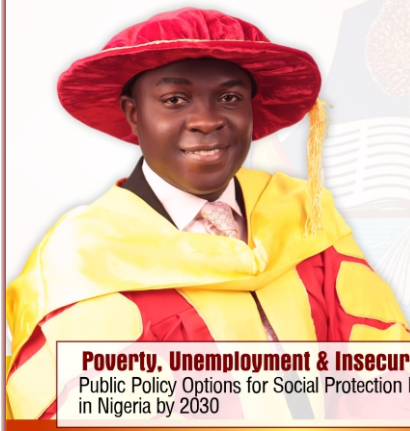




3rd Institute Distinguished Lecture Series
Institute of Public Policy & Administration
University of Calabar, Calabar

NOVEMBER 27TH, 2024



Poverty, Unemployment & Insecurity Nexus:
Public Policy Options for Social Protection Interventions
in Nigeria by 2030

DR. BASSEY EKPENYONG ANAM
Distinguished Lecturer



**POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT AND INSECURITY NEXUS:
PUBLIC POLICY OPTIONS FOR
SOCIAL PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS
IN NIGERIA BY 2030**

*3rd Distinguished Lecture Series of the
Institute of Public Policy and Administration,
University of Calabar, Calabar*

▪ **DR. BASSEY EKPENYONG ANAM**

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Citation for Distinguished Lecture:

Dr. Bassey Ekpenyong Anam

Dr. Bassey Anam, a distinguished academic and researcher, hails from Calabar, Nigeria. His scholarly journey is marked by excellence, having earned a PhD in Development Studies (2016), an MSc in Development Studies (2010), a BSc in Policy and Administrative Studies (2007), and a National Diploma in Local Government Administration (2002)—all from the prestigious University of Calabar.

With over a decade of dedicated service at the Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA), University of Calabar, Dr Anam has risen through the ranks to become a Senior Research Fellow. His leadership acumen is reflected in his roles as Acting Director of IPPA and as Chair of several strategic committees, including those on Quality Assurance, Research, Linkages and Collaboration, and Convocation.

Dr Anam's influence extends well beyond the academic community. He has been a guest speaker and resource person at numerous national and international conferences, including those hosted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria, the Conference of Registrars in Colleges of Education, and the Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered). His expertise spans corporate governance, research grant acquisition, and human resource management in complex and dynamic environments.

A prolific and widely respected scholar, Dr Anam has authored and co-edited over 40 academic books and published more than 50 research papers in high-impact journals—many of which are indexed in Google

Scholar and Scopus. His research has been supported by reputable institutions, including the European Union, TETFund, CODESRIA, and the British Council.

Dr Anam is an active member of various professional bodies, such as the International Research and Development Institute, the African Research Council on Sustainable Development, and the United Nations-African International Partnership for Sustainable Development Goals. His work continues to make a significant impact on public policy, international development, and human resource management globally.

At the core of Dr Anam's life is his unwavering faith and dedication to family. A devout Christian, he is married to Mrs Iniobong Anam, and together they are blessed with four wonderful children.

Today, we proudly recognise Dr Bassey Anam—a visionary leader, esteemed academic, and devoted family man—whose contributions to education, research, and policy are shaping minds and transforming institutions across Nigeria and beyond.



Dedication

This work is dedicated with deep respect and profound gratitude to
Professor Agnes Sylvester Antai;
My academic mentor, teacher, and guide.

Your unwavering commitment to scholarship, your integrity, and your exemplary dedication to the pursuit of knowledge have profoundly shaped my academic journey. Through your mentorship, I have learned not only the value of critical thinking and rigorous research but also the importance of humility, perseverance, and purpose in the life of a scholar.

Thank you for believing in me, for challenging me, and for guiding me with wisdom and patience. This accomplishment is a reflection of your investment in my growth.

May this work stand as a small testament to the enduring influence of a great teacher.



Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I give all glory, honor, and praise to Almighty God, the author and finisher of my faith, whose grace, strength, and divine wisdom sustained me throughout this challenging yet fulfilling academic journey. Without His guidance, none of this would have been possible.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Calabar, Professor Florence Obi, whose visionary leadership and unwavering support for academic excellence created a conducive environment for research and learning. I am equally thankful to the Director of the Institute of Public Policy and Administration, University of Calabar, Professor Eucharia Nwagbara, whose administrative guidance and encouragement significantly contributed to the success of this work. I acknowledge the teaching and non-teaching staff of the Institute, for their camaraderie, constructive criticism, and intellectual exchange.

My deepest appreciation goes to my distinguished **Professors, Teachers, and Mentors**, Professor Agnes Antai, Professor C. C. Ikeji, Prof. Simeon Ering, Professor Monday Ushie, Professor Antigha Bassey, Professor Agba, Professor Festus Nkoyen, Professor K. Ukwai, Professor Donald Enu, Professor Emmanuel Ekuri, Professor Susan Umoh, Professor Uchennna Ajake, Professor Bassey Bassey, Professor T. A. Ojuah, Professor Mboto, Professor Francisca Bassey, Associate Professor Unor Agbor, Associate Professor Otu Duke, Associate Professor Pius Abang, Associate Professor Ojong, Associate Professor Frank Attah, Associate Professor Felix Eteng, etc past and present, who laid the academic foundation upon which the arguments in this lecture

is built. Your knowledge, mentorship, and high standards of scholarship have shaped my academic life in profound ways.

I am also grateful to the International Institute for Policy Review and Development and the African Research Council on Sustainable Development to which I belong. Their platforms have enriched my understanding, broadened my network, and provided invaluable resources that informed the depth of this research.

To my beloved parents, Elder & Elder Mrs. E. Anam, In-laws; Dr. & Lady Apostle Ukpabio, and extended family, your love, prayers, and sacrifices have been my source of inspiration. I owe you more than words can express.

My heartfelt thanks also go to my wife, Mrs Iniobong Bassey Anam, whose unwavering love, patience, and encouragement carried me through the toughest moments of this journey. To my Joel, Jesse, Jael, and Jemmy, thank you for being my motivation and constant reminder of why perseverance is so important.

I deeply appreciate my staff, Mary Sunday, Glory, Amah, and Emmanuel. You guys are the best. Your support fostered an enriching academic environment and pushed me to do better.

To my students and fellow researchers, your curiosity, energy, and passion for knowledge have been both humbling and inspiring. Teaching and learning with you have sharpened my insights and given me a renewed purpose as a scholar.

Finally, to everyone who contributed to this work in one way or another, I say thank you. This achievement is not mine alone—it is a shared victory.

God bless you all.



A Welcome Address Presented by

Prof. E. N. Nwagbara

Director, IPPA

On the Occasion of the Institute of Public Policy &
Administration Lecture Held on 27th November, 2024 at
The Senate Chambers, University of Calabar, Calabar

Vice Chancellor

Deputy Vice Chancellors

Registrar

University Librarian

Deans of Faculties

Directors of Institutes

Traditional leader here present,

Friends and family members of the lecturer,

Esteemed Guests, Ladies and gentlemen, Faculty members,

Great Malabites and Malabresses!!!

I am super delighted to welcome you all to today's Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA) lecture, titled “Poverty, Poverty, Unemployment and Insecurity Nexus: Public Policy Options for Social Protection Intervention in Nigeria by 2030” presented by our very own ebullient and distinguished speaker, Dr. Bassey Ekpenyong Anam. Of truth, today's event is a significant milestone in our institute's ongoing efforts to reposition itself and foster intellectual discourse, innovation, and excellence.

First and foremost, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Bassey Anam, who has graciously accepted the IPPA Board invitation to share

his thoughts and expertise on this provocative topic with us even on very short notice. Dear Dr, Anam, your presence in this Senate Chambers today is a testament to your commitment to advancing knowledge and inspiring present and future leaders. Indeed, you have broken a record today and I pray that the next record you will break may be yours!

To our guests, faculty, staff, and students, I am delighted to see such a strong turnout. Your interest in today's lecture and your engagement with our institute's activities are what make our academic community thrive.

Indeed, today's lecture, "Poverty, Poverty, Unemployment and Insecurity Nexus: Public Policy Options for Social Protection Intervention in Nigeria by 2030", promises to be enlightening and thought-provoking. Despite being Africa's largest economy, Nigeria has a significant poverty rate, with approximately 40% of the population living below the poverty line. Again, Nigeria's unemployment rate is high, particularly among youth, with a rate of over 30%. On the issue of security, the country faces various security challenges, including insurgency, banditry, and kidnapping, which have displaced millions of people and exacerbated poverty and unemployment. The list is endless. Where do we go from here?

We have Dr. Anam to provide the answer and also offer us the public policy options for social interventions in Nigeria. Our lecturer Dr. Bassey Anam will share valuable insights on the topic, shedding light on the latest developments and challenges raised in the topic. This lecture series aims to facilitate meaningful discussions, encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, and foster a deeper understanding of the complex issues shaping our economy.

The Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA) remains committed to providing a platform for intellectual exploration, critical thinking, and knowledge sharing on socio-economic and development issues and their public policy implications. We strive to create an environment that nurtures creativity, innovation, excellence, and growth, and we are grateful for the support of our amiable, first female Vice Chancellor of the University of Calabar, Prof. Florence Banku Obi. Upon assumption of office as the Vice-Chancellor, you charged us your appointees to flood the campus with academic activities such as conferences, distinguished lectures, workshops, seminars, etc. Ma, I hope IPPA is on course with your mandate.

Before I hand over the floor to our speaker, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of our organizing committee, who have worked tirelessly to make today's event possible. Thank you for your dedication and hard work. Once again, I gladly welcome you all to this epoch-making intellectual feast. Do sit back, enjoy it, and remain blessed.

Thank you.



Opening Remark by
Professor Agnes Sylvester Antai

The Chairman,
3rd Distinguished Lecture Series of the Institute of
Public Policy and Administration, University of Calabar,
Calabar.

*Distinguished guests, esteemed colleagues, faculty members,
students, ladies and gentlemen;*

It is my great honour and privilege to welcome you all to the **3rd Distinguished Lecture Series** of the **Institute of Public Policy and Administration**. We are gathered here today not just to witness another academic milestone, but to engage critically with one of the most pressing and multidimensional challenges of our time—**the intersection of unemployment and insecurity** in Nigeria.

Our lecture today, titled *“Poverty, Unemployment and Insecurity Nexus: Public Policy Options for Social Protection Interventions in Nigeria by 2030”*, could not be more timely or relevant. The intricate link between joblessness and rising insecurity has become a defining issue in our national discourse, with implications for governance, peacebuilding, and socio-economic development.

We are indeed honoured to have with us a brilliant mind and a highly respected voice in the field of development studies and public policy, **Dr. Bassey Anam**, who will be leading today's discourse. Dr. Anam is not only a seasoned academic, but also a pragmatic policy thinker whose work continues to shape conversations around inclusive development and sustainable governance frameworks.

The Distinguished Lecture Series is a platform designed to provoke thoughtful dialogue, encourage research-based policy solutions, and stimulate stakeholder engagement. As such, today's lecture aligns perfectly with our commitment at the Institute to provide academic leadership and policy-relevant research that addresses real-world challenges.

As we look toward the **year 2030**—a critical milestone for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals—we must ask hard questions and craft pragmatic policy pathways that will secure social protection, reduce unemployment, and guarantee national security. This forum offers us a unique opportunity to reflect, question, and contribute toward solutions that will shape Nigeria's development trajectory in the years to come.

Once again, I warmly welcome you all. Let us listen, engage, and be inspired to act.

Thank you, and God bless.



Opening Remark by
Prof. Florence Banku Obi
Vice Chancellor,
University of Calabar, Calabar

*Distinguished Guests, Esteemed Colleagues, Ladies and
Gentlemen, Good morning!*

It is with great honor and profound pleasure that I warmly welcome you all to this 3rd Distinguished Lecture, organized by the Institute of Public Policy and Administration, University of Calabar, on the timely and critical topic: *“Poverty, Poverty, Unemployment and Insecurity Nexus: Public Policy Options for Social Protection Interventions in Nigeria by 2030.”*

This lecture marks an important milestone in our collective efforts to deepen our understanding of the complex interplay between poverty, unemployment, and insecurity—issues that continue to pose significant challenges to Nigeria's sustainable development and social stability.

As we gather here today, we are reminded of the imperative to explore innovative and effective policy solutions that can safeguard the vulnerable, promote inclusive growth, and ultimately secure a peaceful and prosperous future for our nation by the year 2030.

I am particularly delighted to extend my heartfelt appreciation to our Guest Lecturer, Dr. Bassey Anam, whose profound expertise and insightful scholarship have greatly enriched this discourse. The depth of analysis and clarity presented in the lecture not only shed light on the

structural dynamics of poverty and insecurity but also offered pragmatic public policy options that can drive impactful social protection interventions.

Your dedication to research and policy advocacy in this field is truly commendable and serves as an inspiration to us all. On behalf of the organizing committee and all present here, I express our sincere gratitude for your invaluable contribution.

I also wish to acknowledge the presence of our distinguished guests, scholars, practitioners, and all participants whose engagement is vital to the success of this lecture.

Let us all take this opportunity to engage meaningfully, reflect critically, and collaborate toward building a Nigeria where social protection is robust and accessible to all by 2030.

Thank you.



Goodwill Message by
Pastor (Hon.) James Anam
*The Executive Chairman,
Calabar Municipal Local Government Area, Cross River State*

*Distinguished Scholars, Esteemed Guests, Ladies and
Gentlemen,*

It is with immense pleasure and profound respect that I extend my heartfelt congratulations and warmest goodwill to all participants, organizers, and the esteemed Guest Lecturer on this landmark occasion—the inaugural lecture addressing the critical theme of “*Poverty, Poverty, Unemployment and Insecurity Nexus: Public Policy Options for Social Protection Interventions in Nigeria by 2030.*”

This lecture is more than a mere academic exercise. It represents a pivotal moment for reflection, learning, and action on some of the most formidable challenges confronting Nigeria today. Poverty, unemployment, and insecurity have long been interconnected forces that have shaped the socio-economic landscape of our nation, often to the detriment of sustainable growth, social harmony, and human dignity.

Understanding the Nexus

Poverty in Nigeria remains a persistent and widespread phenomenon, with millions of citizens living below the poverty line. Unemployment, particularly among the youth and graduates, exacerbates economic hardship and deepens social exclusion. When these issues persist unchecked, they breed insecurity, often manifesting as conflicts, insurgency, and social unrest. The nexus between these three factors

creates a complex and vicious cycle that demands urgent, innovative, and inclusive policy responses.

The lecture today offers an invaluable opportunity to dissect this nexus critically and holistically, providing fresh perspectives on how social protection policies can serve as a transformative tool. Social protection, when effectively designed and implemented, can cushion vulnerable populations against shocks, foster human capital development, and enhance social cohesion. This is crucial for Nigeria, a country with vast human potential yet grappling with development challenges that threaten the well-being and future of its people.

Significance of Public Policy Options

Public policy plays a central role in shaping the trajectory of social protection interventions. This lecture's focus on policy options aligns with the urgent need for evidence-based, context-sensitive strategies that can respond to Nigeria's unique realities. From cash transfer programs to employment generation schemes, and community safety nets to educational opportunities, the spectrum of public policy tools must be leveraged with precision and inclusivity.

As we aim toward Nigeria's Vision 2030, which envisages a prosperous, inclusive, and secure nation, the insights shared here are vital. The policy options discussed have the potential not only to alleviate immediate hardships but also to build resilience among the most marginalized groups. These strategies can empower citizens to break free from the cycles of poverty and unemployment that fuel insecurity.

Appreciation of Scholarship and Leadership

I take this moment to commend the Guest Lecturer for the outstanding scholarship and thought leadership evident in this work. The depth of analysis, clarity of vision, and practical recommendations presented

demonstrate a profound commitment to national development and human welfare. Your dedication to exploring and illuminating these interrelated challenges is invaluable to policymakers, academics, and practitioners alike.

It is through intellectual rigor and public engagement such as this lecture that we can hope to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The discourse generated here will undoubtedly enrich ongoing conversations about social protection and national security.

Call to Action

As we celebrate this inaugural lecture, let it serve as a clarion call for all stakeholders—government officials, civil society, academia, and international partners—to intensify collaboration toward comprehensive social protection frameworks. We must commit to policies that are inclusive, sustainable, and grounded in empirical research.

Nigeria's path to 2030 is laden with challenges, but also tremendous opportunities. Through collective effort and informed policy innovation, we can forge a society where poverty is reduced, employment opportunities abound, and security is restored and maintained.

In conclusion, I urge all attendees to engage actively with the lecture's content, to debate, reflect, and translate knowledge into action. Together, we can contribute to the realization of a Nigeria where social justice, economic empowerment, and peace reign supreme.

Once again, congratulations to our Guest Lecturer Dr. Bassey Ekpenyong Anam, and the organizers for this milestone event. I wish you all fruitful deliberations and inspiring engagement.

