dependency scholars like Rodney (1972), Onimode (1983), Offiong (1980) and Ake (1981) the poverty of Africa and Nigeria in particular is rooted in the unequal

relationship developed between the continent and country and the industrialised capitalist countries via the slave trade, the legitimate trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism. The World Bank however associated poverty in Nigeria with mainly macroeconomic problems including fall in oil revenues, excessive borrowing, drift and decline in wages (Fwatshak, 2006). Related to the above, Gallas (2016), submitted that economic inequality and an asymmetrical wealth distribution between the prosperous nations and developing countries is a major cause of poverty and inequality in the world. Globalisation is identified as the driver behind the rise of poverty and inequality in developing countries like Nigeria because the global agents are pushing for trade and economic policies at the global scale that are sometimes detrimental to the independent growth and development of low income countries (Gross, Hoffer & Laliberte, 2016). In line with the above argument, Lee (2015) argues that globalisation led to increased poverty and inequality. Lee (2015) debunked the position of many scholars that globalisation fosters economic growth and poverty reduction because according to him, “economic performances of globalisation are disappointing”.

Orji (2008) shares the same view with Fwatshak (2006) above on the causes of Nigerian poverty. According to him; specifically, for Nigeria, the combination of the economic and political structures inherited in its post independent period had paved way for social crises, which the new leaders had failed to successfully address. The major population of Nigerians who lived in rural areas had continued to experience low quality of life, misery, hopelessness, scarcity of food, lack of shelter, poor health care delivery system, high infant mortality rate, high level of illiteracy and above all, manifesting characteristics of underdevelopment in all its ramification. Orji (2008) added that, unfortunately, most of the post-independence leaders who took part in nationalist movements, and took over government from the colonialists soon became authoritarian and did not care for the development and welfare of their people. However, Fwatshak (2018), argues that there is no consensus in African literature on the causes of African poverty with some section referring to causes as external while others as internal. This study accepted that both internal and external factors are influential.

Magaji (2005) in a similar analysis like that of Orji but with much emphasis on neo-colonial Nigeria, summed up the causes of poverty as the negative impact of colonialism, which merged different heterogeneous societies that after independence, national resources are allocated, based on tribal cleavages creating wars, destruction of lives and properties, causing poor means of life (Magaji,2005:39). Additionally, poorly designed policies of social investment devoid of meritocracy in developing world contributes to poverty and inequality (Solga, 2016).

Nwagbara (2001) sees culture impoverishment via globalisation as a major cause of poverty. To him, cultural impoverishment is yet another form of poverty inflicted on societies through the influence of globalisation. In Nigeria, western cultures and values have so much infiltrated our society such that some of our rich cultural heritage has given way to alien ones. Precipitating this cultural impoverishment is the giant technological height attained by the modern world in the area of communication. Ijaiya (2007:47) reiterates that the factors that cause poverty include:

(i) structural causes that are more permanent and depend on a host of factors such as limited resources, lack of skill, location disadvantage and other factors that are inherent in the social and political set up;

(ii) the transitional causes that are mainly due to structural adjustment reforms and changes in domestic economic policies that may result in price changes, increase unemployment and others. Natural calamities such as wars, environmental degradation, also include transitory poverty.

This manifested in lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increase morbidity and mortality from illnesses; homelessness and inadequate, unsafe and degraded environment, and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by lack of participation in decision making in civil, social and cultural life. Aliyu (2008) also attributes the causes of poverty in Nigeria to the following factors:

- i. Poor macro-economic and monetary policies resulting in low economic growth rate and continues slide in the value of Naira which depreciated from N 1.0 to 140.00 to \$1.0 between June 1986 and March 2000 in the parallel market. In 2020, Naira is exchanged in parallel market at \$1=N500;
- ii. Dwindling performance of the manufacturing sector which has the capacity to employ about 20 million people but currently employs only about 1.5 million by all the 2,750 registered members of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN);
- iii. Increasing foreign debt overhang of almost \$30 billion, requiring \$3.5 billion annually for resettlement from an economy earning just about \$10.0 to \$15.0 billion per annum;
- iv. Poor management of the nation's resources coupled with large scale fraud and corruption, most which has been siphoned out of the country in hard currency. This is a country endowed with abundant resources in which between 1970s and now, the nations have earned over \$300 billion from oil revenues alone. By

1970s, Nigeria was among the fifty richest nations in the World, but by 1999, Nigeria was among the twenty-five poorest nations of the world; and

- v. Poor execution of government programmes and projects, especially those projects aimed at the provision of social welfare services such as education, health, and those aimed at the provision of economic infrastructures.

The same views presented by Aliyu (2008) were supported by Sagagi (2008), Maikaba (2008), Edoh (2003), Ajakaiye (2002), Anyanwu (1997), and Ajegi (2002) as the major causes of poverty in Nigeria. Udegbonam (2006) views the role of unemployment in causing poverty. In his critical analysis of unemployment in Nigeria. Udegbonam explains that, nearly 40% of the working population in Nigeria is either jobless or underemployed. He further expanded his analysis on the basis of unemployment among the graduate with formal education. In his study, 1.9% of NCE holders are unemployed, 52.2% of ND and HND, 39.5% of B.Sc and 4.9% of M.Sc and PhD holders. In all, the general impact of unemployment is poverty in Nigeria.

### **Manifestations of Poverty**

Poverty manifested in many ways. Statistics on poverty in Nigeria revealed that Nigeria's Human Development Index in 1999 was only 0.416 with nearly 70% of its population of about 110 million living below the poverty line (spending less than a dollar per day), as against 15% at independence in 1960. National average indicates that life expectancy at birth stands at 51 years; nearly 40% of the children below the age of 5 years suffer malnutrition, over 50% of the population lacks access to safe drinking water, and only 40% of the population is literate with only about 35% of the population living in urban areas (Dandago, 2008:38-39).

Rural dwellers are among the hardest hit by these entire statistics, with about 70% of their population having no access to portable water, health care facilities or electricity, amongst other vital facilities necessary for decent living. The statistics disclosed that by 2003, the number of poor people in Nigeria has doubled over the last two decades, during which the country received over \$300 billion in oil and gas revenues. Here, it is not the increasing rate of poverty from 1999 and declining standard of living that is alarming, the most annoying thing is the increasing oil revenue and economic growth which failed to commensurate with the standard of living of an average Nigerian. Nigeria within sixteen years from 1999 to 2016 earned a huge oil revenue amounting to N77.348 (\$215, 027, 440, 000 billion) trillion (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2017) just from the petroleum industry but the Nigerian government has been unable to utilise the funds to improve the lives of its citizens or use the money to

develop the economy. This has been one of the explanations why the poverty level increased in the country from 1999 to 2019 in contrary to the increasing revenue. The National Bureau of Statistics (2017) revealed that Nigeria earned approximately between 1999 to 2017 equivalent to \$800 billion in oil revenue along.

