

Analysis of Poverty and Unemployment in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: An Outlook to Year 2035

Rex Oforitse Aruofor, Ph.D

Retired Professor of Economics, Benson Idahosa University,
Benin City, Nigeria
Email: aruoforr@yahoo.com

Daniel Risiagbon Ogbeide, Ph.D

Former Senior Lecturer of Political Science,
Augustine University, Ilara-Epe, Nigeria
Email: ogbeidedaniel8@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Poverty and unemployment has been a daunting and challenging problem in the Fourth Republic of Nigeria. The population has been growing by about 3% and the unemployment rate as at 2021 was as high as 43%. In addition, the level of poverty is high and as at 2021, the number of poor people in Nigeria was as high as 27 million. The population of women as at 2021 was estimated as 140 million while rural population was 77 million. The unemployment and poverty situation in Nigeria has really been depressing and have continued to confound extant political regimes in the fourth democratic republic. If this condition is allowed to persist, the level of dissatisfaction is likely to increase and the economy will largely become more unproductive. In addition, some have alleged that women are marginalized in Nigeria and that development is concentrated in the urban centers to the detriment of the rural areas. Others have postulated that rural-urban migration is one of the causes of unemployment in Nigeria. These contentions are real and need to be investigated if the country is to advance in development. Indeed, the Strategic Vision for Nigeria 2030 underscores our commitment to human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as to protecting children and harnessing the transformative power of youth. This study uses Markov Chains analysis to analyze the probable situation if things are allowed to continue in situ without any positive interventions. The results indicate that while unemployment may reduce, the reduction will not be enough to stem the rising poverty in Nigeria. Government should therefore embark on building more factories and industries especially in the rural areas of Nigeria. In addition, government should shun and fight corruption, indiscipline and greed in our everyday life as well as ensure the security of life and property in Nigeria. It should also address the problem of lopsided income distribution in the country.

Key Words: *Markov Chains, probability, transition matrix, poverty and unemployment, fourth republic.*

INTRODUCTION

Poverty and unemployment have constituted a daunting and challenging problem in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The population of Nigeria as at 2021 was 284 million, with an Active work force of 125.76 million of which 33.65 million were unemployed. The number of children of ages sixteen and below was 88.44 million, while the population of the aged (Old people, 80 years and above), was 23.5 million. The population of women as at 2021 was estimated as 140 million while rural population was 77 million.

The unemployment and poverty situation in Nigeria have really been depressing and have continued to confound extant political regimes in the fourth democratic republic. If this condition is allowed to persist, the level of dissatisfaction is likely to increase and the economy will become largely more unproductive.

There have been a lot of initiatives in the past by various governments to try and alleviate poverty and stem unemployment. Indeed, according to Aruofor (2007a), "In the 1980's government attempted to increase the social deliveries by embarking on several projects and programmes including, OFN (Operation Feed the Nation), GR (Green Revolution), DFRRRI (Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure Programme), BLP (Better Life Programme), FSP (Family Support Programme), NDE (National Directorate for Employment). In the 1990's, PTF (Petroleum Trust Fund), FEAP (Family Economic Advancement Programme) were added to the kitty.

The International Agencies were not left out. We had interventions by the World Bank (IBRD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO) among others. In spite of these interventions, poverty level and rate have remained very high in Nigeria."

In the fourth republic, according to Aruofor (2007b), one of the initiative to alleviate poverty in Nigeria, was the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), being embarked upon by the Federal Government of Nigeria. One of its development strategies or aspiration levels, was to reduce the incidence of poverty in Nigeria, by 5% per annum beginning from 2003 to 2007. Ejifoma (2022) highlighted what she regarded as some successes of the Buhari administration in areas of infrastructure and housing, amongst others. She indicated that Federal Ministry of Works and Housing is on projects in thirty four states in the federation. Family Homes Fund Limited (FHFL) which was incorporated in 2016 was the implementing agency for the National Social Housing Scheme and was said to have completed over thirteen thousand homes across nine states of the federation.

The extent to which all these initiatives and interventions have succeeded in alleviating and reducing poverty as well as stemming unemployment in Nigeria is yet to be evaluated.