Thank you.



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Section 1

Introduction:

Poverty, Unemployment and Insecurity Nexus: Public Policy Options for Social Protection Interventions in Nigeria by 2030

The interconnected challenges of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity have emerged as critical impediments to sustainable development and social stability in Nigeria. These issues, while often examined separately, form a complex and interdependent nexus that significantly undermines the country's efforts towards economic growth, social inclusion, and peace. As Nigeria approaches 2030—the target year for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—it is imperative to deepen our understanding of these intertwined phenomena and explore coherent public policy options that can enhance social protection interventions across the nation.

Contextualising the Nexus of Poverty, Unemployment, and Insecurity

Poverty in Nigeria remains pervasive despite the country's abundant natural and human resources. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023), approximately 40% of Nigerians live below the national poverty line. This widespread deprivation manifests in limited access to essential services such as healthcare, education, clean water, and adequate housing. Poverty's prevalence is not merely an economic concern but also a social and political one, as it engenders exclusion, marginalisation, and disempowerment.

Closely linked to poverty is the issue of unemployment, particularly among the youth. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022) reports that Nigeria's youth unemployment rate stands at over 30%, with millions of young people lacking access to stable and decent work. Unemployment exacerbates economic insecurity, reduces household incomes, and contributes to social unrest. The absence of meaningful employment opportunities often leads to frustration, hopelessness, and, in some cases, engagement in criminal activities or insurgency.

Insecurity in Nigeria has escalated markedly over the past decade, fuelled by various forms of violence including terrorism, banditry, communal conflicts, and kidnappings. The nexus between insecurity and socioeconomic deprivation is well-documented (Akinola, 2019; Ojo, 2021). Communities afflicted by poverty and unemployment are more susceptible to recruitment by armed groups and participation in violent acts. This creates a feedback loop whereby insecurity deepens poverty and unemployment, which in turn further destabilises society.

Importance of Social Protection Interventions

Social protection has been globally recognised as a vital policy instrument to mitigate poverty and vulnerability. It encompasses a range of public and private measures designed to reduce economic and social risks and enhance the resilience of individuals and households (World Bank, 2018). For Nigeria, strengthening social protection systems is critical to breaking the cyclical nature of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity.

Social protection interventions can take various forms, including cash transfers, public works programmes, unemployment benefits, healthcare subsidies, and education support. When effectively designed and implemented, these programmes can provide safety nets for the

most vulnerable, promote human capital development, and foster social inclusion (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2004).

However, Nigeria's social protection landscape has historically been fragmented, underfunded, and inadequately targeted (Olayemi et al., 2020). Many existing programmes suffer from inefficiencies, poor coordination, and limited reach, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas. This underscores the urgent need to rethink and reform social protection policies to ensure they address the complex realities posed by the poverty-unemployment-insecurity nexus.

The Policy Imperative Towards 2030

The year 2030 represents a global commitment to achieving the SDGs, which aim to eradicate poverty, promote decent work, and ensure peace and justice (UN, 2015). Nigeria's Vision 2030 similarly outlines a strategic framework for national development that emphasises inclusive growth, security, and social well-being (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2010).

Achieving these ambitious goals requires integrated policy approaches that recognise the interlinkages between socio-economic challenges and security threats. Public policy options must move beyond piecemeal interventions and adopt comprehensive frameworks that leverage social protection as a tool for sustainable development and conflict prevention.

The scholarship and analysis presented in this lecture seek to contribute to this vital discourse by providing empirical evidence, theoretical insights, and practical policy recommendations. It examines the structural drivers of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity in Nigeria, evaluates existing social protection interventions, and proposes innovative policy options that align with national and global development agendas.

Section 2

Telling the Story of Nigeria, Presenting the Real Picture

Distinguished Scholars, Esteemed Guests, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me start by explaining the story of Nigeria with the pictures below,



Poverty Slums. It is a common thing to have slums in every state in Nigeria. Many live in poverty without hope of ever having a better life.



The desperation for gainful employment led many to unexpected and untimely death. In 2014, the Nigerian Immigration service recruitment exercise led to many deaths.



A high national unemployment rate serves as an environmental cue—a societal signal that emphasizes the severe consequences of job loss, such as financial instability and reduced social status. In Nigeria, where unemployment remains persistently high, this "environmental cue" affects not only those who are unemployed but also those who are currently employed.



Families in the North-east displaced by actions of violence and insurgency.

What common thread binds these lives together? Vulnerabilities.

These are the faces of poverty in Nigeria. They represent individuals and families caught in the relentless cycle of socioeconomic vulnerability. They are disproportionately affected by economic shocks, exploited by fraudulent entities, and entangled in a web that perpetuates inequalities and inequities.

Poverty, Unemployment and insecurity trail this narrative, feeding off one another. The unemployed street vendor might find herself vulnerable to scams promising non-existent jobs. The displaced family faces not only homelessness but the constant threat of insecurity and economic displacement. The young girl, without access to education or economic opportunity, becomes trapped in a cycle of dependence. The aging labourer, without social security, works until his body is weak and he is unable to afford medical care.

These stories are not isolated; they are interconnected threads in the fabric of a nation in crisis. Poverty, unemployment, and insecurity are not just abstract phenomena—they are lived realities.

Nigeria gained an unfortunate title as the country with the World's largest population living in extreme poverty (World Bank, 2024). This was also announced by the Vice President of the World Bank at the 2024 National Economic Summit held in Nigeria. Nigeria's poverty story is still the same since 1999, when poverty reduction was a top priority in the Obasanjo administration. Though policies and programmes to curb the menace have been set up and recycled across successive administrations (Antai and Anam, 2014), the country is rich but its people are poor, and where poverty stands, unemployment and insecurity are not far behind. This realisation highlights an urgent need for solutions that go beyond conventional economic growth strategies to address the deep-seated issues of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity.

In this presentation, I examine the interconnected issues of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity, drawing out their interrelations and highlighting social protection interventions aimed at alleviating vulnerabilities and promoting development in Nigeria. Through descriptive and scoping analyses, with a focus on the South-South

Nigeria, the impact of these policies in addressing regional challenges is assessed. Eventually, I propose a context-specific and transformative framework designed to achieve economic resilience, reduce poverty, and enhance security. This comprehensive approach aligns with Nigeria's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aiming to reimagine social protection as a catalyst for stability and inclusive growth by 2030.

The Problem Statement

Nigeria faces a persistent and multifaceted crisis characterized by the interlocking challenges of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity, which create a vicious cycle of socioeconomic vulnerability and instability. Despite numerous policy interventions, progress remains limited: 40.1% of the population lives below the 2018/19 national monetary poverty line, and 63% are multi-dimensionally poor, reflecting compounded deprivation in health, education, and living standards (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). The unemployment rate, particularly among youth, continues to escalate, exacerbating disenfranchisement and driving many into criminal activities, insurgency, and other forms of insecurity.

The South-South Nigeria region exemplifies the stark realities of this crisis. Despite being a resource-rich area and the hub of Nigeria's oil production, the region remains plagued by high levels of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity. Over 70% of youth in the South-South Nigeria live below the poverty line, and widespread unemployment has become both a driver of conflict and an obstacle to peace and regional development. The region's paradox of resource wealth alongside persistent underdevelopment underscores the systemic failures in translating natural resource revenue into equitable socio-economic progress. This disconnect has fuelled grievances, militancy, and environmental degradation, making the South-South Nigeria a critical

case study for understanding the nexus of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity.

The historical trajectory of Nigeria's development reveals a pattern of failed or poorly implemented poverty alleviation efforts. Since the civil administration of President Shagari and successive military regimes, significant resources have been allocated to combating poverty. Yet, by 1999, the Human Development Index (HDI) stood at 0.47, with nearly 70% of Nigerians living in poverty (Ayodeji & Adebayo, 2015). These failures have been perpetuated by systemic challenges, including:

1. Endemic corruption
2. Weak governance
3. Policy inconsistency
4. Poor policy evaluation

The social consequences of these challenges are evident in recent upheavals, including the Japa Syndrome, ENDSARS protests, and END BAD GOVERNANCE movements, which clearly shows public dissatisfaction with the state of governance, economic mismanagement, and the erosion of public trust. Meanwhile, the security situation has deteriorated further, with terrorism, banditry, and militancy severely affecting Northern Nigeria and the South-South Nigeria region. These crises threaten national cohesion and development, creating an urgent demand for integrated, innovative responses.

As Nigeria's population is projected to surpass 250 million by 2030, and with emerging World Bank predictions of higher poverty indices, unemployment and insecurity, the stakes are higher. Unchecked poverty, rising unemployment, and escalating insecurity jeopardize the country's long-term stability and its aspirations for sustainable development. While social protection interventions hold promise as a

critical policy tool, existing measures are often fragmented, underfunded, and poorly targeted, limiting their impact. This paper identifies an alternative policy framework to address existing policy challenges, while also sustainable strategy for Nigeria.

Objectives

1. To analyse the interconnections between poverty, unemployment, and insecurity in Nigeria.
2. Provide an outlook on the problem of poverty, unemployment and insecurity in the South-South region of Nigeria.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of past and existing social protection interventions, and identify challenges in the implementation of these interventions.
4. To propose innovative and context-specific public policy solutions/framework for achieving sustainable development and national stability by 2030.



Section 3

Conceptual Clarifications

Conceptual Clarification of the Variables: Poverty, Unemployment and Insecurity

The Concept of Poverty

There is extant literature on poverty. I choose to define the concept based on personal research and interactions with the vulnerable and core poor. Poverty means “a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation.”

Poverty remains a critical issue in Nigeria, affecting millions and undermining national development efforts. Despite its vast natural and human resources, Nigeria continues to struggle with high poverty levels, ranking among the countries with the highest number of people living in extreme poverty globally. The persistence of poverty in Nigeria is attributed to a combination of socio-economic, political, and structural factors. This essay explores the meaning of poverty within the Nigerian context and examines its key characteristics, drawing on scholarly sources and empirical data (Attah, Akpan & Anam, 2021).

Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses more than just the lack of income or financial resources. The World Bank defines poverty as “pronounced deprivation in well-being,” which includes lack of access to education, healthcare, clean water, and adequate shelter (World Bank, 2020). In the Nigerian context, poverty is often viewed in terms of absolute and relative deprivation. Absolute poverty refers to a condition where individuals are unable to meet the basic requirements for survival, such as food, clothing, and shelter. Relative poverty, on the other hand, pertains to inequality in income distribution and access to opportunities relative to others in society (Olawuyi & Adetunji, 2013).

Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) defines poverty in relation to the minimum income required to afford a basic standard of living. According to the NBS (2020), over 40% of Nigerians live below the national poverty line, signifying that a large portion of the population is unable to meet essential living needs. This economic deprivation often intersects with other forms of marginalisation, such as lack of access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities.

Characteristics of Poverty in Nigeria

1. High Unemployment and Underemployment Rates

One of the most visible characteristics of poverty in Nigeria is the high rate of unemployment and underemployment, especially among the youth. According to the NBS (2020), Nigeria's unemployment rate stood at 33.3%, with youth unemployment even higher. This lack of gainful employment contributes significantly to poverty, as individuals are unable to earn incomes sufficient to support themselves and their families. The informal sector, characterised by low wages and job insecurity, absorbs a significant portion of the labour force, thereby perpetuating the cycle of poverty (Ajakaiye & Adeyeye, 2001).

2. Low Literacy and Educational Attainment

Education is a key determinant of poverty levels, and in Nigeria, low educational attainment is both a cause and consequence of poverty. Access to quality education remains limited, particularly in rural and conflict-affected regions. According to UNESCO (2021), Nigeria has one of the highest numbers of out-of-school children in the world. Poor families are often unable to afford school fees, uniforms, and transportation, leading to early school dropouts and limiting future economic opportunities for their children (Umar & Abdullahi, 2015).

3. Inadequate Access to Basic Services

Another defining characteristic of poverty in Nigeria is inadequate access to basic services such as healthcare, clean water, and electricity. Many communities, particularly in rural areas, lack functional health centres, potable water, and sanitation facilities. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) reports that maternal and infant mortality rates in Nigeria are among the highest globally due to poor access to quality health services. Similarly, the lack of electricity and modern infrastructure limits business operations and household productivity, further entrenching poverty (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

4. Regional Disparities and Urban-Rural Divide

Poverty in Nigeria is unevenly distributed across regions, with the northern part of the country experiencing higher poverty rates than the south. The North-East and North-West zones are particularly affected due to insurgency, lower educational attainment, and limited economic activities. For example, the NBS (2020) reports that states like Sokoto, Taraba, and Jigawa have the highest poverty rates, while Lagos and Ogun states have the lowest. The urban-rural divide also contributes significantly to poverty, with rural areas lacking infrastructure and economic opportunities that are more readily available in urban centres (Omotola, 2008).

5. High Dependency Ratio

A high dependency ratio, where a large proportion of the population is not economically active, is another feature of poverty in Nigeria. With a youthful population and limited employment opportunities, many households are dependent on a few income earners. This limits the capacity of families to save and invest in education or healthcare, thereby reinforcing the poverty cycle (Oyekale, 2011).

6. Vulnerability to Shocks and Insecurity

The poor in Nigeria are highly vulnerable to economic, environmental, and social shocks. Events such as price inflation, climate change impacts (e.g., flooding and desertification), and insurgency significantly affect livelihoods, especially for those engaged in agriculture and informal labour. The Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East, for instance, has displaced millions, disrupted economic activities, and increased poverty levels in the region (International Crisis Group, 2017). Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic had a disproportionate impact on the poor, further exacerbating income inequalities and access to healthcare (UNDP, 2020).

Poverty in Nigeria is a complex and multifaceted issue that extends beyond mere income deprivation to include lack of access to essential services, education, employment, and infrastructure. Its persistence is driven by structural inequalities, regional disparities, and vulnerability to socio-economic shocks. Addressing poverty in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that targets its root causes, including investment in education, healthcare, job creation, and social protection programmes. Only through inclusive and sustainable development strategies can Nigeria hope to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

The indicators of poverty have evolved significantly, from basic income thresholds to more nuanced, multidimensional perspectives. De Schutter and Raworth (2024) present various approaches, including the widely used Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) or money-centric method, which aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) target for 2030. Under this framework, poverty is defined as surviving on less than \$2.15 per day (in 2017 PPP). Despite being a global benchmark, this measure has been criticised for narrowly focusing on minimal survival needs and failing to capture the broader societal and economic factors that trap individuals in poverty.

Increasingly, the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (2010), is seen as a more comprehensive poverty measure. Unlike the CBN approach, the MPI considers various deprivation indicators across health, education, and living standards, presenting a fuller picture of poverty's impact on individuals and communities. However, Nigeria's poverty assessments largely remain income-based, limiting insights into the complexity of poverty. This paper employs the CBN approach for consistency, while incorporating insights from adjacent issues like unemployment and insecurity to enhance understanding. Figure 1 below shows the proportion of Nigerians living above poverty in selected states. The National Average stands at 54%, with the highest state average in Lagos State at 91.5%.

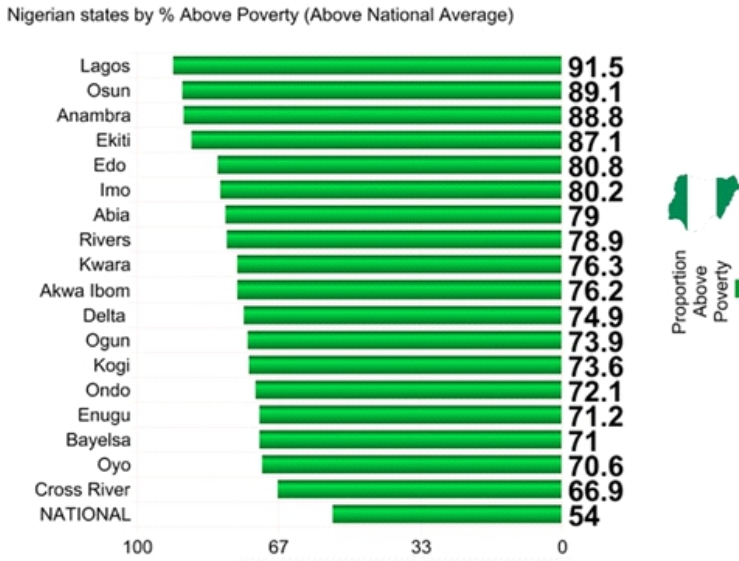


Figure 1: Proportion of Nigerians living above poverty in selected states. National Average stands at 54%, highest state average is Lagos state at 91.5%

The Concept of Unemployment

Unemployment refers to the situation in which individuals who are willing and able to work at prevailing wage rates cannot find employment. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2021), unemployment encompasses all persons above a specified age who, during a reference period, are without work, currently available for work, and actively seeking employment. In Nigeria, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) defines unemployment as the proportion of the labour force that is willing to work, is actively seeking employment, but remains without work (NBS, 2020).