Similarly, Nigeria’s budget rose from 1999 to 2017 steadily in a reasonable increase for instance, in 1999, Nigeria budgeted \$13.6 billion, \$14.7 billion in 2006, \$18.7 billion in 2007, \$21.1 billion in 2008, \$22.8 billion in 2009, \$29.3 billion in 2010, \$31.8 billion in 2011 and \$31.9 billion in 2016. This increase in national budget does not translate into poverty reduction policies. In the period between 1999 to 2017, there were series of policies and programmes to alleviate poverty but the policies did not impact positively on the common man in Nigeria. In the year 2000, a poverty alleviation programme was introduced called Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) but as early as 2001, the Federal Government declared the policy a failure and introduced another one, the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001 targetted at eradicating poverty by the year 2010. The policy failed in its approach and implementation making poverty incidence in Nigeria to increase incidentally in the year 2010, 2011 up to 2017 from 24.6% in 1999 to 54.3% in 2001, 63.4% in 2004, 68.9% in 2007, 70% in 2010%, 70% in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2017 respectively. In 2019, poverty incidence rose to 72.6% in Nigeria showing an annoying rate. Other economic development policies failed to take into account the integration of masses-oriented policies for poverty reduction such as the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) initiated in 2003, Seven Point Agenda in 2007 and other related economic development policies and recently Economic Recovery Policy and Growth (ERPG) introduced by Buhari Government in 2018. The above period which recorded an oil boom and an increased revenue also recorded the higher incidence of poverty index in Nigeria as revealed below.

Table 1: National Poverty Level 1980 - 2017

<b>Year</b>	<b>Poverty level %</b>
1980	27.2%
1985	46.3%
1992	42.7%
1996	65.6%
2004	54.4%
2007	70.6%
2010	70%
2012	70%
2013	63.4%
2014	61.2%

2015	62.6%
2016	70.6%
2017	71.6%
2018	72.4%

Source: National Bureau of statistics 2019.

Additionally, the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of Nigeria in 2018 revealed a poor country with a low level of productivity and economic performance as indicated in the following data. The survey for the year 2018 for developing countries shows that Nigeria's MPI value is 0.254 below that of countries like Malawi, Madagascar, Lesotho, Guinea and Guinea Bissau. The percentage is 46.4% and the headcount of the population in poverty according to the survey is 90, 919, the intensity of deprivation reached 54.8%, the value of inequality among poor is 0.023, and the population in severe multidimensional poverty is 26.8%. Contribution of deprivation in dimension to overall multidimensional poverty in health is 30.9%, in education is 28.2%, in terms of standard of living is 40.9%, national poverty line 46.0% and PPP \$1.90 per day is 53.9% (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) recently released the "2019 Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria" report, which highlights that 40 percent of the total population, or almost 83 million people, live below the country's poverty line of 137,430 naira (\$381.75) per year. These statistics are the reflection of what emanated from states like Gombe which are reported by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2019 as among the five poorest states in the country.

### **Strategy of Poverty Alleviation**

There are many suggested strategies for poverty alleviation which can be adopted and implemented in Nigeria. Sen (1999) observes that poverty can be reduced through an integrated approach where mankind can be free, all opportunities are harnessed for utilisation and inequality gap is drastically reduced while employment is generated accordingly. In another view, Mahbub Ul Haq (1999) identified that it is not the real poverty that is the problem but the poverty of ideas and deprivation. If the poor will be empowered and motivated, he can succeed in working towards extricating himself from poverty through effective utilisation of the chances offered. The UNDP suggested that sincere political will and the adoption of critical poverty reduction strategies through some comprehensive and integrated macroeconomic policies are the measures that can help in poverty alleviation in the poor countries such as Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African States. African countries generally fall within the four poverty traps of Collier's Bottom Billion as resource-trapped nations leading to corruption, rent-seeking, and "Dutch disease," the conflict-coup trap, land-

locking/bad neighbours, and bad governance/small countries. Cutting-edge macroeconomic policies and sectoral approach as well as community-based bottom to top approach should be given an emphasis as strategies for poverty reduction in Africa (Odey & Falola, 2018). Christensen, Ojomo & Dillon (2019) suggested for an innovation as the best strategy for lifting nations out of poverty. African countries and Nigeria in particular should resort to indigenous technological innovation and home-grown economic policies in line with the above approach. Sambo, Adamu, Sule & Yahaya (2020), support the above position that indigenous innovation is the best alternative for Africa's growth and development. Sambo et al. (2020) agreed that globalisation is pushing for economic growth in Africa but it is also leading to poverty, trade inequality and maldevelopment in the Continent.

There are other models that Nigeria can adopt in general and Gombe State in particular which is the area of study that can be utilise as strategies for poverty eradication. The first model is the Brazilian Bolsa Familia or the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) in which the poor are integrated in social investment programmes including education, health and job creation which was introduced by Inacio Silva Da Lula and which has succeeded in removing about 29% of Brazilians from poverty line in just 10 years (Sule, 2014). The Bolsa Familia or CCT was designed to encourage rural dwellers to enroll their children in schools, immunise them, access medical care such as ante-natal and to establish small scale businesses. Once an individual enrol his ward in school, immunise them or attend ante-natal and other medical services, a certain amount of money is set aside as a cash reward for the enrolment. Since measurement of poverty indicators consider educational qualification, access to healthcare and immunisation, many Brazilians were consciously extricated from poverty line through this process. Another strategy that can be borrowed is the Malaysian model of economic empowerment, gender empowerment and education revolution which miraculously turned the country into an economic power in Asia Pacific, in the Asian continent and in the world at large (Sule, 2014). Malaysian population is a young population with youth consisting of over 40% and female gender constitutes a significant percentage of the population. The Malaysian Government found it imperative to provide quality and affordable education to youth, accessible healthcare services, infrastructure and to empower the female gender for political participation, entrepreneurship and competition for social prestige. In this way, the female gender in the country secure access to jobs, businesses and other economic opportunities while the policy of job creation sustained the youth continuously.

The above two models were suggested because Nigeria has a cultural, social and political similarity with the countries that operate them. In terms of poverty indicators,

one of the reasons why Nigeria is poor and many Nigerians are living in poverty line is due to lack of access to quality education, healthcare and gender empowerment. Provision of incentives in form of a conditional cash transfer will motivate for a rapid school enrolment, immunisation and attending ante-natal care. This will pull many out of poverty if it is adopted in Nigeria and Gombe State specifically. Additionally, empowering youth and women with a quality education, job creation and entrepreneurship development will reduce poverty incidence in Nigeria in general and Gombe State specifically.

