

The Implication of Child Poverty to the Economy of Nigeria

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Abstract

Sustainable economic development through future societal value has conquered a central theme on the academic interest of recent time. The well being of child's future has direct link with the present time activities of the government, community, organizations, family and parents to protect them. Thus fulfilling their rights and values at early stage of childhood will certainly transform them to achieve their full potentials and to participate actively in the society. The study descriptively analyzed the child poverty situation in Nigeria by comparing the changes between 2000 and 2007. Similarly the paper adopted the model "B" of Faith and Holland,(2007) and Bristol approach for the situational analysis in Nigeria. Simple mathematical tool for assessing the differential changes of the period under review was employed. The result revealed that there are prevalence of severe deprivation in shelter, sanitation and nutrition, education and health positively increased by 11.1%; 7.7%; 50.0%; 36% and 17.5% respectively while water and information drastically increase by -15.9% and -48.6 respectively (In essence only information and water supply contribute to children wellbeing). The paper recommends that, policy makers should restructure the existing social policies and service delivery to children and young persons.

Keywords: *Child poverty, Poverty indices, Economy, Severe deprivation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The economics of poverty reduction, alleviation and eradication has conquered a central theme on the academic research agenda. In recent time, many economies of the world had experienced significant changes in economic growth. Nigeria has witness GDP growth rate appreciation in past seven years with 6.5% in 2005; 7.0% in 2009; 7.9% in 2010 and 7.7% in 2011 respectively (Sunusi, 2012). The overall growth rate can be misleading however, it tells us nothing about the sectoral composition of growth and its real effect to livelihood of the citizens. It could be possible for the real economic productive sectors which touch and sustain the survival means of major population to stagnate or decline while services are booming. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2011), the Nigeria unemployment rates between 2000 and 2011 showed that, the number of unemployed persons constituted 31.1% in 2000; 13.6% in 2001; 12.6% in 2002; 14.8% in 2003; 13.4% in 2004; 11.9% in 2005; 13.7% in 2006; 14.6% in 2007; 14.9% in 2008; 19.7% in 2009; 21.1% in 2010; and 23.9% in 2011. The 2011 annual socio economic report revealed the rate of unemployment is higher in the rural area (25.6%) than in the urban area (17.1%), which is invariably, reflect directly in their

standard of living and poverty status (NBS, 2011). Thus, unemployment rate may have been a lot worse in near future if measures are not taken as it rises at increasing rate without major employment generating policies by the government.

World Bank, (2000) refers to absolute poverty as insufficiency of or the total lack of basic necessities like food, housing and medical cares. It embraces the inadequacy of education and environmental services, consumer goods, recreational opportunities, neighbourhoods' amenities and transport facilities. While in relative terms, people are poverty-wracked when their incomes fall drastically below the community average. It is imperative to assess the responsiveness of growth and poverty in relation to child development. Building future generation would certainly be adherent to the construction of solid foundation and to sustain the younger one. This could be doable via reducing, alleviating and eradicating the absolute and relative poverty to children. Roelen and Gassmann, (2008, P4) asserted that; "Children are largely dependent on their direct environment for the provision of their basic needs. Since they are not independent economic actors by themselves, they rely on the distribution of resources by their parents, household or community members". Poverty often manifest itself from the natural inheritance (a child born in poor family background would grown up poor) thereby, reducing child poverty would impulse to adult poverty reduction in near future. UNICEF, (2005) advocated that every children living in poverty would experience deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources and they are in need of them to survive, develop and grow well. In the same vein, those children are unable to enjoy their rights, and to achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society. These deprivations may either be in education, health, nutrition, water, sanitation, shelter, information, income or any other fundamental rights.

The main objective of this study is to examine the implication of child poverty to the social security, socio-economic growth and development of the country and provide policy inputs to analysts and policymakers in Nigeria. A survey was conducted by UNICEF- Nigeria and learnt lessons on the issues of child Al-majiri in the country with a specific focus burdensome area(northwest, north central and southwest regions of the country) they deduced that, "the misconception of hard work being pre-requisite to greatness has been greatly abuse in today's context to the extent that the thousands of children who find themselves in this schooling arrangement have their basic rights to survival, education, health, development, protection and participation highly compromised" UNICEF (2008, P30). Thus, un-healthy and un-conducive environment for learning to children would undermine the main target of impacting knowledge for adequate skill and literacy that would contribute to development of the world at large.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Aliyu,(2008) proclaimed that, the growth in Nigeria is not pro-poor, income/consumption inequality was positively related with growth due to pro-rich opportunities in business and other economic activities. Thus, poverty alleviation programme would help the comatose of poverty situation and improve standard of living by facing the major needy populace of the society in considering the geographical spread of the country.