Unemployment in Nigeria can be categorised into several types, including structural, cyclical, frictional, and seasonal unemployment. Structural unemployment arises from a mismatch between the skills of job seekers and the requirements of employers, while cyclical unemployment is linked to fluctuations in the economic cycle. Frictional unemployment occurs when individuals are between jobs, and seasonal unemployment relates to jobs that are only available at certain times of the year, such as in agriculture or tourism (Adebayo, 2013).

Unemployment is a key indicator of the health of an economy. It is defined as a situation in which someone is able and willing to work but cannot find employment. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the unemployed comprise all persons above a specified age who, during a reference period (typically a week or a month), were not in paid employment or self-employment, were available for work, and were actively seeking work (Winkelmann, 2014). A high unemployment rate in a country is indicative of a weak job market with limited opportunities, posing a threat to job security.

According to Jing and Tony (2024), a high national unemployment rate acts as an environmental cue—a societal signal that highlights the severe consequences of job loss, such as financial instability and reduced social status. In Nigeria, where unemployment remains persistently high, this "environmental cue" affects not only those who are unemployed but also those who are currently employed.

For employed individuals, the high unemployment rate fosters a heightened sense of job insecurity and an intensified focus on financial stability, as they are acutely aware of the potential risk of job loss and the associated financial hardships. This increased focus on survival often

discourages personal and professional development efforts, reinforcing a mindset centred on short-term financial gain rather than long-term career growth. For unemployed individuals, this pervasive job insecurity translates into increased psychological stress, anxiety over prolonged financial hardship, and a greater vulnerability to social unrest and frustration, which can contribute to broader insecurity.

Unemployment remains one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges in Nigeria, with far-reaching consequences for economic growth, political stability, and social cohesion. As Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria faces increasing pressure to generate employment opportunities for its rapidly growing labour force. Despite various initiatives aimed at diversifying the economy and attracting investment, the unemployment rate has continued to rise, particularly among the youth.

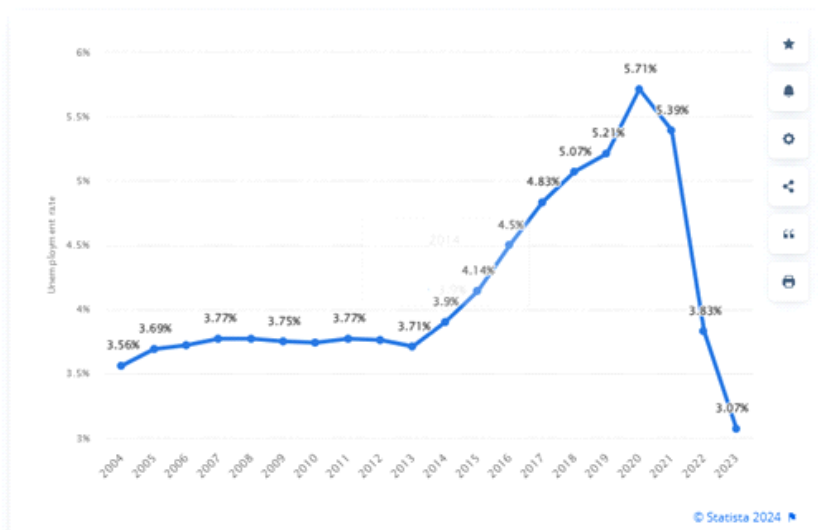


Figure 2: Trend of unemployment rate in Nigeria from 2004 to 2023

Characteristics of Unemployment in Nigeria

1. High Youth Unemployment

One of the most defining features of unemployment in Nigeria is its disproportionate impact on young people. Youth unemployment, defined as the percentage of the labour force aged 15–34 without work, remains alarmingly high. According to the NBS (2020), the youth unemployment rate exceeded 42.5% in 2020. This trend is driven by rapid population growth, insufficient job creation, and a mismatch between educational qualifications and labour market requirements. Many Nigerian graduates lack the practical skills demanded by employers, resulting in elevated graduate unemployment (Ogunyemi & Olamitunji, 2013).

2. Underemployment and Informality

Underemployment is another significant characteristic of Nigeria's labour market. The NBS (2020) defines underemployment as the condition in which individuals are working fewer than full-time hours or in jobs that do not fully utilise their skills and qualifications. Nigeria's underemployment rate stood at 22.8% in 2020, reflecting the prevalence of low-quality jobs in the informal sector. Informal employment—including street vending, motorcycle transport (okada), and petty trading—dominates the labour market, often providing meagre incomes and no job security (Okafor, 2011).

3. Urban-Rural Disparities

Unemployment in Nigeria also highlights stark urban-rural disparities. Urban areas typically have higher recorded unemployment rates due to increased population density and job-seeking activity, whereas rural areas experience high levels of disguised unemployment—people engaged in low-productivity agricultural work. Urban unemployment is more visible, while rural joblessness often goes unrecorded due to

subsistence farming and informal work arrangements (Umaru & Zubairu, 2012).

4. Gender Inequality

Gender disparities are prominent in Nigeria's unemployment statistics. Women are more likely to face both unemployment and underemployment compared to men, particularly in the northern regions. Cultural barriers, lower female literacy rates, and limited access to economic opportunities contribute to this disparity (Olawale & Garwe, 2010). Women also encounter challenges in securing formal sector employment, often resorting to informal and low-paying occupations.

5. Regional Variations

Unemployment rates vary significantly across Nigeria's geopolitical zones. The northern states, especially in the North-East and North-West, report higher unemployment levels due to conflict, inadequate infrastructure, and low levels of educational attainment. In contrast, southern states such as Lagos, Rivers, and Ogun tend to have lower unemployment figures due to industrial activities and better access to services. However, even in these urbanised regions, job creation has not kept pace with rapid population growth (Ajakaiye et al., 2016).

6. Graduate and Educated Unemployment

A concerning trend in Nigeria is the high unemployment rate among educated individuals. Many university graduates are either unemployed or underemployed due to a lack of practical skills and misalignment between academic curricula and labour market demands. The overproduction of graduates in fields with limited employment prospects—such as the humanities and social sciences—has worsened the issue (Emeh, 2012). Furthermore, weak industrialisation and

limited private sector investment hinder the economy's ability to absorb skilled labour.

The widespread nature of unemployment in Nigeria has severe implications. Economically, it leads to lost productivity, decreased consumer spending, and a rise in dependency ratios. Socially, high unemployment contributes to poverty, crime, and political instability. The surge in armed robbery, kidnapping, and insurgency in parts of the country has been linked to youth unemployment (Aliyu, 2014). Politically, it undermines trust in government and democratic institutions, especially among young people who feel excluded from economic opportunities.

Unemployment in Nigeria is a persistent and complex challenge, marked by youth disenfranchisement, underemployment, regional inequalities, and gender-based barriers. It reflects deep-seated structural issues in the economy, including poor educational outcomes, lack of industrialisation, and inadequate job creation. Addressing unemployment requires coordinated efforts: reforming the education system, investing in skills development, promoting entrepreneurship, and improving the business environment. Sustainable economic growth must be inclusive to ensure that job creation keeps pace with the nation's expanding population.

The Concept of Insecurity

Insecurity is broadly defined as a persistent state of fear, vulnerability, and uncertainty regarding personal safety, often resulting from a perceived or actual lack of protection (Beland, 2005). It refers to a condition of exposure to danger or threats, coupled with a lack of safety and protection. According to Akin (2015), insecurity encompasses threats to life and property, as well as the inability of the state to maintain law and order. It involves a breakdown in the capacity of institutions to

protect individuals and communities from physical harm, economic deprivation, and emotional distress. In Nigeria, this concept extends beyond immediate physical danger to include psychological and economic instability. Many Nigerians experience insecurity not just as threats to their lives, but also as daily struggles to meet basic needs amidst unstable incomes, erratic access to essential services, and minimal social safety nets.

Achumba et al. (2013) describe security as the presence of stability, continuity of livelihood, and protection from physical and psychological harm. In contrast, insecurity reflects the absence or breakdown of these conditions. In Nigeria, insecurity is characterised by declining employment stability, unreliable access to essential services, and exposure to violent crime. These conditions disproportionately affect unemployed youth, many of whom resort to militancy, crime, or other destabilising behaviours as coping mechanisms.

Insecurity in Nigeria is largely linked to political instability, corruption, youth unemployment, ethnic tensions, and weak security institutions. As Olayemi (2012) observes, insecurity is both a cause and consequence of poor governance—where the failure to address underlying issues leads to a cycle of violence and unrest.

In Nigeria, insecurity manifests in multiple dimensions:

1. **Physical threats:** Including terrorism, militancy, banditry, kidnapping, and violent crime.
2. **Economic vulnerabilities:** Characterised by high unemployment, income instability, food insecurity, and limited access to social support systems. Youth disenfranchisement is especially acute, with many young people feeling excluded from social and economic opportunities, thereby fuelling restiveness

and heightening security challenges.

3. **Social insecurity:** Marked by a breakdown in community trust, weak institutions, and fragmented social structures. Rising insecurity hampers efforts at economic reform and national development.

Figure 3 illustrates that most Nigerian states are grappling with diverse security challenges. These include threats from militant Islamist groups, criminal gangs, herder–farmer conflicts, militant Biafran separatists, piracy, and violence by security forces against civilians.



Figure 3: Nigerian Map showing security threats across the country

Characteristics of Insecurity in Nigeria

1. Terrorism and Insurgency

The rise of terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) is a key characteristic of insecurity in

Nigeria, particularly in the North-East. Since 2009, Boko Haram has waged a violent insurgency, resulting in the deaths of over 35,000 people and displacing more than 2 million (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2021). The group targets civilians, government institutions, and security forces, rendering large areas of the region ungovernable.

2. Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom

Another notable feature of insecurity in Nigeria is the prevalence of armed banditry and kidnapping. In the North-West and parts of the North-Central region, armed groups engage in mass abductions, extortion, and violence against villagers. Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina States have become epicentres for such activities. Between 2011 and 2021, over \$18 million was paid in ransom to kidnappers across the country (SBM Intelligence, 2021). Kidnapping is widespread, affecting schoolchildren, travellers, and high-profile individuals across various regions.

3. Herders–Farmers Conflicts

Violent clashes between nomadic herders and sedentary farmers have escalated in recent years, particularly in the Middle Belt region. These conflicts are driven by competition over land and water resources, exacerbated by climate change and population pressure. According to Okoli and Atelhe (2014), the clashes have claimed thousands of lives and displaced entire communities, making it one of the deadliest forms of insecurity in Nigeria today.

4. Communal and Ethno-Religious Violence

Ethnic and religious divisions have historically contributed to insecurity in Nigeria. Communal clashes, often triggered by disputes over land ownership, traditional authority, or political representation, are common in states such as Plateau, Benue, and Taraba. Religious

extremism and intolerance have also incited violent incidents, particularly in regions with mixed religious populations (Adagba et al., 2012). These conflicts are often politicised, undermining efforts at national integration.

5. Militancy and Oil Theft in the Niger Delta

In the oil-rich Niger Delta, insecurity manifests in the form of militancy, vandalism of oil infrastructure, and illegal oil bunkering. Groups such as the Niger Delta Avengers have attacked pipelines and oil installations to demand greater local control of resources and protest against environmental degradation. These activities threaten national revenue, damage the environment, and endanger lives (Ikelegbe, 2005).

6. Cybercrime and Urban Criminality

Urban centres in Nigeria are increasingly plagued by cybercrime, internet fraud (locally referred to as “Yahoo Yahoo”), and gang violence. These crimes, often committed by young, tech-savvy individuals, reflect socio-economic frustrations and lack of employment opportunities. Additionally, armed robbery and cult clashes remain common in cities like Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Benin (Adebayo, 2013).

Insecurity in Nigeria is one of the most pressing challenges undermining national unity, economic growth, and social development. Despite being Africa's most populous country and one of its largest economies, Nigeria has experienced a surge in violent conflicts, terrorism, kidnapping, and communal clashes that threaten the very fabric of society. Insecurity not only endangers individual safety but also disrupts business activities, displaces populations, and deepens poverty.

The consequences of insecurity are far-reaching. Economically, it deters investment, disrupts commerce, and increases the cost of doing

business. Politically, it erodes public trust in governmental institutions and weakens democratic governance. Socially, it causes displacement, loss of lives, and psychological trauma. According to UNDP (2021), insecurity has reversed development gains, particularly in the northern regions where conflict is most severe.

Moreover, the burden on security agencies has exposed the limitations of Nigeria's police and military institutions. Inadequate funding, poor training, corruption, and lack of coordination have impeded effective responses to security threats (Ezeoha, 2011). These challenges have led to renewed calls for restructuring Nigeria's security architecture, including the creation of state police to address localised threats more effectively. A holistic approach is required—one that strengthens security institutions, expands economic opportunities for the youth, promotes justice and equity, and fosters national unity. Without concerted efforts, insecurity will continue to threaten Nigeria's stability and development.



Section 4

Defining the Nexus of Poverty, Unemployment, and Insecurity

The Nexus of Poverty, Unemployment, and Insecurity in Nigeria: A Literature Review

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country and largest economy, faces a triad of interlinked challenges: poverty, unemployment, and insecurity. These three socio-economic phenomena are deeply interconnected and perpetuate a cycle of instability and underdevelopment. A growing body of literature illustrates how poverty and unemployment fuel insecurity, and conversely, how insecurity exacerbates poverty and joblessness. This review explores theoretical and empirical studies that examine the interrelations among these issues, aiming to understand their root causes, manifestations, and implications for policy and development.

Poverty and Insecurity

Numerous studies demonstrate a strong correlation between poverty and insecurity in Nigeria. Poverty fosters criminal activity by limiting access to education, healthcare, and legal employment opportunities (Akin, 2015). In Northern Nigeria, impoverished youths are easily recruited by terrorist organisations such as Boko Haram and ISWAP (Adagba et al., 2012), which exploit socio-economic grievances to recruit and radicalise members.

Anyanwu (2014) found that poverty, particularly in the North-East, has fuelled insurgency, with many young individuals turning to terrorism out of desperation. Similarly, militancy in the Niger Delta has been

linked to environmental degradation, poverty, and lack of federal investment, creating fertile ground for violence and sabotage (Ikelegbe, 2005).

Unemployment and Insecurity

Unemployment, particularly among youth, is a major driver of insecurity in Nigeria. According to Adebayo (2013), high unemployment increases the propensity for criminal behaviour as individuals struggle for survival. Youth unemployment is directly associated with armed robbery, kidnapping, and cybercrime.

The government's failure to generate adequate employment has led to widespread disenchantment among the youth. Emeh (2012) observed that the inability to integrate educated young people into the labour force has contributed to rising anti-social behaviour and violence. In states such as Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina, high youth unemployment correlates with banditry and criminal gangs (SBM Intelligence, 2021).

The Interplay Between Poverty and Unemployment

Poverty and unemployment are mutually reinforcing. Lack of employment leads to income insecurity, which in turn deepens poverty. Likewise, those living in poverty often lack the education, skills, or social networks required to obtain jobs. Ogunyemi and Olamitunji (2013) argue that systemic poverty denies individuals opportunities to develop marketable skills, perpetuating a cycle of unemployment.

Critics of Nigeria's educational system highlight its failure to equip graduates with practical or entrepreneurial skills, resulting in high graduate unemployment. The mismatch between labour market needs and educational output entrenches poverty and joblessness (Eze,

2011). Furthermore, the informal sector—dominant in Nigeria's economy—often does not provide secure or well-paying employment.

The Poverty–Unemployment–Insecurity Nexus

Multiple studies affirm a causal relationship between poverty, unemployment, and insecurity in Nigeria. Okonkwo and Eze (2018) found that a one per cent increase in unemployment correlates with a 0.7% rise in crime rates, while a one per cent increase in poverty results in a 0.6% rise in criminal activities. These figures highlight the significant nexus among the three challenges.

Ajakaiye et al. (2016) assert that jobless growth and income inequality have led to increased violence and insecurity across Nigeria. They advocate for employment-centred economic policies as a means to reduce poverty and improve national security. The multidimensional nature of insecurity—including terrorism, herder–farmer conflicts, and gang violence—often stems from socio-economic exclusion. Disillusioned youth lacking prospects for a better future are more susceptible to radicalisation and criminal exploitation (Aliyu, 2014).

The interaction between poverty, unemployment, and insecurity varies across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. The North-East, devastated by Boko Haram insurgency, has among the highest poverty and unemployment rates. According to the NBS (2022), over 70% of residents in Borno and Yobe States are multidimensionally poor. In the North-West, banditry and kidnapping have displaced thousands and undermined livelihoods. The South-South, despite its oil wealth, struggles with environmental degradation, poverty, and sporadic militancy. In the South-East and South-West, urban insecurity and youth unrest are tied to unemployment and perceived injustice (Umaru & Zubairu, 2012).