## **FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS: VICIOUS CIRCLE OF POVERTY**

Ragnar Nurkse in a book titled “Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries” theorised poverty in a model called “Vicious circle of poverty”. According to Nurkse: “In discussion of the problem of economic development, phrase that crops up frequently is the vicious circle of poverty” (1967: 4). Vicious circle of poverty implies a circular constellation of forces tending to act and react upon one another in such a way as to keep a poor country in a state of poverty. Particular instance of such circular constellations are not difficult to imagine, for example, a poor man may not have enough to eat, being underfed his health may be weak and being physically weak, his working capacity is low which means that he is poor, a situation of this sort, relating to a country as whole can be summed up in trite proposition hence: a country is poor because it is poor (Nurkse 1967: 4).

Perhaps the most important circular relationship of this kind is those that afflict the accumulation of capital in economically backward countries. The supply of capital is governed by the ability and willingness to save, the demand for capital is governed by the incentive to invest. A circular relationship exists on both side of the problem of capital in the poverty ridden areas of the world. On the supply side, there is a small capacity to save, resulting from the low level of real income as a reflection of low productivity. On the demand side, the inducement to invest may be low because of the purchasing power of the people which is due to their small real income, which again is due to low productivity.

Jhingan (2007: 31-32) further developed and expanded Nurke’s theory of Vicious Circle of Poverty, that the basic vicious circle stems from the fact that in less developed countries, total productivity is low due to deficiency of capital market and low investment on human capital, economic backwardness and underdevelopment. This is illustrated below:

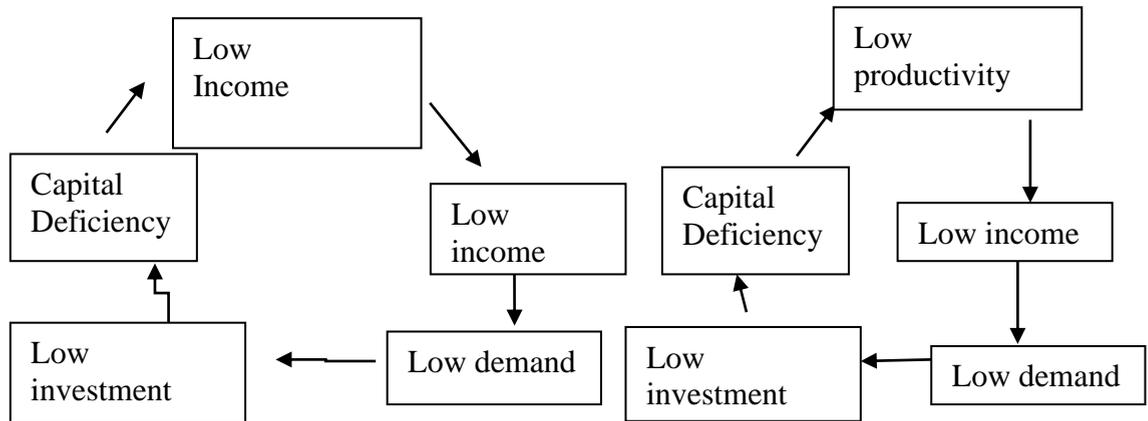


Figure 1: Showing the Circular Flow of Poverty in a Society  
 Source: Jhingan, 2007

A complement of the vicious circle of poverty envelops underdeveloped human natural resources which is dependent upon the productive capacity of the people in the country. If the people are backward and illiterate, lack in technical skill, knowledge and entrepreneurial activity, the natural resources will tend to remain unutilised, and leading to underutilisation or even mis-utilisation. This is explained below.

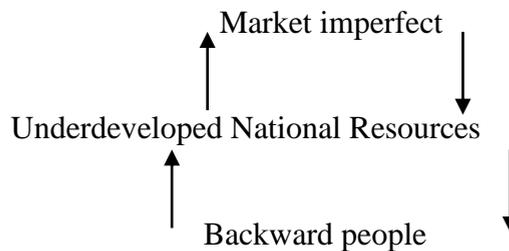


Figure 2: Showing a Complement of the Vicious Circle of Poverty  
 Source: Jhingan 2007: 31-32

Jhingan (2007:31-32) concludes his proposition of the theory of vicious circle of poverty in the following words; poverty and underdevelopment of the economy are thus synonymous. A country is poor because it is underdeveloped. A country is underdeveloped because it is poor and remains underdeveloped as it has not the

necessary resource for promoting the development. Poverty is a curse, but a greater curse is that it is self-perpetuating.

The vicious circle of poverty proposed the following as a means of eradication of poverty. The first is massive human resource development which leads to increase in savings. Secondly, improved higher per capita growth rate. This can be achieved by increasing the level of employment in the country. Thirdly, efficient use of both human and material resources. The developing countries are not making the efficient use of their natural resources available to them. At present, the Multinational Corporations (MNCs) of the advanced countries are exploiting these resources more for their own economic benefit. Fourthly improving the quality of human resources in terms of employment generation, good quality of labour force, higher literacy level, proper medical care and good supply of balanced diet.

Effective measures have to be taken for sufficient investment in human capital to break up the poverty barrier of the LDCs. Fifthly, increasing the stock of capital goods. This can be done by encouraging the wealthy class to make their savings available for investment in productive activities. Sixthly, is technological advancement. Seventh, expansion of volume of trade internationally and finally, political willingness to greatly root out corruption and bribery. It can provide incentive to save and invest, and it can increase agricultural production by introducing effective reforms in the country.

The Vicious Circle of Poverty can clearly explain poverty and poverty eradication policies in Nigeria. Even though some scholars; Myrdal (1974), Ake (1996) and Somasundara (2010) do not absolutely subscribe to the view that poor are likely to remain poor because it is intergenerational. These scholars agreed with Nurkse (1967); Jhingan (2007); and Hill (1985) that, poor are in vicious circle of poverty and are likely to remain so if the government policies are not directed towards genuine National Development.

The vicious circle of poverty in Nigeria has the following proposition; a. the individual and nations at large are poor and are rotating within the chain of poverty, b. poor macroeconomic settings such as low income, low investment, low level of demand and supply, technological backwardness, unemployment, inflation etc. which are making poverty persistence in the country c. there is the problem of policy agenda setting which lacks political willingness and sincerity, poverty can be truly eradicated if the leadership of poor countries exhibit good governance and is willing to adopt real development agenda particularly radical investment in human capital.