This study uses Markov Chains analysis to analyze the probable situation if things are allowed to continue *in situ* without any further interventions. The objectives of this study among others include:

1. To build a socio-economic model of the Nigeria economy and use it to analyze the social dynamics of the Nigerian people using Markov Chains analysis.
2. In particular, to estimate and reveal the transition matrix and evaluate the poverty and unemployment situation of the economy especially in the fourth republic; as well as expose and analyze the rural-urban dynamics and gender effects on employment and poverty in Nigeria.
3. To examine the impact of past government initiatives on employment and poverty reduction in Nigeria.
4. To forecast the Markov outlook of the system from 2021 to 2035; especially if the economy continues to run without any further interventions, and
5. To draw conclusion and make some recommendations.

The article is therefore divided into five parts. Part I is the introduction and states the objectives of the study. Part II is the literature review; while Part III is the methodology. In Part IV, the results of the analysis are presented and discussed and Part V concludes the study and makes some recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Unemployment occurs according to Investopedia, when an active person searching for employment is unable to find work or when an individual who is not employed and is seeking employment cannot find work. Indeed, unemployment is a key indicator of the health of an economy. Low unemployment rate represents a strong economy while a high unemployment rate represents a weak economy. According to OECD, unemployment is people above a specified age not being in paid employment or self-employed but currently available for work. Poverty on the other hand is a condition in which one lacks the financial resources to meet basic needs, such as food, clothing and shelter (Wikipedia). It is apparent that unemployment and poverty are “twin sisters”.

Temitope (2021), lists the major causes of unemployment in Nigeria to include:

- i. Neglect of the Agricultural Sector
- ii. High migration from the rural to urban areas.
- iii. Disregard for vocational training institutes
- iv. High rate of embezzlement
- v. Political favoritism and nepotism
- vi. Low rate of investment
- vii. Rapid growth of population
- viii. Use of archaic and outdated school curriculum
- ix. Low economic growth.

He suggests that if the above causes are addressed, things will improve in Nigeria.

Poverty and Unemployment are social problems that have constituted major developmental challenges to Developing nations of the world, including Nigeria.

Abject poverty is majorly caused by faulty economic policies which then constitutes itself into a harbinger of the high spate of crimes prevalent in affected countries. This is facilitated by

inequitable distribution of wealth which ultimately leads to political violence, terrorism and other similar social vices in a country.

Poverty in absolute terms can be seen in respect of suffering from denial of basic human needs while in relative terms, it is viewed from the perspective of the situation falling below a minimum acceptable standard.

United Nations in 2010 adopted a Multi-dimensional Poverty Index, MPI, to measure poverty. This covers, amongst others, areas of living standard, education and health (UN, 2010 and 2015). International Labour Organisation, ILO, in 1982 viewed Unemployment in terms of numbers of economically active population without work, but available and seeking work, including those that lost jobs and those who voluntarily left work.

The National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, reports unemployment rate of 5.3% in the fourth quarter of 2022 and 4.1% in the first quarter of 2023 in Nigeria.

Unemployment and population growth have positive and direct relationship on the Nigerian economy, so, as unemployment increases, poverty also increases. Economically, unemployment facilitates poverty while psychologically, it fosters anger and frustration.

This study can be guided by Dudley Seer's Theory of Development.

The World Bank in 1991, viewed Development in terms of advancement in quality of life, increased income, health, reduction in poverty and increased freedom.

Dudley Seer, a British-trained Development Economist, views Development from the perspective of de-emphasizing focus on national income as target for reducing poverty. Rather, he seeks to emphasize socially-relevant measures (Seer, 2009).

To Seer, the purpose of Development, which is the target of thriving countries, is the reduction of poverty, unemployment and inequality, thereby broadening choices available to citizens.

In his work, "What is the meaning of Development?", Seer posits that three questions are necessary to be answered in order to ascertain whether a particular nation is developed or not. These are:

- a. What is the level of poverty in the country?
- b. What is the level of unemployment in the country; and
- c. What is the level of inequality in the country?

While it is not expected that any nation would score a zero rate for any of the questions, the country that scores lower rates in the three indices will be adjudged to be more developed than that country with higher rates.

This will invariably affect governmental allocation of resources to critical sectors of the economy that have bearing on the indices which will include, among others, education, agriculture and health (Ayodele, 2022).

Therefore, the analysis of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria's fourth republic will definitely have a bearing on the developmental strides of the country.

METHODOLOGY

An economy and indeed the world consists of variables interacting in a dynamic fashion. These variables include people (i.e. children, the work force, employed and unemployed, old people), businesses, vocations, sectors, governments etc interacting and changing in space and time. Even

the policies they implement and the policy instrument they use also change in time and space and the ability to manage these changes tend to depend on our ability not only to understand them but to be able to analyze and interpret them.