The Nigerian government has implemented several initiatives to combat poverty and unemployment, including the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), N-Power, and the Youth Employment and Social Support Operation (YESSO). However, these programmes have been plagued by poor implementation, corruption, and limited coverage (World Bank, 2020). Security responses remain heavily militarised, with insufficient attention to underlying socio-economic causes. Scholars such as Akin (2015) argue for a more comprehensive approach that combines security operations with investments in education, job creation, and social welfare.

Empirical Assessment of the Nexus

Existing research and data clearly highlight the cyclical relationship between poverty, unemployment, and insecurity in Nigeria. The findings underscore the urgent need for well-targeted employment and economic policies. Breaking the cycle requires not only security interventions but also structural reforms that address inequality, improve education, and create sustainable livelihoods.

Table 1: Empirical Studies on the nexus between Poverty, Unemployment and Insecurity

Author	Study	Finding	Nexus
Egunjobi (2014)	Poverty and Unemployment Paradox in Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-run relationship between poverty and unemployment, although broader structural and policy issues play a part. 	Poverty/ Unemployment
Nwagu (2014)	Unemployment and Poverty in Nigeria: A Link to National Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct relationship between unemployment and poverty, and the rising levels of insecurity. 	Unemployment/ Poverty/ Rising insecurity.
Orhero (2019)	Poverty, Unemployment and National Insecurity in Nigeria's Fourth Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic deprivation, frustration, and desperation among lower-class youths are the underlying causes of national insecurity. 	Unemployment/ Poverty/ Insecurity
Ayegba (2015)	Unemployment and Poverty as sources and consequence of insecurity in Nigeria: The Boko Haram insurgency revisited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper established a strong connection between unemployment, poverty and prevailing insecurity. 	Unemployment/ Poverty/ Insecurity
Edomwonyi-otu and Edomwonyi-otu (2020)	Is Unemployment the Root Cause of Insecurity in Nigeria?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified unemployment as a critical factor contributing to Nigeria's security challenges. Economic recession intensified unemployment crisis, adding pressure to an already challenging job market. Government-led initiatives to stem the unemployment problem have little impact on unemployment rates or insecurity. 	Unemployment/ Insecurity
Akwara et al (2013)	Unemployment and Poverty: Implications for National Security and Good Governance in Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployment and Poverty: Implications for National Security and Good Governance in Nigeria 	Unemployment/ poverty/Insecurity

Poverty, Unemployment and Insecurity Nexus:
Public Policy Options for Social Protection Interventions in Nigeria by 2030

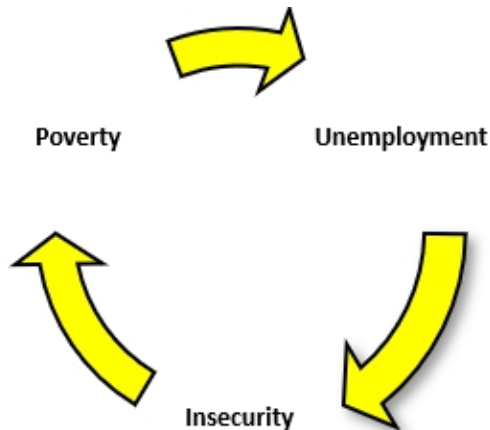
Evans & Kelikume (2019)	The Impact of Poverty, Unemployment, Inequality, Corruption and Poor Governance on South-South Nigeria Militancy, Boko Haram Terrorism and Fulani Herdsmen Attacks in Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption and poor governance were significant causes of South-South Nigeria militancy, Boko Haram terrorism and Fulani herdsmen attacks in Nigeria. 	Poverty/ Unemployment as well as inequalities and poor governance leads to violence and conflicts
Adenike (2021)	Poverty, Unemployment and Insecurity Challenges in Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As more people fall below the poverty line, unemployment increases and increased government expenditure on security • As more people become unemployed, poverty increases • As government expenditure on security increases, poverty increases. • Insecurity accounted for the greatest shocks in poverty and unemployment • Poverty and unemployment positively and significantly responded to shocks from insecurity. 	Poverty/ Unemployment/Insecurity
Bžanová & Kováč (2024)	The Relationship Between Unemployment and the Risk of Poverty in the Slovak Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment increases poverty risk in Slovakia. • Long-term unemployment correlates with higher poverty rates. 	Unemployment/ Poverty
McBride (1999)	Towards permanent insecurity: The social impact of unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment linked to poverty and social ills. • Negative self-esteem impacts individuals and families. 	Unemployment/ Poverty/Insecurity
Peter et al (2018)	The Unemployment Puzzle an Insurgence to Insecurity in Nairobi County, Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment linked to poverty and social ills. • Negative self-esteem impacts individuals and families. 	Unemployment/ Poverty/Insecurity

The nexus of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity in Nigeria constitutes a multidimensional challenge that demands comprehensive and sustained intervention. These interrelated issues reinforce one another, creating a vicious cycle that impedes development. As the literature indicates, addressing insecurity requires not only policing and military responses but also structural reforms aimed at enhancing livelihoods and promoting social inclusion. Bridging the gap between policy formulation and implementation is essential to securing long-term peace and prosperity in Nigeria.

Specific Realities

Poverty, unemployment, and insecurity are both mutually reinforcing and cyclical.

i. A Cyclic Web of Underdevelopment



Poverty Drives Unemployment and Insecurity

Poverty drives unemployment by limiting access to quality education, skills acquisition, and capital. This economic deprivation often pushes

individuals towards criminal activities, insurgency, or informal work that offers no stability or prospects for upward mobility (Inienger, Gberindyer & Anam, 2023). Simultaneously, insecurity—marked by violent conflicts, crime, and weak governance—stifles economic growth by disrupting local economies, displacing populations, and undermining investor confidence. I categorise this interconnection as a “cyclic web,” where poverty fosters insecurity and insecurity, in turn, deepens poverty.

This dynamic is particularly evident in the South-South region of Nigeria, which paradoxically suffers from extreme poverty and unemployment despite being a hub for Nigeria's lucrative oil industry. The region's persistent militancy and insecurity underscore the failure to translate resource wealth into inclusive development. This “resource curse” highlights the absence of transformative social protection policies that address systemic inequality, economic marginalisation, and environmental degradation. Unemployed and impoverished youth are especially vulnerable to radicalisation, as militant groups exploit their economic desperation by offering financial incentives and a sense of purpose (Collier, 2007; Uzoh, Anam & Ironbar, 2023).

To break this cycle, Nigeria must adopt comprehensive, sustainable policy interventions that address the root causes of these interconnected challenges. Social protection programmes must move beyond short-term palliatives to include transformative interventions that tackle systemic inequities and structural barriers to development.

ii. Social and Economic Instability

The root causes of Nigeria's social and economic instability are deeply entrenched in rising poverty, widening inequality, and insufficient employment opportunities. The cycle of poverty, unemployment, and

insecurity often manifests as a “doom spiral,” trapping communities in persistent instability.

Economically, insecurity has severely disrupted agriculture—Nigeria's largest employer of labour—contributing 25.9% of GDP in 2021. Agricultural activities, which also supply raw materials for manufacturing, have been hindered by violent conflicts, including banditry, communal clashes, and farmer-herder disputes. Farmers in some areas are forced to pay terrorist groups to access their farmlands, resulting in sub-optimal agricultural output, food scarcity, and rising prices. These issues impede Nigeria's goal of food self-sufficiency, increasing dependence on food imports and straining foreign reserves, thereby plunging households deeper into poverty. Poverty, in turn, breeds frustration and conflict.

Socially, insecurity disrupts business operations both within the states and across the country. This can be observed in the following indicators:

1. **Business operations and expansion:** Many businesses have suspended operations or abandoned expansion plans, exacerbating unemployment and poverty.
2. **Transportation and logistics:** Providers have raised fares to high-risk regions due to security concerns. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), airfares have risen by 28.26%, and intercity bus fares have increased by 35.65% in the past year.
3. **Supply chain disruptions:** Insecurity has hindered access to raw materials in certain areas, disrupting production cycles and increasing costs.

Lower-income earners are disproportionately affected, experiencing declining purchasing power, job losses, and reduced access to financial services that could mitigate economic shocks during periods of conflict.



Section 5

Perspectives on Public Policy and Social Intervention Strategies

Public Policy Options for Social Intervention Strategies

A. Meaning and Perspectives of Public Policy

Public policy plays a central role in shaping the socio-economic and political landscape of any nation. Through public policy, governments translate political visions into programmes and actions that deliver outcomes on the ground.

Public policy comprises the decisions, actions, and inaction of governments aimed at addressing societal problems. It reflects the priorities of policymakers and the mechanisms through which governments intend to achieve desired outcomes.

Demir (2021) describes public policy as any issue the government deems significant and acts upon. Another definition characterises it as “the intentions of politicians and the programmes developed and implemented by governments to turn policy intentions into action.”

Anderson (2014) broadly defines public policy as a course of action or inaction taken by governmental bodies and officials in response to public problems. Dye (2013) notably states that public policy is “whatever governments choose to do or not to do,” capturing both action and deliberate omission.

Public policy also embodies values and ideologies, often influenced by political, economic, and social contexts (Birkland, 2015). It represents the tools applied by public authorities to achieve goals in specific societal domains—such as legislation, subsidies, or public awareness campaigns. The public policy cycle includes, agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation and policy evaluation.

Theoretical Perspectives on Public Policy

Several theoretical frameworks underpin the formation of public policy:

1. **Rational Choice Theory:** Suggests policy results from rational decisions aimed at maximising societal welfare based on available information (Simon, 1976).
2. **Incrementalist Approach:** Lindblom (1959) proposes that policy evolves through small, gradual adjustments rather than radical changes.
3. **Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF):** Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith (1993) argue that policy change stems from the interaction of competing coalitions with shared beliefs.

Nature and Characteristics of Public Policy

Key attributes include:

1. **Goal-Oriented:** Targeted at specific objectives such as poverty reduction or educational reform.
2. **Problem-Solving:** Addresses existing or anticipated societal issues.
3. **Decision-Making Process:** Involves stages such as agenda-setting, formulation, and implementation.
4. **Authoritative and Legal Backing:** Legitimised through law and institutional processes

5. **Public Interest Orientation:** Aims to serve society at large.
6. **Dynamic and Adaptive:** Evolves in response to shifting societal contexts.
7. **Multidisciplinary and Intersectoral:** Requires cross-sectoral cooperation for effective delivery.

Types of Public Policy

1. **Distributive Policies:** Allocate resources to specific groups.
2. **Regulatory Policies:** Control or limit behaviour.
3. **Redistributive Policies:** Shift resources to achieve equity.
4. **Constituent Policies:** Concern institutional operations (Ripley & Franklin, 1984).

Public policy translates political ideologies into practical outcomes. Effective policy can uplift living standards, promote equality, and foster development. In contrast, poorly implemented policy may result in corruption and unrest (Bardach & Patashnik, 2020). In Nigeria, public policy aims to address poverty, insecurity, disease, and inequality. For meaningful progress, policy must be well-informed, inclusive, and effectively implemented.

B. Social Protection Interventions

The Nigerian Social Protection Policy (2020) defines social protection as programmes and initiatives by government, organisations, and individuals to address vulnerabilities, assist the poor, and ensure a minimum standard of living.

The World Bank (2012) classifies social protection into:

1. **Social Assistance:** Non-contributory transfers such as cash transfers or school feeding.
2. **Social Insurance:** Contributory schemes like pensions and health insurance.

3. Labour Market Programmes: Support employment and skills development.

The ILO defines social protection as the set of measures society provides to shield its members from economic distress due to illness, old age, or unemployment, and to ensure health care and family support.

Social protection is a fundamental human right and essential to a nation's socio-economic development. It is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) and ensuring no citizen falls below a minimum threshold of dignity and well-being.

Objectives of Social Protection

According to Holmes & Jones (2013), the objectives of social protection are the specific goals that social protection programmes aim to achieve in order to improve the well-being of individuals and communities, especially the poor and vulnerable. These objectives are essential for promoting social justice, economic stability, and sustainable development.

Below is an explanation of the key objectives of social protection:

1. Poverty Reduction

One of the primary aims of social protection is to alleviate poverty by providing direct support to individuals and households who lack sufficient income or resources. This support could come in the form of Cash transfers, Food subsidies, and Social pensions. These interventions help ensure that people can meet their basic needs (food, shelter, health, education), preventing them from falling deeper into poverty. According to Holmes & Jones (2013), well-designed social protection programmes can significantly reduce both chronic and transient poverty.

2. Risk Mitigation and Economic Security

Social protection helps individuals and families manage economic risks such as Illness, Job loss, Disability, Old age, and Natural disasters. By providing a safety net, it ensures that these risks do not push people into poverty. For example, health insurance prevents medical expenses from becoming financially catastrophic, while unemployment benefits offer temporary income support during periods of joblessness.

3. Social Inclusion and Equity

Social protection promotes social inclusion by reducing inequality and supporting marginalised or excluded groups, such as: People with disabilities, Women and children, Elderly persons, and Ethnic minorities. Programmes that are inclusive in design and implementation help build a fairer society by ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background, has access to basic services and opportunities. As noted by Sabates-Wheeler & Devereux (2008), inclusive social protection strengthens social cohesion and national unity.

4. Human Capital Development

By supporting access to education, healthcare, and nutrition, social protection programmes contribute to the development of human capital. For example: School feeding programmes improve children's school attendance and learning outcomes. Child support grants enable families to invest in their children's health and education. This investment in people increases future productivity and breaks the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

5. Economic Stability and Growth

Social protection also contributes to broader economic stability by:

- a. Sustaining household consumption during economic downturns

- b. Stimulating local markets through increased spending
- c. Enhancing workforce productivity

According to Gentilini et al. (2020), when vulnerable populations are protected from shocks, the economy becomes more resilient and inclusive, laying the groundwork for sustainable growth.

The objectives of social protection go beyond temporary relief; they are part of a long-term strategy to build a more inclusive, stable, and prosperous society. Properly designed and implemented, social protection systems reduce poverty, protect against risk, foster equality, and support national development.

Forms of Social Protection

- 1. Non-Contributory Schemes:** Targeted support without prior payment (e.g., social assistance).
- 2. Contributory Schemes:** Based on regular contributions (e.g., pensions).
- 3. Labour Market Policies:** Active (skills development) or passive (unemployment insurance).

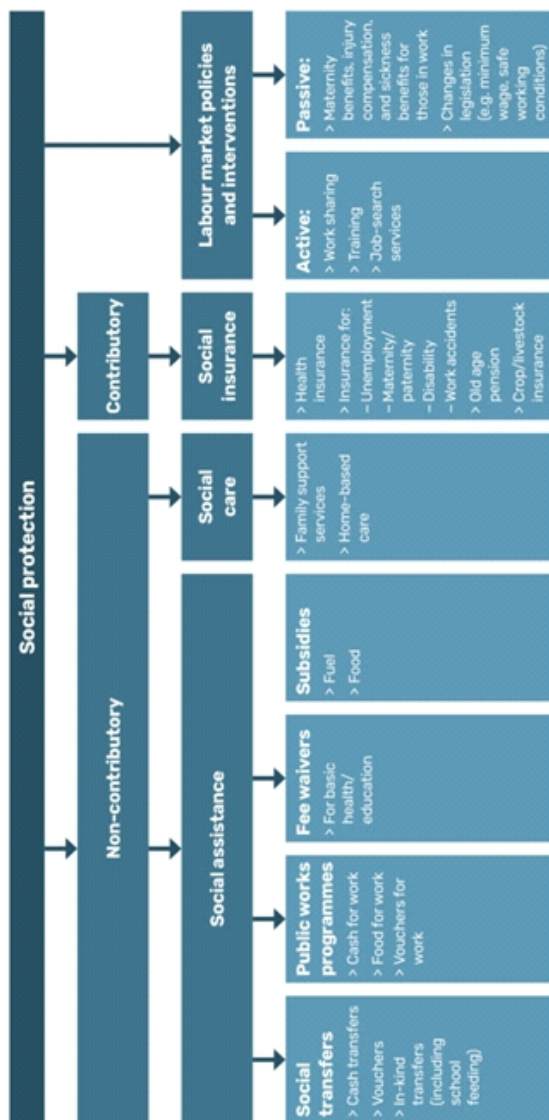


Figure 4: Forms of Social Protection

Beyond direct financial support, social protection also focuses on long-term stability by investing in people's skills, health, and opportunities. This aspect includes programmes aimed at enhancing access to education, healthcare, and training, equipping individuals with the necessary skills to participate effectively in the labour market. Additionally, these programmes may offer support such as small business grants or tools for farmers, entrepreneurs, and youths, with the aim of increasing sustainable income generation (Behrendt et al., n.d.).