The theory is capable of explaining the situation in Gombe State because the persistent cause of poverty is associated with low income, low savings and low investment which is perpetually keeping the poor in continuous poverty despite several efforts by the government to alleviate the menace such as National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). A good policy should seek to eradicate poverty because reduction will amount to little changes or the resurgence of that phenomenon which is exactly what the theorists are postulating that the poor are likely to remain in poverty if the policy makers are not serious. Payment of ₦3,000 allowances monthly under the NAPEP where the training is not absolutely practiced will not lead to high income, high demand, high supply, high saving and increase productivity. Instead, the process adopted by NAPEP may lead to low attainment of income, supply, demand, and other variable factors which are the ingredient of keeping poor in vicious circle of poverty.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research used both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data is categorised into two. The first is the questionnaire administration with some selected respondents. Gombe State is divided into eleven local government areas with three geo-political zones as Gombe North, Gombe Central and Gombe South. The total population of the study which is Gombe State is estimated at 3.6 million according to 2006 population census projection. In each of the geo-political zones, one local government was identified and selected for data collection based on the report of the NBS 2019 of the poorest in each zone. In Gombe North, Dukku Local Government was selected out of Gombe, Kwami, Dukku, Funakaye and Nafada. In Gombe Central, Akko was selected between the Akko and Yamaltu/Deba. In Gombe South, out of Balanga, Billiri, Kaltungo and Shongom, Shongom was selected. The total number of respondents from each of the local government selected were 200 respondents based on equal proportion. The criteria for the selection was simple random sampling where questionnaires were indiscriminately distributed. The total number selected therefore was 600. The questionnaires were designed using structured or open-ended. Questions were designed with answers on a scale of options A-D or other alternatives depending on the nature of the question and response. The respondents were assured of ethical conduct in the process and their personal biodata were treated under utmost confidentiality for the information provided. Additionally, the respondents were allowed to respond without an interference from the researchers. Where they could not read or interpret some meanings, they were referred to their colleagues to guide them in answering to avoid giving direction to the responses.

Table 2: Number of Respondents Selected from the Chosen Area of Study

S/No	Local Government	Number of Respondents
1.	Akko	200
2.	Dukku	200
3.	Shongom	200
4.	Total	600

Source: Field Survey 2017.

However, out of the total of 600 questionnaires distributed, only 527 were returned as indicated in the figure below.

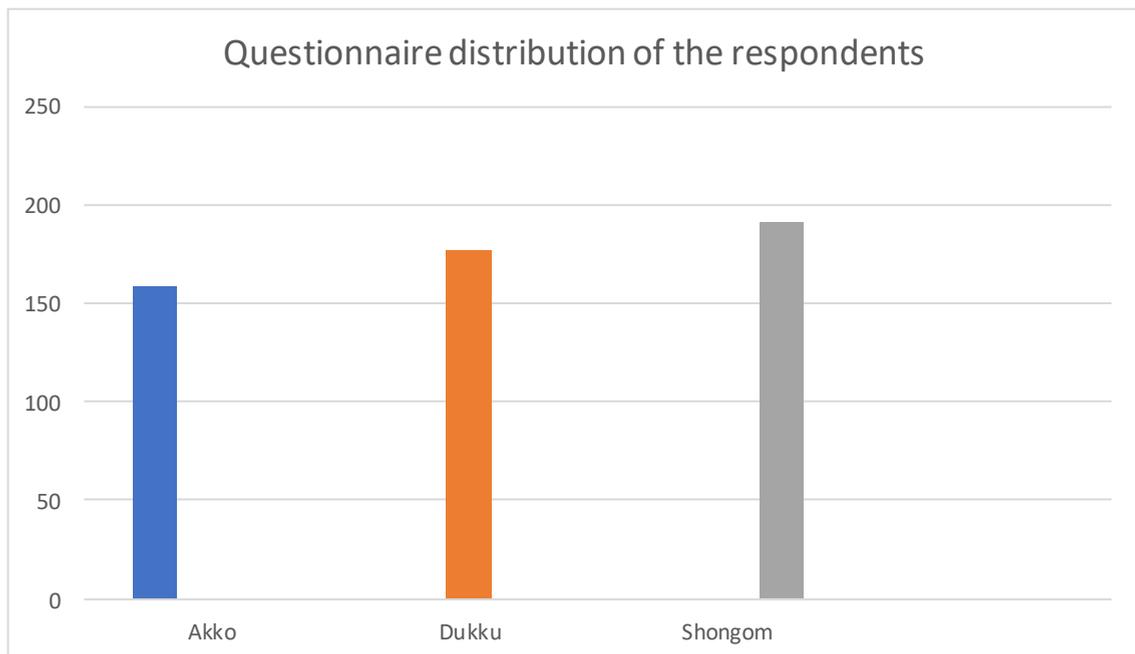


Figure 3: Total Number of Returned Questionnaires

Source: Field Survey 2017.

Table 3: Characteristics of the Respondents

Personal Information of the Respondents						
Age Distribution of the Respondents						
18-30	31-45	46-55	56-65	65 and above	Total	
223 (42.32%)	141 (26.76%)	71 (13.47%)	62 (11.76%)	30 (5.69%)	100%	
Gender Distribution of the Respondents						
Male		Female			Total	

328 (62.24%)		199 (37.76%)				100%	
<b>Educational Qualification of the Respondents</b>							
Pri. Cert.	SSCE	NCE/Dip	Degree	Masters	PhD	Others	Total
189 (35.86%)	176 (33.40%)	19 (3.61%)	6 (1.14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	137 (26.0%)	100%
<b>Occupational Distribution of the Respondents</b>							
Student	Business	Civil Service	Artisan	Others (Specify)		Total	
109 (20.68%)	93 (17.65%)	38 (7.21%)	119 (22.58%)	168 (31.88%)		100%	

Source: Field Survey 2017.