Markov Chains Analysis provides us with such a tool for analyzing and understanding these changes and ecostatometrics alias total differential modeling approach provides the enabling mechanisms for capturing the changes. Markov Chains Analyses can be approached in terms of flows which is the original concept but also can be approached in terms of change or a combination of both which is a new concept. However, the concept is versatile and depends on how we define our variables in the Markov Chains, especially in the estimation and interpretation of the transition matrix, which is vital to the procedure.

In the above connection, our variables can be defined as the probability of being in one state in period $(t+1)$, when another state changes in period (t) ; or just the probability that a variable will change in period $(t+1)$ when another variable changes in period (t) or both. Given the above definitions, it is worthy of note that Markov Chains analysis deals only with probabilities which do not admit of negative values; but an economy interacts in both negative and positive numbers. This impasse can be overcome by reducing the system to conform (see Aruofor, 2003 and 2020). This was the methodology applied in this study.

A computer programme has been developed by the author, Professor Aruofor, Rex Oforitse and Mr. Omoruyi, Kingsley Igbini of Microcraft Nigeria Ltd and incorporated into ESM Lab and can be assessed on the Internet as esmlab.ng.com. The list of variables in the model is presented in Fig. 1 and were obtained from the comprehensive ultimate model of the Nigerian economy (see Aruofor and Ogbeide, 2023a and 2023b).

Fig 1: LEGEND OF VARIABLES NIGERIA ECONOMY

S/no.	ACRONYM:	ACTIVITY	UNIT
1	UNEMWF	Unemployed Work Force	Million
2	POOR(t)	Poor	Million
3	MALE	Male Population	Million
4	FEMALE	Female Population	Million
5	URBAN	Urban Population	Million
6	RURAL	Rural Population	Million
7	CHLDRN	Population of Children 16 years and below	Million
8	EPAWF	Estimated Potential Active Work Force	Million
9	POPOLD	Population of Old people 80 years and above	Million
10	EMPWF	Employed Work Force	Million
11	EMP4TH	Employed Work Force in 4th Republic	Million
12	POOR4TH	Poor in 4th Republic	Million
13	UNEMP4	Unemployed Work Force in 4th Republic	Million

However the 2001 and 2006 census of the Nigerian economy by the National Bureau of Statistics was used to adapt the population of male and female, as well as urban and rural populations in Nigeria according to their shares.

The complete list of variables in Fig.1 was fed into ESM Lab and ran as Markov Chains in terms of flows. The Markov analysis of change doesn't have to deal with homogenous variables and is good for policy analysis while the Markov analysis of flows has to do with homogenous variables. The transition matrix is presented as Table 1 and can be interpreted as X is the probability of being in state j in period $(t+1)$ when state i changes in period (t) . The forecast was carried out simultaneously by ESM Lab from 2021 to 2035 and is presented in Tables and charts below.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented and discussed below, starting with the transition matrix.

ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSITION MATRIX

The transition matrix is presented in Table 1 and represents the probability of change of the column variable in year $(t+1)$ when the row variable changes in year (t) . The first coefficient is 0.9724 and is to be interpreted as a person who is unemployed in Nigeria in year (t) , has a chance or probability of 0.9724 of remaining unemployed in the following year, $(t+1)$. An unemployed person in year (t) has a probability of 0.0039 of being a male in period $(t+1)$ and a chance or probability of 0.0038 of being a female in year $(t+1)$; while an unemployed person in year (t) has a chance of 0.0062 of being employed in period $(t+1)$ in the fourth republic and a probability of 0.0018 of remaining unemployed in the fourth republic etc. What is most striking in the transition matrix is that the probabilities of remaining in the same state in period $(t+1)$ in Nigeria is very high across board while the probabilities of change or of moving to other states in period $(t+1)$ are very low. This suggests that alternatives and opportunities are very rare and few in the country. This brings to mind the hew and cry of the need to diversify the Nigerian economy.