The focus of social protection interventions is usually on the outcomes rather than the means through which these outcomes are achieved. As such, governments have the autonomy to choose the model of social protection that best suits their context and preferences. Governments may favour either a developmental or welfarist approach to social protection interventions. The developmental approach seeks to reduce poverty and vulnerability through economic and social investment, enabling long-term growth and enhancing self-reliance. In contrast, the welfarist approach often emphasises immediate relief from poverty and vulnerabilities, aiming to provide a social safety net based on the principle of social rights. Agencies such as the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) generally support developmental objectives, often promoting social protection policies that enhance economic productivity and resilience (e.g., cash transfers, conditional assistance, and livelihood programmes).

Conversely, other agencies, led by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), view social protection as a rights-based guarantee of basic income security for all. These agencies emphasise universal access to income security and social services, often advocating for policies that ensure such protections throughout the lifecycle (e.g., universal child

grants, unemployment benefits, and pensions) (Sabates-Wheeler et al., 2024).

A key feature of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the call for countries to “implement nationally appropriate social protection systems for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.” The term *floors* refer to the recommendation that social protection floors should comprise at least four basic social security guarantees: healthcare, income security for children, income security for persons of working age who are unable to earn sufficient income, and income security for older persons.

Importance of Social Protection Interventions

Social protection interventions are not merely short-term relief mechanisms; they are transformative tools that promote social justice, economic resilience, and inclusive development. By reducing poverty, mitigating risks, and empowering individuals, these interventions lay the foundation for a more equitable and prosperous society. As nations strive to recover from global crises and pursue the SDGs, investing in robust and inclusive social protection systems will be essential. Effective social protection is not just a policy choice—it is a moral and economic imperative.

1. Alleviation of Poverty and Inequality

One of the most significant roles of social protection interventions is their capacity to reduce poverty and narrow income disparities. For example, evidence shows that cash transfer programmes in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa have significantly reduced poverty rates and improved access to education and healthcare (Bastagli et al., 2016). Social protection redistributes income and provides essential services, thereby breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty.

2. Economic Empowerment and Productivity

By providing financial security, social protection encourages individuals to take productive risks such as investing in small businesses or agriculture. This, in turn, stimulates economic activity. Labour market programmes, in particular, enhance employability through skills training and job placement services (ILO, 2017).

3. Human Capital Development

Social protection contributes directly to human capital development by improving school attendance, health outcomes, and nutrition. Programmes such as conditional cash transfers incentivise parents to keep children in school and ensure regular health check-ups, which are essential for cognitive and physical development (Fiszbein & Schady, 2009).

4. Promotion of Gender Equality

Women often benefit disproportionately from social protection interventions, especially in contexts where they bear the brunt of caregiving responsibilities and have limited access to formal employment. Social protection reduces the burden of unpaid care work and provides women with financial autonomy, contributing to greater gender equality (Holmes & Jones, 2013).

5. Crisis Response and Resilience Building

During economic crises or pandemics such as COVID-19, social protection serves as a critical response mechanism. It helps cushion the impact on vulnerable populations and supports economic recovery. Countries with robust social protection systems were better positioned to respond to the pandemic's shocks, underscoring the importance of preparedness (Gentilini et al., 2020).

Nigeria's Social Protection Interventions

In Nigeria, early public policy interventions from the 1970s did not explicitly identify as social protection, although they shared related objectives. Today, the Social Protection Policy for Nigeria serves as an umbrella framework incorporating a range of social agenda paradigms aimed at reducing poverty and ensuring a life of dignity for all citizens. The policy seeks to address inequalities and inequities while providing social incentives. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), under the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, lays the groundwork for the provision of social protection in the country.

Despite its growing population, Nigeria spends less on social protection than most lower-middle-income countries and regional peers. The need for comprehensive social protection has never been more urgent, and the future of such interventions requires urgent reimagining.

Table 2 (not included here) analyses social protection policies in Nigeria from pre-1986 to 2022, evaluated through the framework developed by Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler. Each intervention is classified according to one of the four key functions of social protection:

- 1. Protective Interventions** – Provide immediate relief to vulnerable populations during crises or periods of deprivation. Examples include cash transfers, food aid, and emergency relief.
- 2. Preventive Interventions** – Aim to reduce risks and avert future deprivation. These include health insurance schemes, contributory pension schemes, and agricultural risk management initiatives.
- 3. Promotive Interventions** – Focus on enhancing income-generation and human capital development through programmes such as skills training, education support, and microfinance.

4. Transformative Interventions – Seek to address systemic inequalities and social exclusion by promoting legal reforms, gender equity, and empowerment of marginalised groups.

This classification helps in understanding the goals, structure, and effectiveness of Nigeria's social protection efforts. While some interventions may serve multiple functions, each is categorised based on its primary objective in accordance with the Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler framework.

Table 2: Nigeria's Social Protection Policies and Interventions, Pre-1986-2022

Period & Intervention	Category (Function)	Description	Role and Effectiveness	Policy Evaluation/Challenges
National Accelerated Food Production Program (NAFPP) (1973)	Promotive	Aimed at boosting food production to ensure food security and self-sufficiency.	Partially effective in increasing agricultural output but limited by poor infrastructure and policy continuity challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coordination • Poor Funding • Limited cooperation of farmers • Shortage of Extension workers
Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) (1976)	Promotive	Promoted farming to encourage self-sufficiency and reduce hunger.	Created public awareness of agricultural self-reliance, though it was not sustained long enough for lasting impact on food security.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate infrastructure/extension services • Lack of long-term commitment • Bureaucratic inefficiency • Political instability
Free Primary Education (UPE) (1976)	Promotive/Protective	Aimed at increasing educational access and reducing illiteracy.	Initially successful in expanding educational access, though constrained by funding and implementation issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor planning • Poor funding • Limited resources • Limited facilities
STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM (SAP) ERA (1986-1999)				
Directorate for Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) (1986)	Promotive	Created to improve rural infrastructure and enhance agricultural productivity.	Had limited impact due to poor project sustainability and corruption issues; successes were uneven across regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor financing • Inadequate sustainability
Better Life for Rural Women Program (1987)	Transformative /Promotive	Empowered rural women through skill acquisition, health, and literacy programs.	Initially impactful in promoting women's roles in rural economies, but outcomes diminished with the transition in political leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate funding • Poor implementation • Socio-cultural barriers • Political interference • Lack of sustainability

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National Directorate of Employment (NDE) (1986)	Promotive	Aimed at reducing unemployment through vocational training and job creation initiatives.	training opportunities, but limited reach due to funding constraints and urban -focused implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor funding Poor public awareness Corruption Political Interference
POST-SAP ERA (1999-2010)				
Poverty Alleviation Program (PAP) (2000)	Protective/ Promotive	Provided jobs and temporary income support to address immediate poverty.	Short-lived program with limited long-term impact on poverty alleviation. Effectiveness was hindered by poor targeting and lack of sustainable funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor targeting Corruption Political Interference Lack of proper monitoring & evaluation Poor implementation Lack of sustainability
National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) (2001)	Promotive/ Protective	Focused on reducing poverty through micro credit, skill acquisition, and empowerment programs.	Moderately effective in reaching rural areas and vulnerable populations, though impact varied due to implementation inefficiencies and political changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor implementation Inadequate funding Corruption Ineffective monitoring Poor coordination between government agencies Political interference Lack of sustainability
Universal Basic Education (UBE) (2004)	Promotive	Reintroduced and expanded access to basic education as a fundamental right for all Nigerian children.	Effective in increasing enrolment rates, though challenges like inadequate facilities, poor teacher quality, and funding gaps persisted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate funding Poor Infrastructure Personnel challenges Poor implementation Lack of continuity

National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) (2005)	Preventive	Established to provide access to affordable healthcare through a contributory health insurance model.	Limited effectiveness due to low enrolment, especially among informal sector workers, though successful in providing some risk protection for enrollees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low enrolment • Poor service delivery • Rural exclusion • Lack of transparency and accountability
In-Care of the Poor (COPE) (2007)	Protective/ Preventive	Targeted at extremely poor households (those headed by a female, the elderly, physically challenged, and fistula or HIV/AIDS patients) with children of school-going age;	Break intergenerational transfer of poverty and reduce the vulnerability of the core poor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited coverage • Poor service delivery • Poor infrastructural development
SOCIAL PROTECTION INITIATIVES (2010-2022)				
Community-Based Health Insurance Scheme (CBHIS) (2011)	Preventive	Established to provide health insurance access to people in the informal economy who might not be covered under traditional NHIS plans	Offers financial protection against healthcare costs by pooling funds within a community; however, its effectiveness is limited by factors like low participation rates and challenges in managing the scheme, especially for the poorest populations within the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Poor uptake and community involvement • lack of clear legislative and regulatory frameworks • Accountability and transparency in management of the scheme • Availability of adequate number of the various cadres of health workers • Availability of essential drugs
SURE-P (Subsidy Reinvestment and	Promotive/ Protective	Invested fuel subsidy savings into social welfare programs,	Impacted some sectors positively but struggled with issues of corruption and lack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underpaid youths • Difficulty identifying beneficial projects • Duplication of functions

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National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) (2016)	Protective/Promotive/Transformative	Umbrella initiative comprising the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), N - Power, School Feeding Program, and Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program (GEEP).	Effective in reaching vulnerable populations; N-Power provided employment opportunities, and CCT improved welfare but faced issues in funding and data accuracy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor implementation • Inadequate funding • Corruption & political interference • Data management issues • Lack of proper monitoring • Inadequate exit strategies for beneficiaries • Lack of sustainability plans
Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) (2016)	Protective/Promotive	Provides cash transfers to the poorest households, with the goal of reducing poverty and incentivizing school attendance and health services.	Moderately effective in providing relief to vulnerable households; however, issues with targeting accuracy and limited funding reduced its reach and impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in accurately targeting the most vulnerable beneficiaries • Administrative complexities • Potential for leakage to non-eligible recipients • Insufficient funding
N-Power Program (2016)	Promotive	Offers skills acquisition and employment opportunities to unemployed youth and graduates.	Effective in providing short-term employment, but sustainability and absorption into the labour market remain challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient funds • Corruption • Lack of transparency • Poor exit strategy for beneficiaries • Inappropriate targeting
TraderMoni (2018)	Promotive/Protective	Provides small loans to informal traders to enhance their businesses and improve livelihood resilience.	Some impact on reducing poverty among traders, but limited in scope and reach, with concerns about political motivations affecting sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor beneficiary profiling • Lack of proper verification mechanisms • Political interference • Inadequate financial literacy among beneficiaries • Difficulties in loan repayment • Limited access to banking services • Lack of transparency in disbursement • Political manipulation

COVID-19 SOCIAL PROTECTION RESPONSES (2020-2022)				
Conditional Cash Transfer (expanded in 2020)	Protective	Enhanced cash transfer coverage to support vulnerable households affected by COVID-19 lockdowns.	Temporarily effective in providing relief to affected households, though logistical challenges and data constraints limited full impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor targeting and beneficiary selection • Corruption • Logistical difficulties in reaching remote areas • Diversion of funds by beneficiaries • Inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems
Youth Employment and Social Support Operations (YESSO) (2020)	Protective/Pro motive	Aims to provide labour-intensive jobs for the youth and offers cash transfers to poor and vulnerable households.	Effective in creating short-term employment and income relief but struggled with scalability and reaching informal sector youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate funding • Lack of inclusion • Limited capacity • Lack of transparency
Rapid Response Register (RRR) (2021)	Protective	A digital platform set up to identify and deliver social assistance to urban poor and vulnerable households impacted by COVID-19 and economic challenges.	Effective in targeting the urban poor with cash transfers, though digital literacy and data accuracy were challenges in the rural areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data accuracy issues due to poor data collection methods. • Limited awareness of the program among eligible citizens
Extended N-Power and NSIP Programs (2021-2022)	Promotive/Protective	Expanded versions of the original programs, providing employment and support for youth, women, and small business owners.	Effective in maintaining support for unemployed youth and small businesses, though criticisms over political influences and targeting persist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor funding • Political interference • Inadequate monitoring and evaluation • Problem of sustainability, discontinued in 2023.

To enhance the impact of social protection interventions, there is a growing consensus on the need for universal systems that guarantee a basic level of social security for all. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 1.3) advocate for the implementation of nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including social protection floors. Innovations in digital technology also present opportunities for more efficient delivery and monitoring of social protection programmes (World Bank, 2022). In Nigeria, scaling up initiatives such as the National Social Safety Nets Programme and integrating them with health and education services could significantly improve their effectiveness and sustainability.

The above Table 2 shows intervention strategies by the government to reduce poverty and create employment in Nigeria. These were not without challenges, as rightly captured in column 5 of the table. Furthermore, recent statistics have shown that instead of a declining level of poverty and unemployment, these issues are on the increase. Figure 5 below clearly shows the rising unemployment rate in Nigeria as a result of increasing poverty levels and lack of economic opportunities.

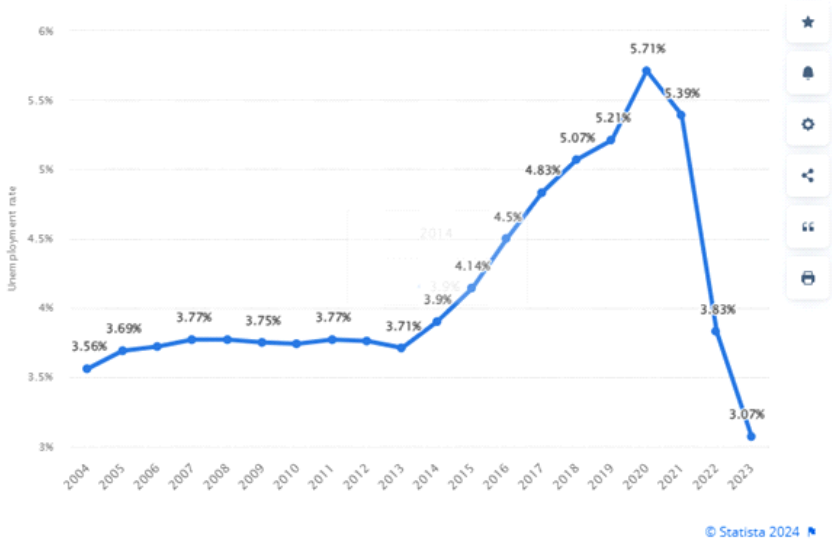


Figure 5: Unemployment rate in Nigeria 2004 – 2023.

The persistence of poverty, high unemployment rates, and insecurity in Nigeria indicates that existing social protection policies and interventions have not effectively addressed systemic and structural challenges. Despite decades of social protection policies and interventions in Nigeria, poverty, unemployment, and insecurity remain persistent and systemic issues. These problems are not unfounded (Anam et al., 2024). One key issue is the weak implementation and lack of continuity in programmes, often caused by fragmented institutional frameworks, inadequate capacity, and shifting political priorities. Programmes are frequently underfunded, poorly managed, and short-term in focus, prioritising immediate relief over sustainable solutions that tackle the root causes of socio-economic vulnerabilities. Additionally, the absence of a universal social registry

and inaccurate data result in the exclusion of the most vulnerable populations, limiting the reach and impact of these initiatives.

Another critical factor is the failure to address structural and systemic issues, such as regional disparities, gender inequality, and limited access to quality education and healthcare. For example, regions like South-South Nigeria continue to suffer from resource mismanagement, environmental degradation, and inequitable development, fuelling grievances and insecurity. Insecurity itself disrupts programme implementation, particularly in conflict-prone areas, further compounding socio-economic instability. The lack of integration between social protection efforts and broader economic strategies, such as industrialisation and job creation, has also limited the ability of interventions to tackle unemployment and economic insecurity comprehensively.

Ultimately, Nigeria's fragmented and underfunded social protection policies fail to address the interconnected nature of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity. Without systemic reforms that ensure robust governance, equitable resource distribution, and regional inclusivity, social protection programmes risk remaining reactive rather than transformative, perpetuating the challenges they aim to resolve.



Section 6

A Case Study of the South-South Region of Nigeria

Social Intervention Strategies and their Impact in the South-South Nigeria Region: A Case Examination

Overview of the Area

The South-South Nigeria is a vast, resource-rich region in the southern part of Nigeria, renowned as the primary hub of the country's oil production. Before the discovery of crude oil, the region was an economic powerhouse due to its palm oil trade, a significant resource in the pre-petroleum era. This dual history of natural resource wealth highlights the region's ongoing economic significance. However, South-South Nigeria's abundant resources have proven to be both a blessing and a curse (Anam, Unimna & Ironbar, 2024).

As a densely populated area, South-South Nigeria accounts for over 25% of Nigeria's population. It is home to more than 40 ethnic groups, spanning six states, including Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, and Edo States, each playing a vital role in the nation's economic and social fabric (Anam, Unimna & Ironbar, 2024).