From the above characteristics of the respondents, it can be inferred that majority of the respondents is youth consisting of 223 (42.32%) in the age category of 18-30, followed by the age category of 31-45 with 141 (26.76%), the age category 46-55 is 71 (13.47%), age category 56-65 consists of 62 (11.76%) and 65 and above is 30 (5.69%). This indicates that the population of the respondents takes about 364 (69.08%) in the age category of 18 to 45 only. This does not mean that the youth are more poor than the elderly population. It can be simply translated in the nature of the Nigerian population where youth is higher than other age categories according to NBS. In the gender distribution of the respondents, the male has 328 (62.24%) while the female gender has 199 (37.76%). By interpretation, this distribution is not indicating that the male gender is higher than female in the area of study. It is simply showing the nature of the society of the area of study where women are still confined in homes not coming out for daily activities like their male counterparts and, since the sampling is a random one, the male gender got a chance of being selected. The educational qualification of the respondents shows the following: those with primary school leaving certificate, 189 (35.86%); SSCE or secondary certificate, 176 (33.40%); National Certificate on Education (NCE)/Diploma, 19 (3.61%); University Degree, 6 (1.14%), Masters Degree, 0(0.0%); PhD 0(0.0%) and others 137 (26.0%). The educational qualification indicates that majority of the respondents in the area of study do not possess higher qualification since most of them fall within the categories of primary school leavers, secondary school certificate, NCE/Diploma and others where the majority specified as Quranic schools and Arabic education not formally awarded with certificates. The occupational distribution of the respondents indicates that those who are students constitutes 109 (20.68%); business 93 (17.65%); civil service 38(7.21%); artisans 119(22.58%) and others 168 (31.88%). This distribution can be translated as showing that most of the respondents are engaged in learning, business, artisanship and others. Few are civil servants.

The other primary source is the interview with some key stakeholders among the policymakers and in this regard, two senior officials were selected from the National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP) Gombe office, two senior officials from Gombe State Bureau of Statistics and one senior officials from the Gombe State Ministry of Economic Planning for an in-depth personal interview on the subject matter. The secondary sources consist of the documents that were consulted on the existing literature such as books, journal articles, reports from organisations and agencies and internet sources. The data obtained from the field were distributed and discussed using the simple statistical techniques such as tables and charts where necessary.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

### Causes of Poverty in Gombe State

There are variant views on the causes of poverty in Gombe State as suggested by many of the respondents in their various responses. Their responses were summarised from the various questions that were asked and presented in tabular form below.

Table 4: Summary of Respondents' Views on the Causes of Poverty in Gombe State

S/No.	Causes	Agreed	Disagreed
1.	Poor Macroeconomic Policies	497 (94.31%)	30 (5.69%)
2.	Corruption	427 (81.02%)	100(18.98%)
3.	Mismanagement	513 (97.34%)	14 (2.66%)
4.	Low level of education	439 (83.30%)	88 (16.70%)
5.	Inequality	487 (92.41%)	40 (7.59%)
6.	Low level of income	511 (96.96%)	16 (3.04%)
7.	Attitude	467 (88.61%)	60 (11.39%)
8.	Low revenue generation capacity	439 (83.30%)	88 (16.70%)
9.	Absence of welfare and social investment	514 (97.53%)	13 (2.47%)

Source: Field Survey 2017

Additionally, the informants that were interviewed also supported the above views of the respondents in their different submissions which are summarised as follows. They have narrated that poverty in Gombe State is caused by several multiple factors top among which include absence of well-designed programmes genuinely targetted for social investment and welfare, bribery and corruption of the public office holders, poor policies, mismanagement of public resources, low level of opportunities, poor attitude of laziness and lack of productivity of the youth particularly and low level of education especially technical and vocational education for self-reliance. The

informants further disclosed that lip services from politicians without corroborating it with action is another problem or simply lack of political will.

Poor macroeconomic policies here refer to failure to consider human resources development, social investment programmes during public expenditure. Policymakers in the State give much priority to white elephant projects that are sometimes perceived by some of the respondents as contracts for kickbacks. Classrooms and hospital buildings as well as roads are prioritised ahead of services such as good payment of salaries and allowances for personnel, provision of clean drinking water and other related services. The respondents also in their submission interpreted corruption as lack of accountability and transparency in how the government income and expenditure are managed without consulting them which is to them suspicion as well as lack of transparency in budget implementation and monitoring. Mismanagement is related to the corruption above. Low level of education is affirmed from the distribution of the respondents in the methodology section where only 25% of the respondents in the population of the study possess certificates of NCE/Diploma and Degree with none having Masters Degree or PhD. This is because the policymakers could not provide adequate support and motivation to make enrolment and pursuance of higher education encouraging such as reasonable scholarship. Inequality, low level of income are all emanating from the policy of the bureaucrats. Public resources are skewed in favour of few privilege ruling class which impoverished and deprived the majority of the masses.

Attitude denotes culture as observed by Royce (2019) in her presentation of theories of poverty. Some practices such as marrying two, three or even four wives by those who could not afford or idleness from the part of the productive section of the population instead of active engagement in farming and other rewarding ventures with opportunities that could not be lacking. Gombe State is among the bottom States in terms of national resources allocation. This means that the low generation capacity accompanied with heavy debt and debt servicing worth 40% of the monthly allocation as obtained by NBS Report is another reason why inhabitants in the State are poor. And finally, absence of welfare and social investment especially failure to complement initiatives by the Federal Government of social investment programmes such as N-Power, anchor borrowers, trader moni and others helped in the poverty situation in the State. If the State is providing a similitude of such programmes of the FG, poverty will reduce.

## Manifestations of Poverty and its Effects in Gombe State

The incidence of poverty keeps on increasing in Gombe State instead of reducing. From the period of the introduction of NAPEP, a significant rise in figure of those identified to be poor in Gombe State is enough to show that, the policy is not the solution to poverty eradication or rather, implementation process. For instance, in 1996, those in poverty level in Gombe State were reported to be 56.4%. In 2001, during the period of the introduction of NAPEP, the figure rose to 70.6%. The figure however fall to 64.2% in 2004 and rose to 70.4% in 2007, But, the percentage increased to 72.4% in 2010 and 72.6% in January 2013 as reported by Ministry of Economic Planning in Gombe State. The State emerged as the third poorest in 2015 with a percentage of 74.6 % according to National Bureau of Statistics. The 2019 Report by NBS indicates that Gombe State is the fourth poorest State in the country. This is indicated in the table below.

Table 5: Poverty Perception Index in Gombe State 1996 to 2018

Year	Percentage
1996	56.4%
2001	70.6%
2004	64.2 %
2007	70.4%
2013	72.6%
2015	74.6%
2016	72.4%
2017	72.6%
2018	73.6%

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2018) as compiled by the authors

The above analysis clearly shows that, poverty is increasing which means policies on ground should be revisited or even replaced if there is need for prompt concern towards poverty eradication in Gombe State and Nigeria in general.

The level of deprivation is varied ranging from healthcare services, education, and provision of infrastructure. Some sections of the population may be better off in terms of income but accessibility to education, proper healthcare service and infrastructure is deprived from them. This means that, poverty eradication by skills acquisition alone if not accompanied by other indicators of a decent living, such as education, healthcare services, infrastructure will not succeed. There is need for a more comprehensive programme. It is observed that, some people are pushed into poverty by number of dependents. Even if the policies of poverty eradication are successful in self-empowerment, poverty eradication is difficult if the dependents are not catered for.