Table 1: TRANSITION MATRIX (FLOW)

	UNEMWF	POOR(t)	MALE	FEMALE	URBAN	RURAL	CHLDRN	EPAWF	POPOLD	EMPWF	EMP4TH	POOR4TH	UNEMP4
UNEMWF	0.9724	0	0.0039	0.0038	0.001	0.0017	0.002	0.0043	0.0008	0.0021	0.0062	0	0.0018
POOR(t)	0	0.9743	0.0023	0.0022	0.0012	0.0021	0.0015	0.0025	0.0005	0.0019	0.005	0.0065	0
MALE	0.0006	0.0016	0.9871	0	0.0005	0.0009	0.0012	0.002	0.0004	0.001	0.0024	0.0018	0.0006
FEMALE	0.0006	0.0016	0	0.9871	0.0005	0.0009	0.0012	0.002	0.0004	0.001	0.0024	0.0018	0.0006
URBAN	0.0004	0.002	0.0012	0.0012	0.9864	0.0011	0.0007	0.0013	0.0002	0.0008	0.002	0.0022	0.0005
RURAL	0.0004	0.002	0.0012	0.0012	0.0006	0.9869	0.0007	0.0013	0.0002	0.0008	0.002	0.0022	0.0005
CHLDRN	0.0003	0.0015	0.0017	0.0017	0.0005	0.0009	0.9866	0.0016	0	0.0009	0.002	0.0017	0.0004
EPAWF	0.0006	0.0017	0.002	0.002	0.0006	0.001	0.0012	0.9842	0.0004	0.001	0.0025	0.002	0.0007
POPOLD	0.0006	0.0017	0.0021	0.002	0.0006	0.001	0	0	0.9856	0.001	0.0026	0.002	0.0007
EMPWF	0.0004	0.0019	0.0014	0.0014	0.0007	0.0012	0.0008	0.0014	0.0003	0.9859	0.0019	0.002	0.0005
EMP4TH	0.0012	0.0051	0.0034	0.0034	0.0015	0.0026	0.0019	0.0035	0.0007	0.0019	0.9677	0.0058	0.0014
POOR4TH	0	0.0065	0.0026	0.0026	0.0013	0.0023	0.0017	0.0028	0.0005	0.002	0.0059	0.9718	0
UNEMP4	0.0016	0	0.0039	0.0038	0.0011	0.0018	0.002	0.0043	0.0008	0.0021	0.0061	0.0036	0.9689

ANALYSIS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY IN NIGERIA

If we pick an unemployed person in Nigeria at random the chances are that he or she has a probability of 0.9724 of remaining unemployed in period $(t+1)$; 0 probability of being poor in period $(t+1)$ because he or she will be fighting for survival. He or she will have a probability of 0.0039 of being a male and 0.0038 of being a female, indicating that males have a higher chance

of being unemployed. He or she also has a probability of 0.001 of being an urban dweller and 0.0017 of being a rural dweller, indicating that rural unemployment is a cause for more concern in Nigeria. In addition, such a person has a probability of 0.002 of being a child, 0.0043 of belonging to the active work force; 0.0008 of being an old person and only 0.0021 probability of getting employed in Nigeria and 0.0062 of being employed in the fourth republic. He or she has 0 probability of being poor in the fourth republic because of the fight for survival but with a probability of 0.0018 that he or she will remain unemployed in the fourth republic.

On the other hand, if we pick a poor person at random in Nigeria, the probability that he or she will be unemployed is zero because of the fight for survival but the probability that he or she will remain poor is 0.9743. The probability that he is a male is 0.0023 and she is a female is 0.0022; indicating that poverty is more rife among males than females. Such a person also has a probability of 0.0012 of being an urban dweller as opposed to 0.0021 of being a rural dweller; indicating that poverty is higher in the rural areas than urban centers. The probability that he or she is a child is 0.0015 and that he or she is old is 0.0005. The probability that he or she is an able bodied person is 0.0025 and a chance of 0.0019 of being employed and 0.005 in the fourth republic. The chance of remaining poor in the fourth republic is 0.0065.

ANALYSIS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

If an employed person is chosen at random in the fourth republic the chance of becoming unemployed is 0.0012 and the chance that he or she will be poor is 0.0051 indicating that poverty is still a serious problem even among the employed in the fourth republic. In addition, such a person has a probability of 0.0015 of being an urban dweller as opposed to a probability of 0.0026 of being a rural dweller; thus confirming that more people dwell in the rural areas of Nigeria. Also, the probability of child employment in Nigeria is 0.0019; that he or she is able bodied is 0.0035 and that he or she is an old person still working is 0.0007. The probability that he or she belongs to the employed work force is 0.0019 and 0.9677 that he or she will continue to be employed in the fourth republic. The probability that he or she will be poor in the fourth republic is 0.0058 which is really alarming; and 0.0014 that such a person will become unemployed in the fourth republic. On the other hand, if an unemployed person is chosen at random in the fourth republic, the chance that such a person will continue to remain unemployed in the fourth republic is 0.9689 and only 0.0061 that he or she will be employed in the fourth republic.