Figure 6: The South-South Nigeria Region

The paradox of the South-South Nigeria lies in its immense resource wealth juxtaposed with the socio-economic challenges faced by its inhabitants. Despite contributing significantly to Nigeria's revenue, the region suffers from environmental degradation, widespread poverty, and underdevelopment. Oil exploration has brought infrastructural neglect, ecological damage, and social unrest, creating a volatile landscape where the promise of economic prosperity is often overshadowed by the realities of inequality and marginalization (Krokeyi & Anam, 2024). This dynamic makes the South-South Nigeria not just an economically significant region but also a critical focal point for addressing the intersections of poverty, unemployment, insecurity and sustainable development in Nigeria.

A. Post Evaluation Notes on Poverty trends despite Social Protection Policies in the South-South Nigeria

Table 3 is an outlook on the poverty trends in the South-South Nigeria, after the implementation of social protection policies. This outlook

provides explanation to the success and otherwise of the implemented policies.

Table 3: Poverty Indices in South-South Nigeria state. Francis et al. (2011)

State	Poverty Incidence (%)	Core Poor (%)	Self-assessed Poverty	Very Poor (%) (Self-assessed)	Gini
Akwa Ibom	35	27	66	17	0.50
Bayelsa	20	22	95	62	0.47
Cross River	42	33	77	22	0.50
Delta	45	23	81	25	0.47
Edo	33	16	79	35	0.46
Rivers	29	19	67	15	0.48

A post-evaluation of poverty in the South-South Nigeria region, despite social protection programmes and interventions, based on the attached poverty indices in Table 3 above, reveals persistent socio-economic challenges despite decades of efforts. The findings highlight critical areas of concern:

Persistent Poverty in South-South Nigerian States: The South-South Nigeria continues to experience significant levels of poverty. Delta (45%) and Cross River (42%) report poverty incidences notably higher than the national average of 35%. Similarly, Akwa Ibom (35%) aligns with the South-South average but reflects a stark failure of decades-long policies aimed at reducing poverty, especially given the region's substantial resource wealth from oil revenues. Despite targeted interventions, these states remain among the most affected by

economic disparities. Self-assessed poverty levels further emphasise the region's vulnerability, with figures such as 81% in Delta and 77% in Cross River, showing that residents are acutely aware of their impoverished conditions. The “Very Poor” category, where 25% of Delta's population self-identify, is another indicator of policy ineffectiveness. Additionally, Gini coefficients for states like Akwa Ibom (0.50) and Cross River (0.50) indicate severe income inequality, reflecting the uneven distribution of wealth in these oil-producing regions (Anam, Unimna & Ironbar, 2024).

Limited Success of Social Protection Policies: While Nigeria has implemented various social protection policies from pre-1986 to 2022, these policies appear to have had limited impact in South-South Nigeria. The failure to reduce poverty is evident in the core poor (quintile 1) statistics, with Akwa Ibom (27%) and Cross River (33%) exceeding the national average of 21.3%. In Bayelsa, although the core poor percentage is lower (22%), poverty alleviation policies have not succeeded in addressing self-perceived poverty, with 62% of residents considering themselves “Very Poor.”

Rural Poverty and Inequality: Rural poverty continues to exacerbate challenges in South-South Nigeria, where oil extraction activities dominate but fail to translate into tangible benefits for the local population. For instance, the South-South region's poverty incidence of 35% suggests that policies have not effectively targeted the unique challenges of oil-based rural economies. Furthermore, the Gini coefficients of South-South Nigerian states, consistently above the national average (0.49), reveal systemic income inequality, compounded by the exclusion of rural communities from oil wealth redistribution.

B. Post-Evaluation Notes on Unemployment Trends Despite Social Protection Policies in South-South Nigeria

A poignant example of the desperation for employment in Nigeria is the 2014 Nigerian Immigration Service recruitment exercise, where over 600,000 individuals applied for just 5,000 vacancies nationwide. The chaotic process, which involved overcrowded venues and poor organisation, led to the tragic deaths of 15 applicants. Similarly, in 2008, at least 20 people lost their lives during recruitment exercises conducted by the Nigeria Prisons Service, Customs Service, and the Immigration Service across various states, including the South-South states.



Figure 7: Crowds at Immigration recruitment exercise

This desperation for employment is also evident in the South-South Nigeria. For instance, in Cross River State, when the state government recently lifted an embargo on recruitment, over 32,000 applications were submitted for just 500 available positions. This overwhelming response clearly shows the acute condition of the region.

Table 4: Unemployment and underemployment rates in the South-South-South Nigeria state. Francis et al. (2011)

State	Unemployment	Underemployment
Akwa Ibom	11.3 (33)	33.7 (24)
Bayelsa	6.8 (19)	19.4 (16)
Cross River	1.8 (5)	12.0 (9)
Delta	9.3 (21)	29.2 (27)
Edo	8.0 (22)	30.9 (37)
Rivers	11.4 (29)	25.3 (20)
South-South	8.8 (24)	26.2 (22)
Nigeria	5.3 (14)	20.2 (17.2)

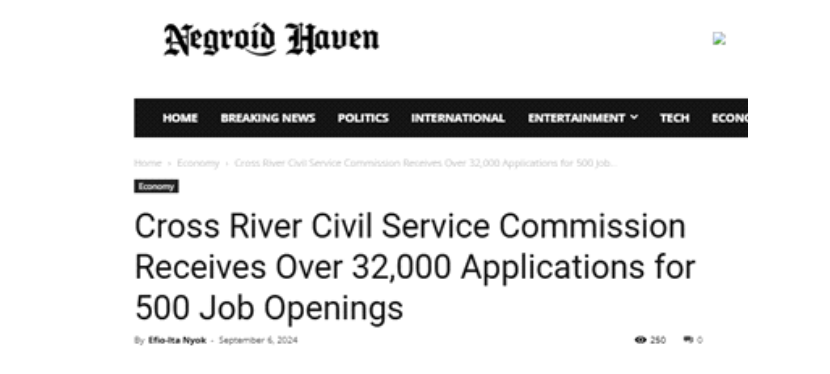


Figure 8: 32,000 applications to fill 500 job openings

Such incidents highlight the dire need for job opportunities as a lifeline out of poverty. The glaring competition for limited positions, which led to the tragic loss of lives, paints a grim picture of the economic vulnerability that continues to plague the South-South Nigeria and the broader Nigerian society.

As illustrated in Table 2, the National government has introduced various policies aimed at improving the well-being of the population. However, despite these efforts, recent statistics reveal that the challenges of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity remain deeply entrenched and persist as recurring issues, particularly in the South-South Nigeria. Examining recent data on the variables discussed in this presentation reveals a concerning trend.

From Table 4 above, unemployment rates in the South-South states, including Akwa Ibom (11.3%) and Rivers (11.4%), are notably higher than the national average of 5.3%.

- a. Underemployment rates also exceed the national average (20.2%) in most South-South states, such as Akwa Ibom (33.7%) and Edo (30.9%), reflecting significant underutilisation of labour.
- b. Cross River has an exceptionally low unemployment rate (1.8%), but its underemployment rate (12.0%) suggests a higher prevalence of informal or part-time work that does not equate to full employment.
- c. Bayelsa, while presenting a lower unemployment rate (6.8%), maintains a noticeable gap in underemployment (19.4%) compared to the national average.
- d. Despite years of social protection policies targeting poverty reduction and job creation, such as skills acquisition programmes and cash transfers, the South-South region remains disproportionately affected. This outcome reflects a

gap between policy design and implementation effectiveness in addressing structural unemployment and labour market mismatches.

- e. The high unemployment and underemployment rates across key South-South states indicate that social protection interventions have been insufficient in driving significant economic inclusion or job creation.
- f. Additionally, the economic potential of the South-South, driven by its oil wealth, has not translated into equitable employment opportunities due to limited investment in non-oil sectors and small business development.

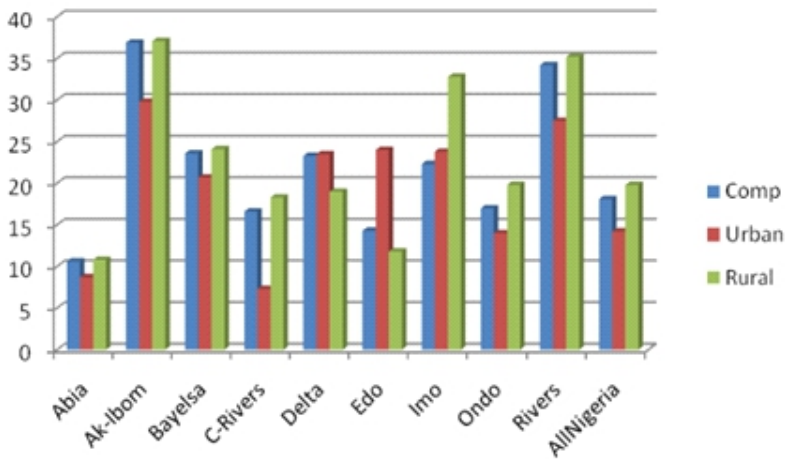


Figure 9: Geometric analysis of unemployment rates. Source: Eregba and Irughe (2009)

- a. The geometric analysis of unemployment rates across the South-South Nigeria states reveals alarmingly high levels of

unemployment, particularly in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers states, compared to the national average.

- b. The situation is even more severe in rural areas, where the majority of the population reside in riverine communities, which are also the epicentres of oil exploration activities. In these rural regions, unemployment rates reach staggering levels—37.1% in Akwa Ibom, 24.1% in Bayelsa, and 35.2% in Rivers—far exceeding the national rural average of 19.8%.

This persistent unemployment crisis fosters social and economic challenges, including widespread poverty, social disenfranchisement, unrest, and escalating violence. These issues are compounded by the paradox of wealth derived from oil, which has not translated into meaningful employment or development for the local population. As such, unemployment in these areas remains a significant driver of instability and underdevelopment.

C. Post-Evaluation Notes on Insecurity Trends Despite Social Protection Policies in the South-South Nigeria

The South-South Nigeria region faces severe insecurity challenges, characterised by militancy, kidnapping, piracy, armed robbery, communal violence, and cult-related activities. These issues arise from underlying factors such as widespread poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, and perceived marginalisation from the benefits of oil wealth extraction. This pervasive insecurity significantly hampers the socio-economic development of the region, creating a cycle of instability and underdevelopment.

Key forms of insecurity include:

1. **Militancy:** Armed groups target oil installations and infrastructure in response to grievances over environmental

damage and inadequate community development.

2. **Kidnapping:** Ransom-driven abductions, often involving oil workers and local residents.
3. **Piracy:** Attacks on vessels in regional waterways, frequently aimed at cargo theft.
4. **Communal violence:** Disputes over land, oil revenue sharing, and political influence fuel inter-community conflicts.
5. **Cultism:** Gang-related violence stemming from clashes between rival groups.

These forms of insecurity are primarily driven by:

1. **Environmental degradation:** Oil spills and pollution have devastated ecosystems, destroyed livelihoods, and heightened local grievances.
2. **Inequitable oil wealth distribution:** Local communities often see little benefit from oil extraction activities in their region.
3. **Poverty and unemployment:** High poverty levels and limited job opportunities foster criminal activities and restiveness.
4. **Poor governance:** Corruption and ineffective governmental responses exacerbate local frustrations and allow insecurity to thrive.
5. **Youth restiveness:** A large population of unemployed youth is vulnerable to recruitment into militancy and other criminal groups.

The consequences of insecurity in the South-South Nigeria are profound and far-reaching:

1. **Economic disruption:** Insecurity deters investment, disrupts oil production—the economic backbone of the region—and negatively impacts tourism.
2. **Social displacement:** Violence and fear force many residents

to migrate, displacing communities.

3. **Humanitarian crises:** The region suffers significant loss of life, injuries, and widespread psychological trauma, compounding its developmental challenges.

Addressing these interconnected challenges requires a multi-faceted approach combining improved governance, environmental remediation, equitable resource distribution, and sustainable development initiatives to foster long-term stability.

Table 5: An overview of types of conflict prevalent in South South Nigeria

S/N	Type of Conflict	Motivating/Causal Factors	Actors of Conflict
1	Intra-Community Conflict	Triggered by disagreement community factions over land, dispute and equitable distribution of oil industry benefits such as scholarships, employment, contract awards, and compensation for damages.	Community factions such as youths, chiefs, urban and local elites, engaged in a struggle for access and equitable share of oil benefits.
2	Inter-Community Conflict	Caused by inter-community struggle over benefits of the oil industry such as award of contracts, employment and payment of compensation.	Community youths and chiefs engaged in a struggle for access and equitable share of oil benefits.
3	Inter-Ethnic Conflict	This caused by inter-struggle for over benefits of the oil industry such as employment, contract awards and payment of compensation for damages, ownership of land, title of traditional rulers and political appointments.	Community youths and chiefs engaged in a struggle for access and equitable share of oil benefits and political leaders.
4	Oil-Company/Community Conflict	Motivated by factors such as delay in the payment of compensation for damage on property, breach of Memorandum of Understanding by the oil companies and the patronage of community factions by the oil companies.	Community youths and chiefs engaged in a struggle for access and equitable share of oil benefits and security personnel invited by the oil companies to maintain order.
5	State-Community Conflict	This is caused by perceived deprivation, neglect and exclusion from the oil wealth.	Youths, chiefs, political leaders, civil society organizations and militia groups.
6	Inter-Cult/Militia Group Conflict	Struggle for supremacy over oil theft/bunkering space.	Youth groups engaged in illegal oil bunkering.
7	Political Conflict	Struggle for access and control of political power.	Armed political thugs, mainly youths and desperate politicians.

As shown in Table 5 above, the South-South Nigeria region is beset by various types of conflict, often rooted in poverty, unemployment, and competition for oil-related benefits. These conflicts include intra-community disputes over the equitable distribution of oil industry benefits such as scholarships, employment, and compensation, as well as inter-community and inter-ethnic clashes over land ownership, contract awards, and political appointments.

Youths play a central role in these struggles, driven by grievances over economic deprivation and exclusion from the wealth generated by the region's resources. Their involvement is also evident in oil company/community conflicts, where delayed compensation and unmet agreements fuel unrest, and in inter-cult or militia clashes over control of illegal oil bunkering operations. Additionally, political conflicts arise as desperate politicians employ armed youth groups to secure power. The overarching issues of poverty and unemployment intensify youths' participation in these conflicts, creating a vicious cycle of instability and underdevelopment in the region.

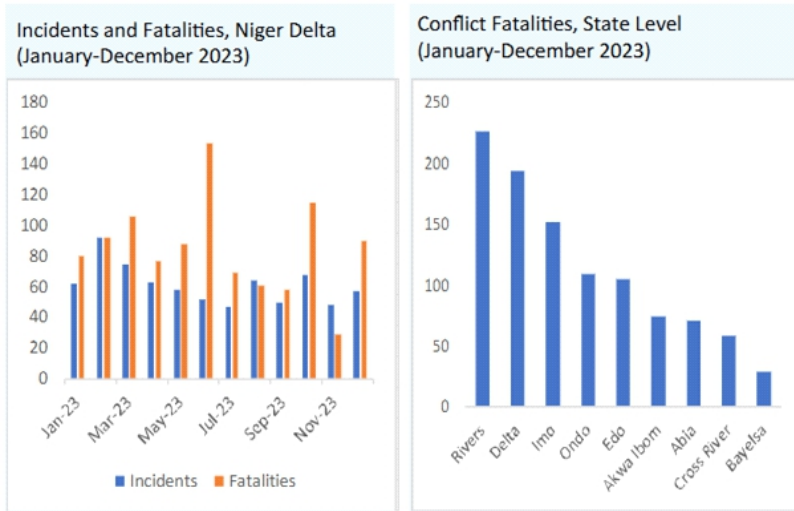


Figure 10: Statistical representation of incidents and fatalities across the South-South Nigeria States and its frequency. Source: South-South Nigeria Annual Conflict Report (2023) by PIND Foundation

Figure 10 above highlights the persistent security challenges in the South-South Nigeria region in 2023, despite the implementation of social protection interventions. The data reveal that incidents of insecurity, such as militancy, communal violence, and cult-related activities, remain high throughout the year, with fatalities peaking in specific months like May and July. This trend suggests a cyclical or escalating pattern of violence, possibly influenced by unresolved grievances and competition over oil-related resources.

The state-level analysis identifies Rivers and Delta states as the epicentres of fatalities, recording the highest numbers compared to other states. These two states are central to oil production and are therefore prone to intensified conflicts over resource control, land ownership, and environmental degradation. Imo and Ondo states also

show significant fatalities, reflecting the wider spread of insecurity beyond the core oil-producing states.

This persistent insecurity underscores the limitations of social protection interventions in addressing underlying structural issues such as unemployment, poverty, and poor governance. While such programmes may provide temporary relief, the high number of incidents and fatalities indicates that systemic challenges, including the unequal distribution of oil wealth and environmental damage, continue to fuel conflicts. Addressing these root causes remains critical to breaking the cycle of violence and achieving sustainable development in the South-South Nigeria region.