One of the persistent reasons why poverty is increasing in Gombe State despite poverty eradication policies such as NAPEP is; low level of income of individuals. The implication of low income is low saving, low investment, low demand and low supply. All these economically disempowered people. To eradicate poverty using a policy like NAPEP will not address these economic issues but rather, it will continue in this way for many generations.

The CBN and NBS socio-economic survey of 2006 and the NBS CWIP of 2006 further confirm the poverty situation in the country across regions and states. It was evident from the study that a substantial proportion of Nigerians still live on less than N 20,000 a year. There is a clear evidence of high dispersion in per capita incomes across the 36 state of the federation as at 2007. High performers included the FCT (\$10,208), Bayelsa (\$5,388), Rivers (\$5,210), Akwa Ibom (\$3,813), Lagos (\$2,554) and Delta (\$147) while the low performing states were Taraba (\$141), Kogi (\$147), Anambra (\$163), Gombe (\$166), Osun (\$183) and Plateau (\$194). Other states fell between the two groups. The oil producing states continue to dominate the high performing states, while 18 states recorded lower per capita income than the global standard of less than \$1.25 per day.

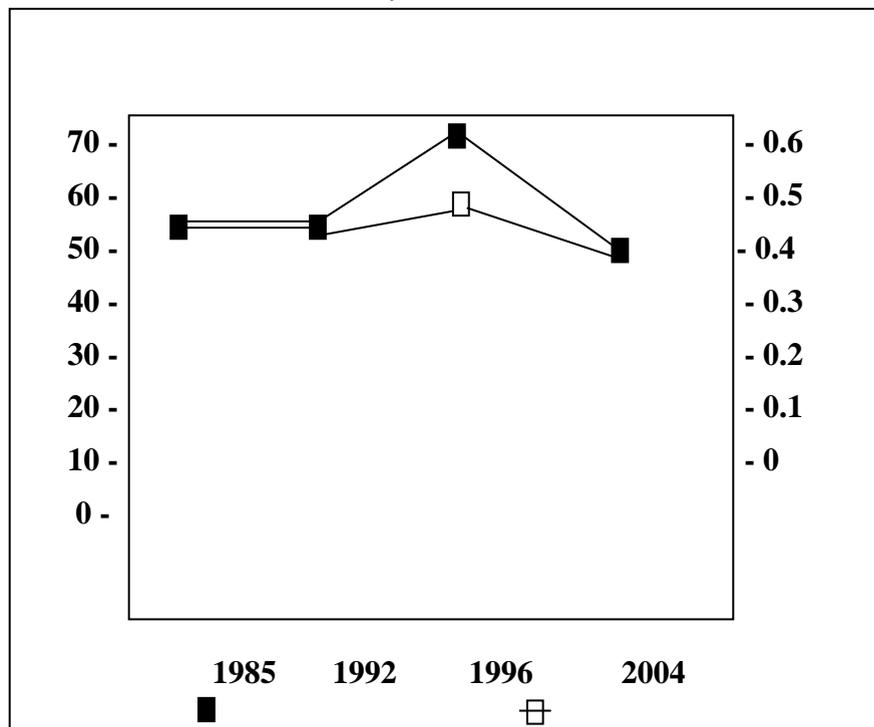
The problem with aggregate living index approach is a standard and acceptable formula for Nigeria within the ambit of Nigerian situation. However, Ogwumike (1991), using micro data from 980 household surveyed in Borno, Gombe, Imo, and Oyo states and complemented by federal office of statistics (FOS) data, derived some poverty lines for Nigeria. This derivation was based on the weekly requirement of an average of six members in a household. The food poverty line derived was N38.00 per head month or N456.00 per head per year. The overall basic needs income (poverty line) was estimated at N47.44 per head per month or approximately N569.00 per year. Using income per head obtained from the survey, the study estimated that 46 million Nigerians were living in poverty in Nigeria in 1990, and then the country is chronically poor, about 59% of her citizens being adjudged poor. In another study, Ogwumike and Ekpenyong (1995) using the above approach computed a food poverty line based on 1993 prices to be N210 per head per month or N2, 520 per year. The overall poverty line was N280 per head per month or N3, 360 per head per year.

If Ogwumike's 1995 findings are built upon from 1995 to date, with high rate of inflation, the poverty line in Nigeria by 2002 will be N430 per month or N5, 360 per head per year. And by 2007, as prices keep on increasing while employment very low which tallied with sharp fall in the value of Naira, the poverty line will be N980 per head per month and N12,360 per head per year. However, this looks short of explaining

actual poverty line in Nigeria presently if other indicators presented by World Bank and UNDP are taken into consideration.

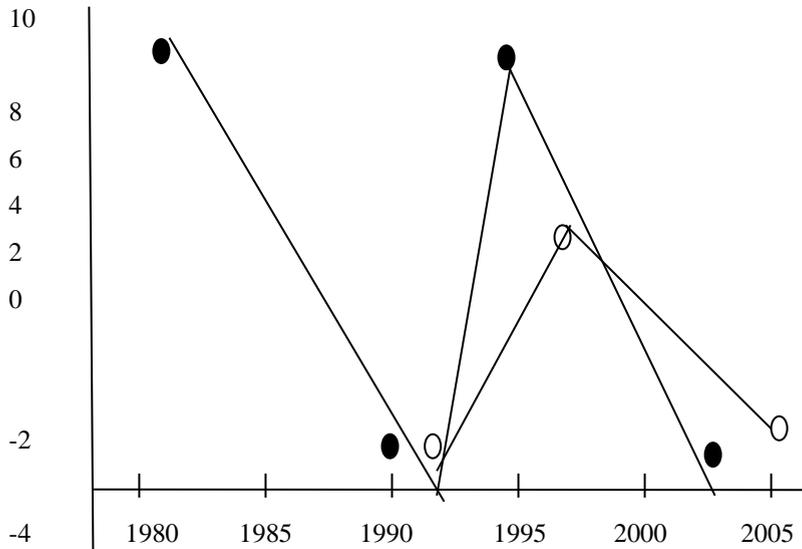
In Nigeria and Gombe State in particular, poverty and inequality share some very important correlation, education, age, occupation, and gender. To that extent, it could be argued that the various measures of poverty incidence correlate with the key dimensions of inequality in the country. To verify this formally, the approach here first relates the Gini Index to poverty incidence. The trend of the national poverty index and the national measure of inequality has tended to move in the same direction, changes in poverty also appear to follow changes in inequality. State level data, however, are much less suggestive of a similar pattern or trend between the incidence of poverty and inequality. All these are shown in the figures below.