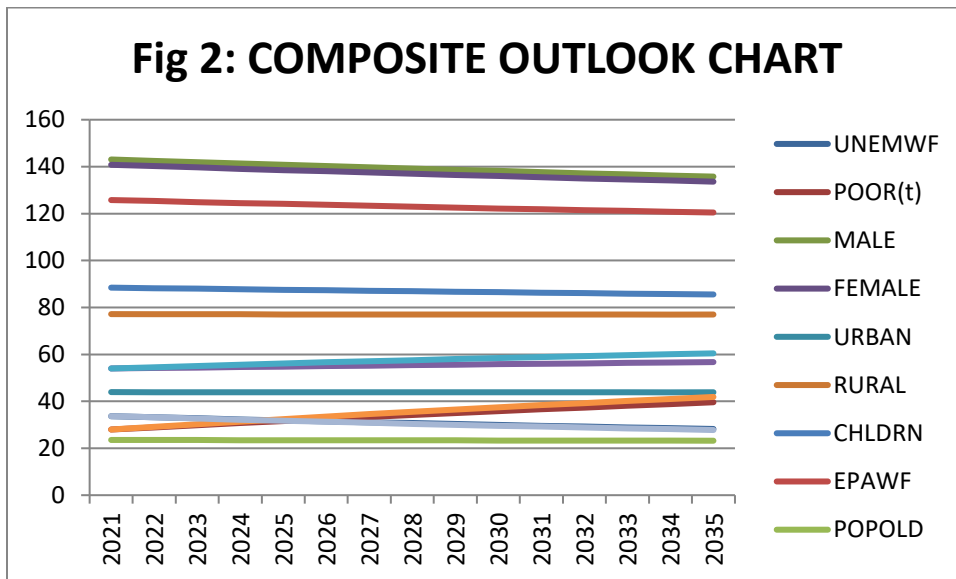
If a poor person in the fourth republic is chosen at random, the chance that he or she will be unemployed is zero because of the fight for survival but with a probability of 0.9718 that he or she will continue to remain poor in the fourth republic. That he or she will be a rural dweller is 0.0023 compared to 0.0013 of being an urban dweller, which confirms that poverty is more rife in the rural areas of Nigeria. The chance that an able bodied poor person will be employed in Nigeria is only 0.002 and 0.0059 in the fourth republic.

ANALYSES OF THE OUTLOOK OF POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA.

To proceed, we first present the outlook forecast as Table 2 followed by the composite Markov plots of the variables in Fig. 2.

Table 2: OUTLOOK FORECAST POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA (FLOW)