The findings from the post-evaluation of social protection interventions in the South-South Nigeria region emphasise the interconnected challenges of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity. These persistent issues highlight the urgent need for more comprehensive and effective strategies. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, significant and targeted efforts are required to address these systemic problems at their source.



Section 7

Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Nigerian Experience

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal blueprint adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015, aimed at achieving a better and more sustainable future for all by 2030. Nigeria, as Africa's most populous nation and a significant regional player, has committed to implementing the SDGs as a central component of its national development agenda. While the goals represent an opportunity to eradicate poverty, improve health, education, and reduce inequalities, Nigeria faces numerous challenges in achieving them.

The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** consist of 17 interlinked goals and 169 targets designed to address pressing global issues, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice (United Nations, 2015). The 17 SDGs are: No poverty (SDG 1), Zero hunger (SDG 2), Good health and well-being (SDG 3), Quality education (SDG 4), Gender equality (SDG 5), Clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), Affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), Industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), Reduced inequalities (SDG 10), Sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), Climate action (SDG 13), Life below water (SDG 14), Life on land (SDG 15), Peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16), and Partnerships for the goals (SDG 17).

They succeed the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** and differ in their inclusiveness, emphasizing universality and interconnectedness across countries regardless of income levels.

In Nigeria, the SDGs are coordinated by the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs (OSSAP-SDGs). The country has domesticated the goals through national frameworks like the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) and the National **Development Plan 2021–2025**, aligning these with SDG priorities (National Planning Commission, 2021). Some key SDGs prioritized in Nigeria include:

SDG 1: No Poverty

SDG 4: Quality Education

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

SDG 5: Gender Equality

SDG 13: Climate Action

These goals are essential for Nigeria's sustainable development, given the country's widespread poverty, regional inequality, environmental concerns, and security issues.

Challenges Facing SDG Implementation in Nigeria

1. **Weak Institutional Capacity and Governance**

One of the major challenges is weak institutional capacity and poor governance. Implementation of the SDGs requires efficient coordination between federal, state, and local governments. However, inconsistencies in policy execution, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and corruption have slowed progress (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2022). Many state and local governments lack the administrative structures and expertise needed to localize and track SDG implementation effectively.

2. Inadequate Funding and Resource Mobilization

Achieving the SDGs in Nigeria requires significant investment. According to the UNDP (2018), Nigeria faces a large financing gap, exacerbated by overreliance on oil revenue, rising debt levels, and limited tax base. Public spending on education, health, and social welfare remains below global benchmarks, making it difficult to sustain SDG-targeted programs.

3. Widespread Poverty and Inequality

Despite being Africa's largest economy, over 63% of Nigeria's population lives in multidimensional poverty (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2022). Income inequality, youth unemployment, and regional disparities hinder progress on SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality). Northern Nigeria, for example, consistently lags behind in health, education, and economic indicators.

4. Insecurity and Conflict

Rising insecurity—manifested through Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, kidnappings, and farmer-herder conflicts—poses a severe threat to SDG achievement. It disrupts education (SDG 4), healthcare delivery (SDG 3), and food security (SDG 2), especially in conflict-prone states like Borno, Zamfara, and Kaduna (Adeleke, 2020).

5. Data and Monitoring Challenges

Reliable data is essential for tracking SDG progress, but Nigeria suffers from inadequate data infrastructure. Inconsistent and outdated data limits the ability of policymakers to make informed decisions and undermines international comparisons (UNDP, 2020). Subnational data, crucial for inclusive development, is often unavailable or unreliable.

6. Environmental and Climate Challenges

Nigeria faces major environmental issues, including desertification, deforestation, pollution, and flooding, all exacerbated by climate change. Efforts to achieve SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land) are undermined by lack of environmental awareness, weak regulatory enforcement, and underfunding of climate-related projects (Ogundipe et al., 2021).

7. Limited Public Awareness and Participation

Another critical challenge is low public awareness about the SDGs, especially in rural and underserved areas. Many citizens are unaware of the SDGs or their relevance to daily life. Without grassroots engagement, SDG initiatives lack the community buy-in necessary for sustainable impact (Ojo & Olaniyan, 2021).

Nigeria's commitment to the SDGs reflects a national aspiration to build a prosperous, equitable, and sustainable society. However, the country continues to face significant obstacles including weak institutions, insecurity, poverty, funding constraints, and limited public awareness. Addressing these challenges requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, involving stronger governance, increased investment in social sectors, improved data systems, and inclusive development planning. With strategic action and sustained political will, Nigeria can make meaningful progress toward achieving the SDGs by 2030.



Section 8

Personal Research Outcome

Building an Advocacy from Personal Research

Over the years, I have engaged in various research and consultancy endeavours. These experiences have exposed me to the processes of policy design, implementation, and impact assessment. I acknowledge the widespread reality of policy failures in Nigeria and across many African countries. The persistent failure of public policies in Nigeria can be attributed to numerous factors, including poor implementation, corruption, political interference, weak institutions, and a lack of policy continuity. Such repeated policy failures have far-reaching implications for Nigeria's socio-economic development. These include:

- a. **Rising Poverty and Inequality:** Poorly implemented poverty alleviation programmes have failed to significantly reduce poverty levels, with over 40% of Nigerians still living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2021).
- b. **Erosion of Public Trust:** Constant policy failures have undermined citizens' trust in government and democratic institutions, resulting in political apathy and heightened civil unrest (Agba et al., 2013).
- c. **Economic Stagnation:** The absence of effective industrial and economic policies has hindered diversification, leaving Nigeria overly reliant on oil exports.

Some of my insights and experiences are drawn from the following studies:

1. PhD RESEARCH ON AN EU-FUNDED PROJECT: SOCIOECONOMIC LIFESTYLES OF NIGERIANS

Nigeria, as Africa's most populous nation, continues to face profound socio-economic challenges despite its wealth of natural and human resources. Persistent issues such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, underemployment, informal labour, and inadequate access to quality education and healthcare services have impeded the country's development. Understanding the socioeconomic lifestyle of Nigerians—defined by patterns of living, consumption, income generation, family structure, health behaviours, and access to public goods—is vital for the formulation of effective policies and interventions.

This PhD research, conducted within the framework of a European Union (EU)-funded initiative, aimed to critically examine the socioeconomic lifestyles of Nigerians across various regions and demographic groups. The study was driven by the urgent need for context-specific, evidence-based data to inform sustainable development policies and improve citizens' well-being. While numerous macroeconomic reports provide broad indicators, few empirical studies delve into the lived experiences and adaptive strategies of Nigerian households amidst socio-economic pressures.

The EU has increasingly prioritised partnerships with African nations focusing on migration, economic cooperation, good governance, and human development. As a strategic development partner to Nigeria, the EU supports initiatives that foster inclusive economic growth, human capital development, and social protection. Undertaking a PhD project under an EU framework provided a unique opportunity to generate

comprehensive, policy-relevant insights aligned with both EU development goals and Nigeria's national priorities.

Policy Outcomes and Benefits

i. Data-Driven Social Protection Programmes

Findings from the study provided disaggregated data on income sources, employment types, household expenditures, and access to basic services. These insights offered both the Nigerian government and international development partners a robust framework for designing targeted social protection schemes that respond to the real needs of vulnerable populations, rather than relying solely on aggregate poverty indices.

ii. Informed Labour and Employment Policies

The research examined informal labour markets, youth unemployment, and underemployment patterns. Its findings informed national employment policies and vocational training programmes tailored to the realities of job seekers—particularly those in urban slums and rural areas. This enabled EU development actors to align their skills-development interventions with actual labour market demands in Nigeria.

iii. Urban and Rural Development Planning

By mapping lifestyle patterns across regions, the research generated spatial data crucial for urban planning, rural development, and equitable resource allocation. Both national and sub-national governments can utilise these insights to enhance infrastructure, housing, transport, and public service delivery.

iv. Health and Education Policy Formulation

The study explored the impact of socio-economic conditions on access to education and healthcare. Understanding these

interconnections aids in refining the implementation of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), Universal Basic Education (UBE), and gender-responsive policies—particularly those addressing child nutrition, maternal health, and school dropout rates.

v. Migration and Remittance Policy

Given the high rates of internal and external migration, the research contributed to the EU-Nigeria migration dialogue by offering insights into the socio-economic factors influencing migration decisions. This supports the formulation of ethical and effective migration policies, improved remittance management, and more meaningful diaspora engagement.

vi. Evidence for Tracking Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The study supported the monitoring of Nigeria's progress towards several SDGs—particularly Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequality). It provided micro-level evidence that can enhance the design, implementation, and evaluation of development programmes co-financed by the EU and other partners.

This PhD project represents a timely and strategic contribution to development policy in Nigeria. By illuminating the complex, lived realities of Nigerian socio-economic life, the findings bridge the gap between high-level policy objectives and grassroots realities. The research outcomes have not only strengthened Nigeria's national planning processes but also improved the effectiveness of EU-funded and other international development interventions. Ultimately, the study advances the broader goal of promoting inclusive, sustainable, and equitable development in Nigeria.

2. FEDERAL CHARACTER COMMISSION RESEARCH TO ASSESS INFRASTRUCTURAL DISTRIBUTION IN NIGERIA

The Federal Character Commission (FCC) was established to promote national unity, ensure equitable representation, and prevent the dominance of any particular ethnic or regional group in the allocation of national resources and appointments. In line with its constitutional mandate, the FCC undertook a comprehensive study to assess infrastructural distribution in Nigeria. This study was necessitated by the imperative to promote fairness, inclusivity, and balanced development across the country's diverse geopolitical zones.

i. Addressing Regional Disparities in Development

A core motivation for this research was the longstanding and widely acknowledged imbalance in the distribution of infrastructure among Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. Over the decades, certain regions have disproportionately benefitted from federal projects—such as roads, bridges, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and energy infrastructure—while others have remained underdeveloped. This disparity has led to growing discontent, regional agitation, and feelings of marginalisation. By assessing these imbalances through empirical data, the FCC sought to inform evidence-based policy reforms that promote regional equity.

ii. Enhancing National Integration and Unity

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious federation, and equitable distribution of federal investments is essential for maintaining peace, unity, and trust in governance. The FCC's infrastructural audit identified areas most affected by perceptions of neglect. Addressing these through a more balanced redistribution of infrastructure fosters a stronger sense of inclusion and reinforces national cohesion.

iii. Promoting Accountability and Transparency in Public Investment

Infrastructure development consumes a significant portion of the national budget. Without proper oversight and distributional analysis, such investments may fail to deliver equitable outcomes. The FCC's study introduced a layer of transparency by exposing patterns of federal investment to public scrutiny. This empowers citizens, civil society groups, and legislators to hold the government accountable and demand fair allocation of resources.

iv. Supporting Evidence-Based Policy and Planning

Federal and state-level development planning often suffers from a lack of accurate, timely data. The FCC's research filled this gap by providing granular insights into infrastructure availability, regional deficits, and project needs. These findings are instrumental for agencies such as the Federal Ministry of Works and the Budget Office in designing development strategies that are both equitable and efficient.

v. Aligning Resource Allocation with the Federal Character Principle

Section 14(3) of the Nigerian Constitution mandates that the composition of government and the conduct of its affairs should reflect the federal character of Nigeria and promote national unity. By extending this principle to infrastructure distribution, the FCC not only reinforced constitutional ideals but also ensured that fairness is embedded in broader governance practices beyond employment quotas.

vi. Mitigating Drivers of Conflict and Insecurity

In several parts of Nigeria, underdevelopment and perceived marginalisation contribute to social unrest, militancy, and separatist tendencies. The study serves as a preventive mechanism by revealing

structural inequalities that, if left unaddressed, may escalate tensions. Targeted interventions based on the findings can reduce conflict and promote peace through inclusive development.

vii. Informing Development Partners and Donor Agencies

International development partners often depend on government data to guide their interventions. The FCC's study offers credible, regionally disaggregated information that helps such stakeholders align their programmes with national priorities and effectively target infrastructure gaps.

In conclusion, the Federal Character Commission's infrastructural distribution study was both timely and strategic. It not only fulfilled the Commission's constitutional responsibilities but also provided a foundation for balanced national development. The insights from the study are essential for promoting equity, reducing regional inequalities, enhancing public trust, and building a unified and just Nigeria.

3. AFRICAN-EUROPE STUDY ON POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT, AND INSECURITY INDICES (2015–2020)

The study of poverty, unemployment, and insecurity indices from 2015 to 2020 in West and East Africa, conducted under the African–Europe collaborative research framework, was both timely and crucial. This period witnessed considerable socio-economic and security challenges across sub-Saharan Africa, characterised by internal conflict, high youth unemployment, economic instability, and growing migration pressures on Europe. The study aimed to provide empirical insight into these multidimensional crises and to inform sustainable policy responses from both African governments and their European counterparts.

i. Growing Interdependence Between Africa and Europe

Africa and Europe share deep-rooted historical, economic, and

geopolitical ties. Instability and deprivation in West and East Africa often result in increased migration flows towards Europe, raising shared concerns over border control, humanitarian response, and regional security. By analysing poverty, unemployment, and insecurity indices, the study provided data-driven foundations for cooperative strategies in economic stabilisation and peacebuilding that serve mutual interests.

ii. Persistent Poverty and Widening Inequality

Despite sustained development aid and economic reforms, poverty levels remained high across many countries, including Nigeria, Niger, Ethiopia, and Somalia. The study aimed to identify recurring patterns, policy lapses, and structural deficiencies that perpetuate poverty. Its findings support region-specific interventions for inclusive growth and social development.

iii. Youth Unemployment: A Looming Crisis

Youth unemployment rose sharply during the study period, driven by underperforming labour markets, limited industrialisation, and misalignment between education systems and job market demands. The study quantified the scale of youth underemployment and linked it to increased migration, insecurity, and radicalisation. It recommended actionable policies on job creation, skills training, and entrepreneurship promotion—key components in harnessing Africa's demographic dividend.

iv. Escalating Insecurity and Armed Conflict

Security challenges such as the Boko Haram insurgency in West Africa and Al-Shabaab terrorism in East Africa severely undermined social stability and economic activity. Conflicts, ethnic violence, and criminality displaced millions and disrupted trade and livelihoods. The study examined these insecurity indicators, assessed their socio-

economic impacts, and proposed policy frameworks for peacebuilding and regional security cooperation.

v. The Impact of External Shocks: Climate Change and COVID-19

The 2015–2020 period also included the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated poverty, unemployment, and insecurity across both regions. Simultaneously, climate change–related disasters such as droughts and floods, particularly in countries like Sudan, Kenya, and Mali, weakened already fragile economies. The study explored how these shocks interacted with existing vulnerabilities and proposed resilience-building measures, including adaptive social protection systems.

vi. Advancing Evidence-Based Policymaking and International Cooperation

Robust data are essential for African governments and their European partners to develop coordinated responses to cross-cutting challenges. This study served as an empirical backbone for policies in migration management, border security, rural development, and regional economic integration. It also functioned as a monitoring tool for evaluating the effectiveness of partnerships such as the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF).

vii. Supporting the SDGs and Agenda 2063

The study directly contributed to tracking progress towards Sustainable Development Goals—particularly SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)—and the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063. By pinpointing areas of both progress and regression, it offered development stakeholders a data-informed basis for adjusting priorities and strategies.

In summary, the African-Europe study on poverty, unemployment, and insecurity from 2015 to 2020 was critical in mapping the intersections of socio-economic deprivation and regional instability. It provided actionable intelligence for African and European policymakers, encouraging a more integrated and strategic approach to development cooperation. Its findings remain vital tools for policy design, donor alignment, and the long-term pursuit of peace, prosperity, and shared growth across both continents.

4. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE REVIEW ON THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND GROWTH PLAN

The administration led by President Muhammadu Buhari (2015–2023) recognised that the Nigerian economy would likely continue on a path of persistent and steep decline unless decisive action was taken to alter the trajectory. This concern prompted the initiation of the **Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP)** (Anam et al., 2024). The 2021 Economic Performance Review of Nigeria's ERGP was a crucial evaluative study aimed at assessing the successes, limitations, and overall impact of the framework designed to stabilise and grow the economy between 2017 and 2020. This review was justified for several key reasons:

i. Evaluating Policy Outcomes and Accountability

The ERGP, launched in 2017, sought to restore economic growth, invest in human capital, and build a globally competitive economy in the aftermath of the 2016 recession. A comprehensive performance review in 2021 was necessary to determine whether the plan achieved its objectives. By analysing macroeconomic indicators—such as GDP growth, inflation, foreign reserves, employment rates, and sectoral performance—the study promoted transparency and accountability in public policy implementation.

ii. Guiding Post-ERGP Economic Planning

As the ERGP concluded in 2020, the 2021 review provided a foundational assessment to inform the development of subsequent medium- and long-term national economic plans. Understanding both the successes and shortcomings of the ERGP enabled policymakers to refine strategies, correct implementation gaps, and avoid repeating past mistakes in follow-up programmes such as the **National Development Plan (2021–2025)**.

iii. Measuring the Impact of COVID-19 on Economic Objectives

Although the ERGP was designed before the global COVID-19 pandemic, its implementation and outcomes were inevitably affected by the economic disruptions of 2020. The 2021 review helped isolate the pandemic's impact on key sectors—such as oil, trade, health, education, and agriculture—and assessed the resilience of the Nigerian economy to external shocks. This informed updated risk management strategies and improved preparedness for future crises.

iv. Assessing Investment and Infrastructure Outcomes

The ERGP prioritised investment in infrastructure, power, transport, and agriculture. The study examined whether capital projects were executed, whether private sector investment increased, and the degree to which these developments contributed to economic diversification. This provided empirical evidence to guide decisions on continuing or recalibrating infrastructure-led growth strategies.

v. Enhancing Public Financial Management and Resource Allocation

A central component of the ERGP was improving the efficiency of public spending and increasing revenue generation—particularly through tax reform and expanding the non-oil revenue base. The 2021

performance review evaluated the government's progress in fiscal discipline, budget execution, and debt sustainability—factors essential for restoring investor confidence and maintaining macroeconomic stability.

vi. Supporting Evidence-Based Governance and International Collaboration

Nigeria's development partners—including the World Bank, IMF, AfDB, and bilateral donors—rely on credible evaluations of national policies to align technical and financial support. The study produced data-driven findings that enhanced alignment between Nigeria's development agenda and international assistance frameworks, thus strengthening cooperation and donor engagement.

vii. Tracking SDG Progress and Economic Inclusion

The ERGP aligned with the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly those addressing poverty reduction, decent work, industry, innovation, and infrastructure. The 2021 review enabled an evidence-based assessment of Nigeria's progress toward these targets, with special emphasis on inclusive growth, gender equity, and youth empowerment.

viii. Public Engagement and Democratic Development

Making the results of the 2021 ERGP performance review publicly accessible promoted democratic accountability by allowing citizens, civil society, and the media to evaluate government performance. This strengthened public discourse on economic development and governance and reinforced the demand for citizen-focused policy reforms.

The 2021 Economic Performance Review of the ERGP was not a mere bureaucratic exercise—it was a critical tool for reflection, learning, and

redirection of Nigeria's economic future. It provided insights into policy effectiveness, institutional capacity, and resource management while laying the foundation for more adaptive and inclusive national development strategies. The study created a feedback loop essential for continuous improvement in governance, economic resilience, and sustainable growth.

5. PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI'S EIGHT-YEAR ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE: ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL POLICIES

A comprehensive study of President Muhammadu Buhari's eight-year tenure, focusing on economic management and social policy implementation, is warranted by the need for evidence-based evaluation of national leadership and socioeconomic outcomes. Given Nigeria's complex macroeconomic conditions and evolving social challenges between 2015 and 2023, the study was necessary for multiple strategic, policy, and academic purposes:

i. Evaluating the Effectiveness of Economic Management Strategies

During this period, Nigeria endured several economic shocks, including:

- a. The 2016 recession,
- b. Global oil price volatility,
- c. Foreign exchange instability, and
- d. The COVID-19 pandemic.

The Buhari administration's responses—such as the ERGP (2017–2020), the border closure policy, and foreign exchange control mechanisms—required systematic evaluation. This study assessed the adequacy, efficiency, and sustainability of these strategies, particularly

in terms of inflation control, fiscal policy, debt management, and GDP performance.

ii. Assessing Social Policy Outcomes and Human Capital Development

Key social programmes launched under the administration included:

- a. N-Power (youth employment),
- b. TraderMoni and MarketMoni (financial inclusion),
- c. The Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, and
- d. Conditional cash transfers for vulnerable groups.

Evaluating their reach, efficiency, and impact on poverty alleviation, youth empowerment, gender equality, and overall human development was essential for gauging their contribution to national welfare.

iii. Monitoring Progress on Structural Economic Reforms

The administration embarked on reforms aimed at diversifying the economy from oil dependency, including the Anchor Borrowers' Programme, the Presidential Fertiliser Initiative, and local content promotion. The study tracked the outcomes of these reforms, their impact on job creation and industrial development, and lessons for future policy directions.

iv. Informing Future Governance and Policy Continuity

A systematic assessment of Buhari's economic and social outcomes established a knowledge base for future administrations. It identified successes, failures, and institutional limitations—insights critical for ensuring the continuity of effective policies and refining ineffective ones.

v. Enhancing Democratic Accountability and Transparency

A transparent review of presidential performance strengthens

democratic governance. By documenting economic decisions and social interventions, the study facilitated fact-based engagement among stakeholders—including citizens, researchers, civil society, and international partners.

vi. Contributing to Nigeria's Socioeconomic Data Repository

Nigeria faces challenges in policy documentation and data accessibility. This study enriched the national archive with credible trend analyses on:

- a. Employment and unemployment,
- b. Poverty rates,
- c. Budget execution,
- d. Exchange rate fluctuations, and
- e. Public debt levels.

Such data are indispensable for academic research, policy development, and investment planning.

vii. Aligning with National and International Development Goals

The Buhari administration committed to the **SDGs** and the **African Union Agenda 2063**. The study measured Nigeria's performance in poverty alleviation, education, health, inclusive growth, and inequality reduction, contributing to assessments of the country's alignment with global benchmarks.

viii. Providing Lessons in Crisis Management and Economic Resilience

From two economic recessions to a global pandemic, Buhari's presidency was a litmus test for Nigeria's economic institutions. The study offered insights into Nigeria's capacity for crisis response, policy

coordination, and institutional resilience—vital lessons for strengthening future governance systems.

The study of President Muhammadu Buhari's economic and social policy legacy is vital for drawing informed conclusions about Nigeria's development journey. It provides a platform for critical reflection, fosters public accountability, and offers lessons that can shape the future of policy, planning, and governance. Beyond national utility, it contributes to international development dialogue and academic discourse.

Evidence from Personal Research

Public policy failures in Nigeria are largely the result of systemic and structural challenges that hinder effective formulation and implementation. Corruption, weak institutions, political interference, and lack of continuity have consistently undermined the country's development objectives. Reversing this trend requires institutional reforms, stronger governance frameworks, and enhanced accountability mechanisms. Only through well-conceived and faithfully implemented policies can Nigeria achieve sustainable development and improve the welfare of its citizens.



Section 9

A New Framework for Achieving Public Policy Goals

A New Framework for Achieving Public Policy Goals, Sustainable Development, and National Stability by 2030

Drawing on the preceding discussion, which highlights the persistent failure of social protection policies in Nigeria, this paper proposes a new strategic framework aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. As the global community strives towards realising the United Nations SDGs, countries are increasingly compelled to reimagine governance models that integrate public policy, sustainable development, and national stability. Although these three domains are often addressed separately, they are inherently interdependent. Public policy provides the strategic direction for sustainable development, which in turn underpins national stability through inclusive economic growth, social cohesion, and environmental resilience.

Advancing a New Direction

The complex and interwoven relationship between poverty, unemployment, and insecurity has been well established—each reinforces the other. This reality demands a multipronged approach to development if the 2030 targets are to be met. The bleak state of human welfare for the average Nigerian citizen raises grave concerns. Despite

numerous government interventions, tangible progress remains elusive, and the future appears even more uncertain. To realise public policy objectives, ensure sustainable development, and secure national stability by 2030, scholars and policymakers are advocating for an integrated framework based on the following key components:

1. Policy Coherence and Systems Thinking

Policy coherence ensures that initiatives across different sectors are mutually reinforcing rather than contradictory. Systems thinking promotes a holistic understanding of problems by recognising the interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental factors (Meadows, 2008). This aligns with SDG 17, which emphasises policy coherence for sustainable development. For instance, energy policy should not solely focus on access but also consider environmental sustainability, gender equity, and employment generation. Integrated approaches of this nature prevent fragmented or “siloeed” policies that often fail to deliver long-term outcomes.

2. Adaptive and Evidence-Based Policymaking

A modern framework must incorporate adaptability, allowing policy to evolve in response to dynamic challenges such as economic downturns, pandemics, or climate-related events. Evidence-based decision-making enhances efficiency, legitimacy, and accountability (Andrews et al., 2017). Government institutions should make use of real-time data, monitoring systems, and predictive analytics to inform and refine interventions continuously.

3. Inclusive Governance and Participation

Inclusive governance fosters legitimacy and ensures that public policy reflects the needs of diverse societal groups. Participation by civil society, marginalised communities, and the private sector promotes ownership, enhances transparency, and improves compliance (Gaventa

& Barrett, 2012). Gender-responsive and youth-inclusive policies are especially vital in countries like Nigeria, where youth constitute a significant proportion of the population and gender disparities remain deeply entrenched.

4. Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building

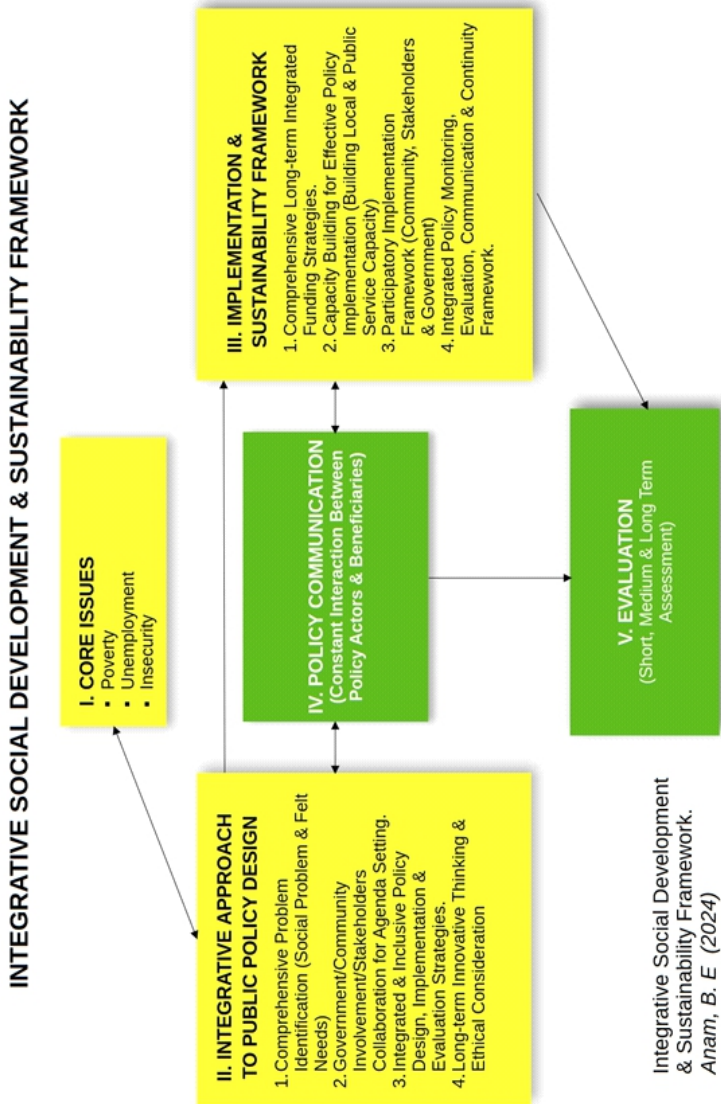
Effective policy implementation depends on strong, transparent, and accountable institutions. The proposed framework emphasises the reform and modernisation of public institutions, particularly in areas such as civil service capacity, digital governance, and anti-corruption. Institutional integrity, efficiency, and credibility are central to successful development outcomes (North, 1990).

5. Localising the SDGs

Although the SDGs are global in scope, their success depends on local implementation. Local governments, being closer to the populace, are better positioned to identify and respond to community-specific needs. Empowering subnational entities through fiscal decentralisation and administrative autonomy enhances adaptability and responsiveness (United Cities and Local Governments [UCLG], 2019).

The ISODS Framework

This section introduces the **Integrative Social Development & Sustainability (ISODS) Framework**—a holistic and context-specific approach that aligns policy coherence, institutional strength, and inclusive participation with the broader goals of sustainable development and national stability. The ISODS Framework aims to transform Nigeria's policy landscape by addressing structural weaknesses and promoting people-centred development in line with the 2030 Agenda.



Core Issues

At the heart of the framework lie three foundational challenges:

- **Poverty:** A systemic issue affecting over 63% of Nigerians, limiting access to basic needs and essential services.
- **Unemployment:** Particularly prevalent among youth, leading to feelings of disenfranchisement and contributing to economic instability.
- **Insecurity:** Evident in forms such as terrorism, militancy, and crime, it disrupts livelihoods and undermines economic development.

These issues are interrelated, forming a vicious cycle that perpetuates socio-economic vulnerability.

I. Integrated Approach to Public Policy Design

a. Comprehensive Problem Identification (Social Problems & Felt Needs):

Adopting a bottom-up development approach, this involves identifying the problem, setting goals, designing an evaluation plan, collecting data, analysing results, and interpreting expected outcomes.

b. Government/Community Involvement and Stakeholder Collaboration for Agenda Setting:

Utilises a consultative and participatory model to ensure inclusivity in the policy design process.

c. Integrated and Inclusive Policy Design, Implementation, and Evaluation Strategies:

Emphasises the identification of strategies tailored to the specific policy environment for effective outcomes.

d. Long-Term Innovative Thinking and Ethical Considerations:

Encourages flexibility and forward-thinking in the policy process, guided by strong ethical principles.

II. Implementation & Sustainability Framework (Interventions and Actions)

a. Comprehensive Long-Term Integrated Funding Strategies:

Includes both budgetary and non-budgetary sources such as corporate social responsibility contributions, loans, and grants.

b. Capacity Building for Effective Policy Implementation:

Focuses on continuous training for public servants and skill development for community members to enhance implementation capacity.

c. Participatory Implementation Framework:

Encourages shared responsibilities among communities, stakeholders, and government for improved sustainability of programmes.

d. Integrated Policy Monitoring, Evaluation, Communication, and Continuity Framework:

Ensures ongoing assessment and communication throughout the policy lifecycle to maintain alignment and continuity.

III. Policy Communication

Policy communication involves conveying relevant information about policies to stakeholders and the public. The aim is to inform, clarify objectives, foster understanding, and encourage compliance. This process must be:

- a. **Strategic:** Employing persuasive and engaging communication tailored to different audiences.
- b. **Continuous:** Providing regular feedback from policy design through to implementation and evaluation.
- c. **Time-Sensitive:** Structured across short-, medium-, and long-term timelines to address evolving needs and reactions.

IV. Evaluation

Policy evaluation assesses the outcomes and impacts of public policies. This process involves:

- a. Defining the objectives of the policy.
- b. Gathering data on implementation and results.
- c. Analysing findings to determine successes, shortcomings, and areas for improvement.
- d. Using the insights to inform and shape future policy directions.

Conclusion

The governance challenges facing Nigeria and other developing nations often stem not from the absence of policy frameworks, but from weak leadership and the lack of a comprehensive policy sustainability structure. Embracing an integrated framework offers multiple benefits:

- 1. **Improved Efficiency:** Reduces duplication and waste by aligning sectoral efforts.
- 2. **Resilience and Preparedness:** Strengthens the capacity to respond effectively to crises such as pandemics and climate-related disasters.
- 3. **Social Equity and Cohesion:** Promotes fairness, reduces marginalisation, and helps to prevent conflict.
- 4. **Enhanced Legitimacy:** Builds public trust through transparent and inclusive policymaking.

It is anticipated that the **Integrative Social Development & Sustainability (ISODS) Framework**, as advocated in this presentation, will support government efforts in tackling persistent poverty, inequality, institutional inefficiency and corruption, unemployment, and insecurity in Nigeria and other developing countries by 2030.

Operationalising ISODS Framework

The ISODS framework is operationalised, and monitored for effective policy implementation and evaluation as follows,

1. **Develop National Sustainability Strategies** that integrate public policy, SDGs, and stability indicators.
2. **Establish Multi-Stakeholder Platforms** to guide policy formulation and monitor implementation progress.
3. **Strengthen National Statistical Systems** to ensure accurate, timely, and reliable data for policy evaluation.
4. **Create Innovation Labs within Government Ministries** to pilot, test, and scale evidence-based solutions.
5. **Promote Regional Cooperation**, especially on transboundary challenges such as climate change, conflict, and migration.

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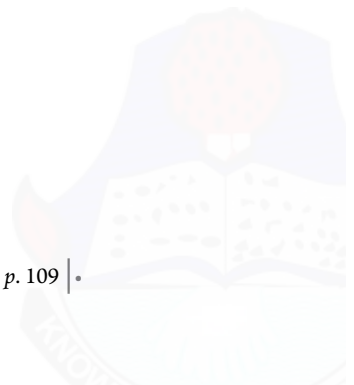
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