Table 6: National Poverty and Gini Index Showing Inequality in Nigeria  
 National Poverty and Gini Index



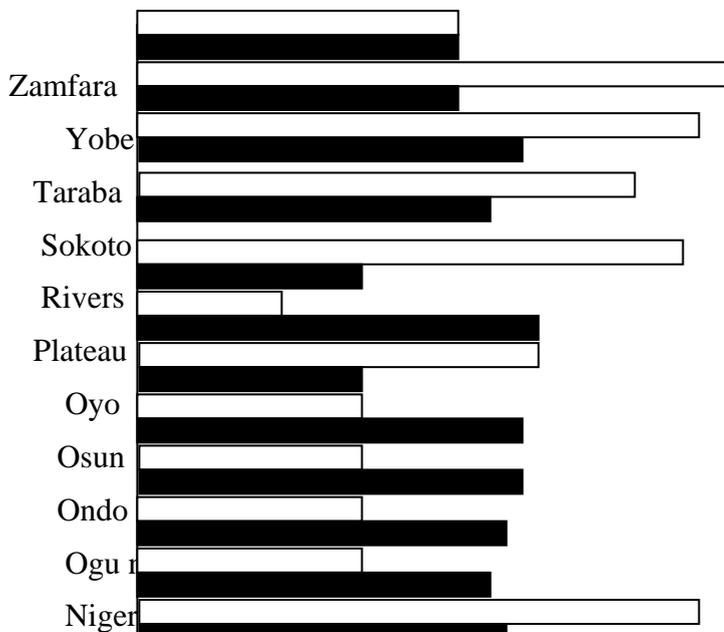
Source: Human Development Report in Nigeria 2002 - 2007

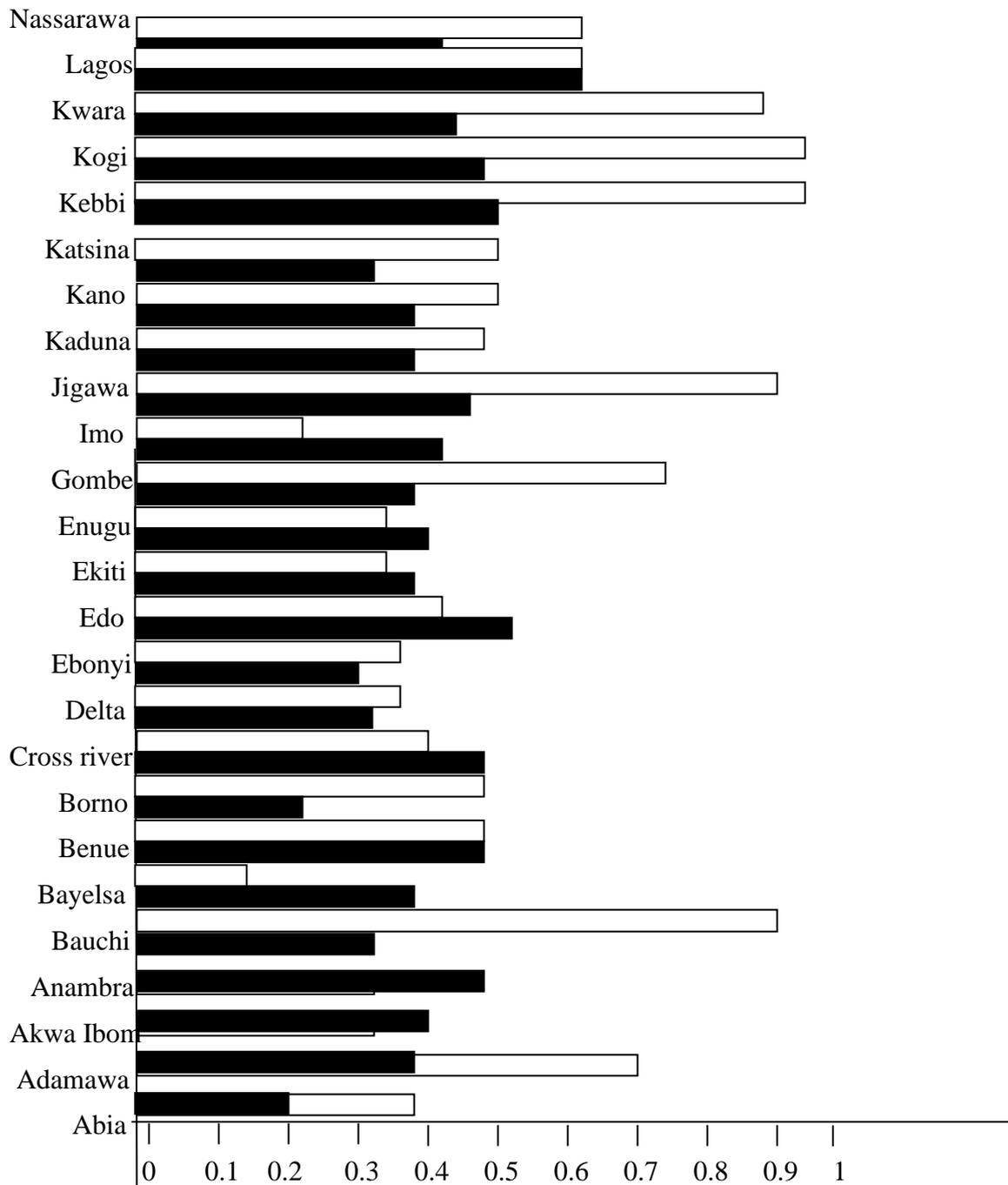
Table 7: Comparison of Poverty and Inequality



Change in poverty - change in inequality  
 Source: Human Development report in Nigeria 2002- 2007

Table 8: Poverty and Inequality indicators across states 2007 per capita income by state (US\$)





Source: Human Development Report in Nigeria 2008 - 2009

Thus, the above table indicated that Gombe State is one of the states with highest incidence of poverty and inequality as discussed in the Theory of Vicious Cycle of Poverty where low income, low wages all lead to low demand and supply and vice versa leading to a perpetual poverty and its increase continuously. Sule, Umar & Yahaya (2019) reported that despite the various poverty alleviation programmes in Gombe State such as Capacity Acquisition Programme (CAP), the level of poverty in the State keeps on rising due to poor implementation, insincerity of politicians and politicisation of the process. Additionally, Sule & Umar (2019) reported again in another study that poverty alleviation in Nigeria in general is a cosmetic political designed to secure cheap political goal and the support of the populace during elections mostly.