Several studies from academics and professionals have been placed in order to depict the sufficient design in measuring child poverty. This resulted to different approaches and procedures in assessing the child poverty by different scholars. Roelen and Gassmann, (2008) concluded that, there is no single approach which is perfect and worldwide accepted to be use in determining the child poverty. Therefore, each approach is subject to specific conceptual frame work in accordance with the availability of resources. The authors, comprehensively reviewed literatures of different scholars and organizations (Ravallion, 1994; UNICEF, 2005;

White and Masset, 2002, 2003; UN, 2007; Deaton, 2006; Dessalien, 1999; Save the children, 2000; DWP, 2002; Ben-Arieh, 2000; Waddington, 2004; Deaton and Paxson, 1997; Minujin et al. 2002; Godon et al. 2003; Yong lives, 2001; Delamonica and Munijin, 2007; Alkire and Foster, 2007; Bradshaw et al. 2006; White, Leavy and Masters, 2002; Feeny and Boyden, 2003; Boyden, 2006; Corack, 2005, 2006; Mickle Wright, 2001; Blank, 2007; Benabou and Mookherjee, 2006; Richardson, Hoelscher and Bradshaw, 2007; Land et al. 2001 words worth, McPeak and Fenny, 2005 among others) and they classified the approaches in to three main heading; first is “child poverty on count measure” which also divided in to three categories (Monetary poverty approach, Corak’s practical approach and Bristol deprivation approach), Secondly, “child poverty index measure” with only two components(EU child well-being index and the US child and youth wellbeing index) and the last is “holistic approach measure”, this have twin division (young live approach and DEV framework for child poverty). The table I below summarizes the approaches with their advantages and disadvantages.

Table: I Advantages and Disadvantages of Child Poverty Approaches

Aggregation Method	Child poverty Approach	Advantages	Disadvantages
<i>Child poverty count measures</i>			
	Monetary poverty	- quantifiable and easily interpretable output	- one-dimensional measure of child poverty - household as unit of analysis - exclusion of vulnerable groups not covered by household surveys
	Corak’s practical Approach	- quantifiable and easily interpretable output - theoretically allows for complementary, nonmonetary indicators	- de facto one-dimensional measure of child poverty - exclusion of vulnerable groups not covered by household surveys

	Bristol deprivation Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - multidimensional measure of child poverty - quantifiable and easily interpretable output - possibility to examine overlaps in deprivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exclusion of vulnerable groups not covered by household surveys - problems in extension to measure overlap, depth and severity of poverty
<i>Child index Measures</i>			
	EU child well-being Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - single summary indicator for communication purposes - method allows for comparison of demographic groups to average performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - single summary indicator hides underlying information - method does not provide information on improvements in absolute terms
	US Child and youth well-being index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - single summary indicator for communication purposes - method allows for tracking performance of demographic groups over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - single summary indicator hides underlying information - method only allows for comparison of demographic to a reference year - large data requirements
<i>Holistic child poverty approaches</i>			
	Young Lives study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recognition of complex nature of child poverty - large range of information Collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - less useful for communication or advocacy purposes - not appropriate for monitoring purposes

	DEV framework	- recognition of complex nature of child poverty - large range of information Collected	- more difficult to operationalize - less useful for communication or advocacy purposes - not appropriate for monitoring purposes
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Source: Roelen K. and Gassman F. (2008), Measuring Child Poverty and Well-Being: a literature review
 Working paper MGSOG/2008/WP001 P 26

In another perspective by Fajth and Holland, (2007) portray three different models of child poverty measures in simplify form (using A, B and C) model which is depicted in figure I below:

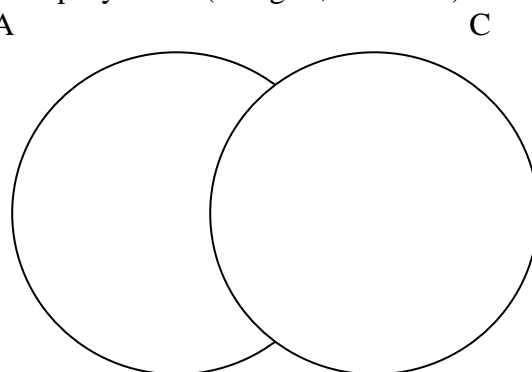


Figure 1: Child Poverty Approaches: three models

Model ‘A’: child poverty = overall poverty

Implications focus on material poverty as well as poverty as powerlessness, voicelessness

Advantage→ seeks solutions addressing the main underlying or core causes of Poverty in the country

Disadvantage→child-specific concerns and/or urge for immediate relief ignored

Examples→Per capita GDP

→ People living on less than \$1USD a day (at PPP) or in different Wealth/asset quintiles

→ Households under national food poverty line; people excluded from Political participation

Model ‘B’: child poverty = the poverty of households (families) raising children

Implications→ focus on material poverty

Advantage→ seeks solutions addressing the main underlying or core causes of poverty in the country as well as the inadequate support and services to families raising children

Disadvantage→ non-material aspects of child deprivations ignored

Examples→ Number of children living in households less than 50% of the median

income or under national poverty threshold (UNICEF IRC Report Card No 6)
 →Children with two or more severe deprivations (shelter, water, Sanitation, information, food, education and health service) ('Bristol concept' in Townsend 2003 or SOWC 2004)

Model 'C': child poverty = the flip side of child well being

Implications→ strongest focus on child outcomes

Advantages→ besides material poverty addresses also the emotional and spiritual aspects of child deprivation therefore brings in the concerns for child protection

Disadvantage→ methodological difficulty to produce standard poverty measures (headcount, poverty gap) and/or lack of indicators/statistical data especially in developing country contexts

Example→ Composite indices on child well being in the rich countries (Bradshaw at al 2006, UNICEF IRC Report Card No 7)

→ Complex child poverty measures in some OECD countries (e.g. UK)

Source: Fajth, G and Holland, K. "Poverty and Children: A Perspective." UNICEF DPP Working Paper, 2007 P 9

III. METHODOLOGY

Fajth and Holland, (2007) considered the comparative advantage on the three model approach (A: Overall poverty; B: the poverty of household (families) raising children; C: the flip side of the child wellbeing) presented in section II (literature review) above and prepared "C" for developmental partners in the issues of child rights, gender equality and well being for children. Nevertheless, due to the inadequacy of data on non- material facet for children wellbeing in Nigeria, the author choose model "B" to support the situational analysis in the country. Consequently, the model has close relationship with the one used by (Peter Townsend et al, Bristol: 2003) in the research work on child poverty in the less developed nations. In the same vein, UNICEF adopted the Bristol study in developing child poverty profile of Nigeria in 2009.

The study adopted qualitative method of analysis using published data of Nigeria demography house hold survey (DHS),Nigeria DHS education data survey 2010, UNICEF publication on Nigerian child protection indicators, multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS) and Nigeria child poverty profile, UNDP human development index, US embassy report on child labour and National bureau of statistic (NBS) several issues on poverty, unemployment and population. The study employed the Bristol approach in analysis considering the core context of our community and data availability. The variables are leading tools to child poverty as a result of child depravation on them (these are: education, health, nutrition, water, sanitation, shelter, information, and income/consumption).

IV. Results

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	R square change	Change statistics	df1	Df2	Sig. F change
1	.952 ^a	.906	.764	6.43525	.906	6.396	12	8	.007
2	.878 ^a	.771	.619	8.17903	.771	5.058	8	12	.006
3	.650 ^a	.423	.279	11.25079	.423	2.932	4	16	.054

SOURCE: Authors computations

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3178.290	12	264.858	6.396	.007 ^b
	Residual	331.299	8	41.412		
	Total	3509.590	20			
2	Regression	2706.833	18	383.354	5.058	.006 ^b
	Residual	802.575	12	66.896		
	Total	3509.590	20			
3	Regression	1484.304	4	371.076	2.932	.054 ^b
	Residual	2025.285	16	126.580		
	Total	3509.590	20			