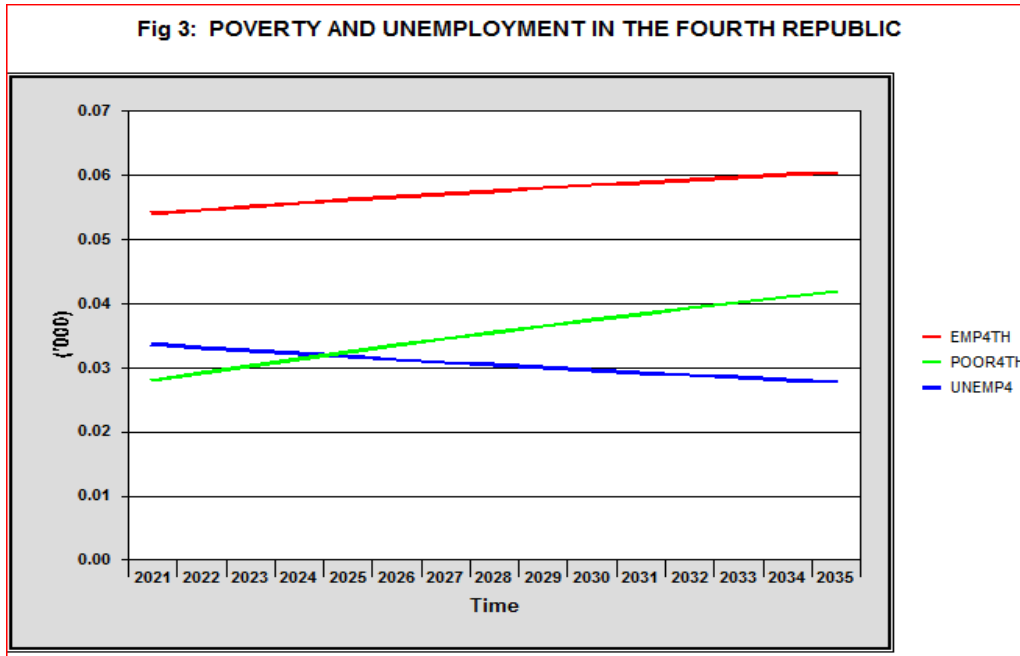
Year	UNEMWF	POOR(t)	MALE	FEMALE	URBAN	RURAL	CHLDRN	EPAWF	POPOLD	EMPWF	EMP4TH	POOR4TH	UNEMP4
2021	33.6552	27.9825	143.0566	140.7858	43.9348	77.1567	88.4429	125.7646	23.5331	53.9945	53.9945	27.9825	33.6552
2022	33.1989	28.9118	142.4764	140.2148	43.9162	77.124	88.2124	125.3381	23.5066	54.1999	54.5489	29.1407	33.15
2023	32.7542	29.825	141.906	139.6534	43.8995	77.0946	87.9857	124.9194	23.4805	54.4037	55.0869	30.2705	32.6595
2024	32.3207	30.7223	141.3451	139.1014	43.8845	77.0683	87.7626	124.5083	23.455	54.6058	55.609	31.3728	32.183
2025	31.8981	31.6039	140.7937	138.5587	43.8712	77.045	87.5432	124.1048	23.4298	54.8063	56.1157	32.4482	31.7203
2026	31.4861	32.47	140.2515	138.025	43.8597	77.0247	87.3272	123.7085	23.4051	55.0052	56.6075	33.4974	31.2709
2027	31.0845	33.3208	139.7185	137.5004	43.8497	77.0071	87.1148	123.3195	23.3808	55.2024	57.0849	34.521	30.8343
2028	30.6931	34.1565	139.1944	136.9846	43.8412	76.9923	86.9058	122.9376	23.357	55.398	57.5483	35.5197	30.4103
2029	30.3115	34.9773	138.6791	136.4774	43.8343	76.9802	86.7001	122.5627	23.3336	55.5919	57.9981	36.4941	29.9985
2030	29.9395	35.7834	138.1725	135.9787	43.8288	76.9706	86.4978	122.1946	23.3106	55.7842	58.4349	37.4448	29.5985
2031	29.5768	36.575	137.6743	135.4885	43.8248	76.9634	86.2987	121.8332	23.288	55.9749	58.859	38.3725	29.2099
2032	29.2233	37.3524	137.1845	135.0064	43.822	76.9586	86.1028	121.4783	23.2658	56.1638	59.2708	39.2777	28.8324
2033	28.8786	38.1157	136.703	134.5324	43.8206	76.9561	85.91	121.13	23.244	56.3511	59.6707	40.1609	28.4657
2034	28.5427	38.8651	136.2295	134.0664	43.8204	76.9558	85.7203	120.788	23.2226	56.5368	60.059	41.0227	28.1095
2035	28.2151	39.6009	135.764	133.6082	43.8215	76.9576	85.5337	120.4522	23.2015	56.7208	60.4362	41.8637	27.7634



The above chart appear blurred and so we shall present them piece mill and discuss them as we progress.

POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

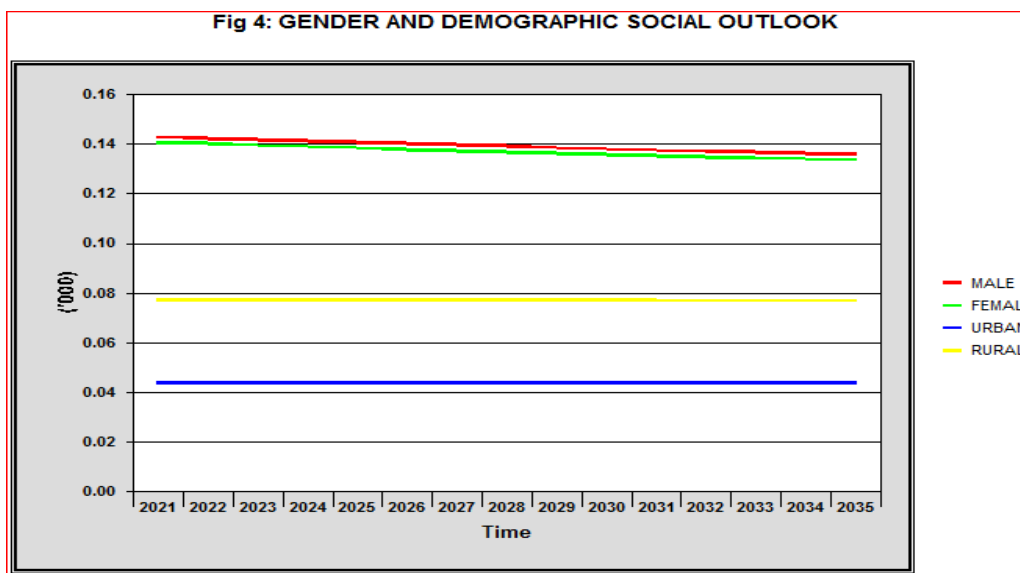
In the fourth republic, poverty appears to be increasing though unemployment appears to be declining.



This may imply that some measure of employment will continue to take place in Nigeria but not sufficient to drive down poverty in the country. This may mean that past initiatives to curb unemployment may not have all been in vain. However, the story of poverty is different, where most of the government expenditure on poverty alleviation may either have been embezzled or stolen by the operatives as a result of corruption. There is need for government to do more to address poverty in Nigeria.

GENDER AND DEMOGRAPHY

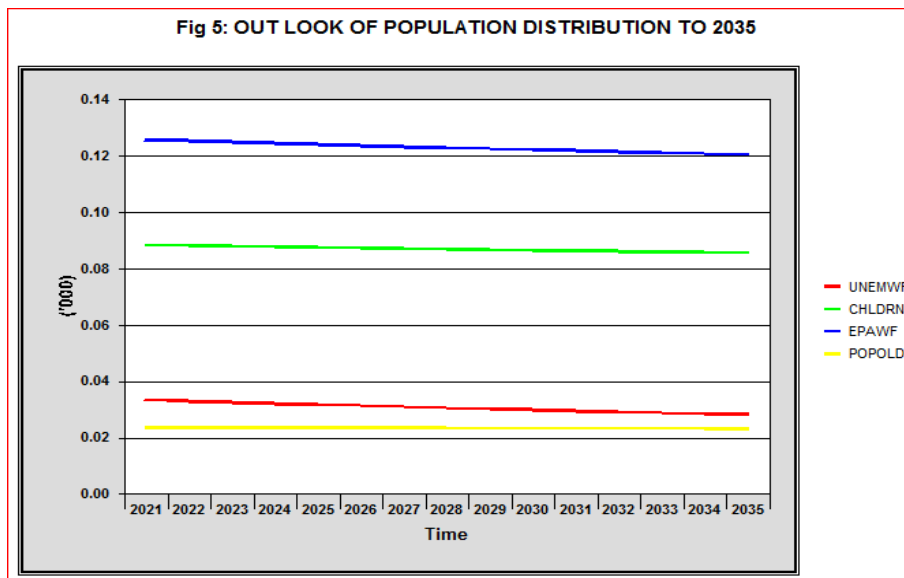
Next, we highlight the gender and demographic outlook of the Nigeria economy.



The population of males and females in Nigeria are very close but as can be seen from Fig 4, both will be declining from 143 million and 140 million respectively in 2021 to 135 million and 133 million respectively by 2035. The decline may be due to rising poverty which may result in death or cause people to emigrate to other lands in search of greener pastures. The rural population is clearly more than the urban population and will remain so even by 2035.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION OF NIGERIA OUTLOOK TO YEAR 2035

The outlook of population distribution is presented in Fig. 5.



In Fig 5, it can be seen that all the population will decline; even though the unemployed work force will also decline. This must be for the same reason as stated above in connection with gender poverty. The estimated potential active workforce will clearly decline from 125 million in 2021 to 120 million by the year 2035 and this will definitely adversely affect the productivity of the nation.