There are several effects of poverty according to the informants interviewed in the research. For instance, some of them revealed that because of the predominant scorch of poverty which has become prevalent in the State, the repercussions are palpable in the security sector. The political thugs known as “Kalare Boys” who raid houses, market shops, terrorise opposition and innocent people in the State are perpetrating their crime due to extreme deprivation, lack of sound education and low level of opportunities. They further argued that poverty in Gombe State is affecting local industries leading to low productivity, low demand, low market activities, decline in revenue for the State and it discourages external and internal investors from investment. In summary, they agreed that the scorch of poverty in the State which is reported as the third poorest in the country in 2018 is hindering business opportunities and economic productivity which in turn affects political activities and the emergence of good leadership. They directly espoused the political economy linkage of the effects of poverty in Gombe State.

### Strategies of Poverty Alleviation in Gombe State

The respondents were asked on the strategies that can be adopted to alleviate poverty in Gombe State and they responded in the following way. Their responses were summarised below.

Table 9: Summary of the Respondents Views on the Strategies of Poverty Alleviation in Gombe State

S/No.	Strategies Suggested/Responses	Frequency
1.	Initiation of social investment programmes	487 (92.41%)
2.	Proper management of scarce resources	498 (94.50%)
3.	Bridging the gap of inequality	507 (96.20%)
4.	Sustained vocational training and empowerment	503 (95.45%)

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5.	Employment generation	501 (95.01%)
6.	Diversified means of revenue generation	413 (78.37%)
7.	Improved education and healthcare	493 (93.55%)
8.	Adoption of a workable external model	421 (79.87%)

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Source: Field Survey 2017.

In a similar way, the selected informants also share the same view with the respondents where they expressed in their various views that there are several strategies that can be used to alleviate poverty in Gombe State. They expressed that there is a need for the State Government to come up with some substantive measures to alleviate poverty in the state and these measures can include improvement in the quality and affordability of education and healthcare services, designing of social investment programmes, intensive vocational training, sustained employment generation, adopting models of Brazilian Conditional Cash Transfer or Bolsa Familia or the Malaysian model of empowerment and welfare and a sincerity of purpose by the policy makers.

Gombe State is one of the States that are blessed with abundant natural resources that will foster empowerment and successful poverty reduction programmes if appropriate measures are taken. For example, social investment programmes reflecting that of the Federal Government's N-Power, anchor borrowers and trader moni can engage several unemployed in the State for meaningful economic activities. Furthermore, proper management of scarce resources will imply utilisation of available opportunities. For instance, the State is one of the few in the country privileged with two major dams, the Dadin Kowa Dam Yamaltu/Deba Local Government and Cham Dam in Balanga Local Government. They could be utilise for irrigation farming and generation of electricity for domestic consumption, establishment of industrial clusters and for generation of revenue from neighbourhood. The 40 Megawatt Dadin Kowa Dam project is yet to be employed into usage. Some of the companies that the State initiated but were neglected should be revisited such as the Manto tomato processing company in Akko Local Government, cotton ginnery and textile industries as well as poultry production all under the watch of the State Government. This will diversify revenue generation and improved employment generation. Efforts should be made in rapid industrialisation particularly small scale. The biggest mistake of relinquishing major factories such as Ashaka/Lafarge Cement and Vegfru tomato company should be revisited and ownership should be reconsidered.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be deduced from the research conducted here that poverty increase in the whole of Nigeria and Gombe state. This is because the rate of poverty incidence keeps shooting up despite many attempts by Nigerian government to curb it. The most nagging issue in Nigeria is that, while revenue keeps on increasing accruing to oil windfall in 2003, the revenue incurred did not translate into any positive development to the masses like poverty eradication and provision of infrastructures. The paper recommends the following if poverty is to be eradicated sincerely and promptly in Gombe State and Nigeria at large. In any poverty eradication policy in Gombe State, judicious use of revenue accrued to the state is necessary vis-à-vis the population especially the section identified as poor. There is need for proper projection into the future of population increase when the policy is to be introduced. There should not be a situation where the estimated revenue accrued to the state is used to plan for poverty eradication presently without consideration of percentage increase for it later to surpass the estimated number. A good planning is necessary and proper record keeping before a poverty eradication policy is implemented giving specific attention to the future. For a sincere poverty eradication policy to be on ground, the agencies responsible for data collection should be given a free hand to identify the beneficiaries. Such ministries like Economic Planning, Rural Development, and Bureau of Statistics should be given autonomy to collect data on the targeted population. The outcome should not be tempered for just political or selfish reasons as it happened in the selection of beneficiaries of NAPEP policy in Gombe State.

In order to curb the menace of rising poverty figures in Gombe State, there is need for serious tackling of other issues that are related to poverty or poverty indicators. Efforts should be geared towards provision of quality education and not just building of additional classes without corresponding quality teachers and modern as well as adequate facilities of learning. Healthcare delivery service should focus on provision of well-trained medical personnel and not renovation of hospital premises alone. Provision of infrastructure should be given consideration with a radical shift from road construction only to provision of portable drinking water, electricity, adequate drainage system, boost agriculture, small scale industries, security etc. This will ginger economic activities that will affect many and eradicate poverty in the long run. There is need for the Gombe State Government to borrow from other poverty eradication scheme obtainable in other developing countries particularly, which proved to be vibrant in reducing deprivation and dependency problems. The number of dependents can be catered by a policy scheme like that of Brazil. Gombe State government and Nigeria at large should borrow Brazilian Bolsa Familia which is Conditional Cash Transfer.

School enrolment, hospital attendance for immunisation of children, honouring government's policy like birth registration should be accompanied with direct cash transfer to the parents to empower them and encourage them to work hard and facilitate school enrolment and immunisation policy. It worked out successfully in Brazil. It should be tried here because of the affordability of the policy. The government can also consider Malaysian model of youth and gender empowerment as another alternative model. This is because Nigeria has a similar population characteristics of majority youth and a significant percentage of female gender among the population which is deprived, unable to enrol their children in school, without adequate access to immunisation, ante-natal care, quality education and entrepreneurship development. If Gombe State and Nigeria by extension, will adopt these models, it may achieve similar or even better outcome particularly with sincerity of purpose and genuine desire for appropriate implementation.

The government also needs to improve people's income by embarking on serious macro-economic policies that can affect the whole population. There is need to create many jobs, facilitate industrialisation, mechanised agriculture, increase the value of currency, promote export of local products, reduce inflation and local company tax and other related issues to boost and improve economic activities that will improve people's income. Improvement in people's income will lead to increase saving, increase investment, increase demand and supply. All these can assist tremendously in the eradication of poverty in the long run.

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