SOURCE: Authors computations

The result revealed that there are prevalence of severe deprivation in shelter, sanitation and nutrition, education and health positively increased by 11.1%; 7.7%; 50.0%; 36% and 17.5% respectively while water and information drastically increase by -15.9% and -48.6% respectively (In essence only information and water supply contribute to children wellbeing). The paper recommends that, policy makers should restructure the existing social policies and service delivery to children and young persons.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The paper aimed to provide critical analysis on poverty-related issues, especially child poverty and contribute to current findings in the area of child wellbeing, development and deprivation. Child poverty is regarded as a global phenomenon that has received attention from national and international stakeholders that are championing the fight against child labour and human trafficking in developing countries (Makinde 2015; Ogwumike and Ozughalu 2018). History has shown that the fight against poverty required government at all levels to provide social interventions and policy that are proactive in combatting and alleviating poverty (Ayegba 2015; Makinde 2015; Nwosa 2014).

Also, another level of concern from this research is gross mismanagement of funds meant for championing the cause for poverty alleviation by different stakeholders saddled with the responsibility of rendering succour to the affected households. There are several poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria that are over the years have either as a result of corruption from the coordinators or lack of proper policies got their priority wrong (Abubakar 2019; Ariyo and Olaniyan 2015). Thus, the political elite's syndrome to corruption and total neglect of their subject under-develop the country. They are addressing the problem of child poverty required government providing programmes and policies that will monitor the disbursement of funds and sanctions any erring coordinators found in diverting those funds for personal use (Taiwo & Agwu 2016). Therefore, adequate attention must be paid to education, health, shelter, proper sanitation and other social amenities. These attributes identified are in line with Ogwumike & Ozughalu (2018) findings on the fact that many children suffered material deprivations, and the level of child poverty in Nigeria is very alarming.

Household size has been identified as the primary cause of child poverty in Nigeria (Ogwumike & Ozughalu 2018). This problem also led to population increase and high rate of illiteracy. Government over the years has failed to roll out programmes that can have a direct impact on her citizens. Moreover, the government are responsible for providing basic amenities to her citizens, especially in the area of health, proper sanitation, shelter and education. Children are grossly affected by the incompetence of the government ranges from societal abuse and deprivation of fundamental human rights (Ogwumike & Ozughalu 2018).

This societal abuse resulted in child labour both in the rural and urban centre. There is a need for social intervention programmes for aged parents and incentives to children below the age of 18 as applicable in advanced countries in order to augment the low-income and reduce pressure on the household head. Adetola & Olufemi (2012) find that the rate of child poverty is lower where the household head is male than female.

On the educational aspect, the government should as a matter of urgency provide funds in line with UNESCO and make education free to children from pre to secondary level (Ogwumike & Ozughalu 2018), even if possibly provide a special intervention funds to those that could not afford the university degree payable in future time which is applicable in other countries. There is also a need for adult education in order to reduce the level of illiteracy among households. The issue of insecurity in Nigeria is as a result of high illiteracy among the household most notably in Northern Nigeria, where they are regarded as a less educational region. If the government can make education, her top priority it will in a long way, solve the problem of insecurity. Also, the issue of unemployment among the teeming youths should be addressed. The government should encourage technical education for self-reliance rather than the syndrome of white-collar jobs.

Further, the action of many families concerning early marriage or low-income family planning also contributed to high rate of child poverty and child labour, and this area needs urgent attention if child poverty is to be alleviated. The government should put in place a tool to draw the attention of family on the importance of birth control and continuous education and child rights advocacy in every geographical part of Nigeria. With abundant human and material resources, the act of mismanagement and corruption has been the primary reasons for the increase in migration and child trafficking (Makinde 2016).

Also, the issue of early marriage is another factor government should look into, as a matter of fact, there is some religious and cultural attachment to early marriage, this act has contributed to increase in child poverty. There is a need for our judiciary and legislative to enact a law that will discourage child marriage, as suggested by (Ogwumike & Ozughalu 2018). Adequate awareness should be put in place in educating the family on the importance of family planning and the effect of early marriage on child development.

This article also laid more emphasis on the issue of insecurity as it influenced by poverty where government neglect her citizens. No nation can develop where there is a high rate of insecurity of lives and property. Social investments should be encouraged by providing adequate funding for education and security. The existing poverty alleviation programmes should be reorganised and monitored so that it will complement the support from national and international donors. Also, it has been revealed that child poverty measured by monetary or non-money-metric correlate, if there is an increase in money-metric approach, there is a likelihood that child deprivation is inevitable based on non-money-metric in a country (Ogwumike & Ozughalu 2018).

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