CONCLUSION

It will seem that though past initiatives may be paying off as far as employment is concerned but not enough to offset the level of poverty which is still on the rise. Apart from the fact that the fight against unemployment is not enough, it is evident that the root causes of poverty in Nigeria can be traced to corruption and lopsided distribution of income which is skewed towards the poor in the country. Indeed, according to Aruofor and Ogbeide (2023), the political class must make some concession and reduce their consumption if the imbalance in income distribution and poverty is to be addressed.

The probabilities of remaining in the same state in Nigeria is very high across board. This suggests that alternatives and opportunities are very few. This is why it is very necessary to diversify the economy. One of the ways of doing this is to build more factories and industries to create more employment opportunities for the teeming masses of Nigeria. The prescriptions by Aruofor (2017 and 2019);Aruofor and Ogbeide (2022a, 2023a and 2023b) still hold sway and are relevant to the solution of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.

Moreover, the results confirm that there is a net rural-urban migration in Nigeria and indicate that more people are in the rural areas and that rural-urban migration has a probability of 0.0012 while urban dwellers migrate to the rural areas with a probability of 0.0011; and therefore these must be taken into consideration in sighting industries and factories in Nigeria. It is necessary to build more factories and industries in the rural areas and not just concentrate on agriculture alone. This also highlights the problem of insecurity in Nigeria (see Aruofor and Ogbeide, 2022b). In addition, the population of children in Nigeria is very high and this places a lot of burden on Government to make provision for the future generations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The need to build more factories and industries especially in the rural areas of Nigeria cannot be overemphasized.
2. The need to shun and fight corruption, indiscipline and greed in our everyday life in Nigeria cannot be too far stressed.
3. Government must braze up and ensure the security of life and property in Nigeria.
4. Ensure good governance in Nigeria, and
5. Address the problem of lopsided income distribution in Nigeria.

ADDENDUM

There is no doubt that we are all in agreement with the above recommendations but the question facing us as a nation is “how do we bell the cat? Or who will bell the cat?” In an attempt to answer this question, we must re-examine ourselves to see and to determine why things have not worked out so far.

To begin, we must start by examining the Nigerian Civil Service and Capital budgetary proposals as well as budget defense by Ministries and Parastatals. Personal experience show that budgetary proposals in Nigeria are a ploy to attract more funds to the respective Ministries and Parastatals rather than for development and therefore, budgetary defense superintended by Ministry of National Planning, Federal Ministry of Finance and moderated by National Assembly Committees is strewn with many irregularities, imperfections and corrupt practices. Money often change hands while promissory notes of contract awards are often made to members of the National Assembly who are supposed to moderate the process, by Ministries and Parastatals in order to attract more funds to their respective Ministries and Parastatals. Often the moderating Committees of the National Assembly end up padding the budgets of the affected Ministries, Departments and Parastatals in their own wisdom. In the final analysis, allocations to Ministries, Departments and Parastatals have nothing to do with the original project proposals, which in themselves are only ploys to attract more funds rather than for execution.

Such allocations to Ministries, Departments and Parastatals, eventually find their way to funding nebulous and frivolous contracts, supplies, estacodes, fictitious and nebulous seminars and workshops, expos, travelling allowances for Ministers and touring advances and claims for those Civil Servants who can take advantage. The bottom line is that huge amounts are spent yearly with nothing on ground to show for it. This is the extant paradigm in the Public Service of Nigeria.

Given the above recommendations in this article, the stack reality is that the Ministries of Industries in Nigeria do not have the where-with-al to establish factories and industries even if given all the funds available in the economy. This may explain why we are always turning to the World Bank and IMF for assistance but they too cannot help us because our development is against their policy.

If confronted with such projects as the establishment of industries and factories they will tell you to leave the establishment of factories and industries to the Private Sector which they know will not be forth coming. And even if they pretend to help in the establishment of capital projects, such projects will end up as a conduit pipe as in the case of Ajaokuta Iron and Steel Mill, and will eventually end up as a white elephant.

The fact is that to build factories and industries in Nigeria, we lack the technology and we still have to depend on expertise from the technologically developed world like the United States, Europe, Japan, Russia, China, Israel and India. As painful as it is, we are at their mercy. Moreover, our nation is so corrupt that even if we can find some Nigerians in the Private Sector who can facilitate the process, it will be to enrich themselves at the expense of the country and the common man. What a catastrophe!

Where do we go from here? If Government Institutions i.e. Ministries, Central Bank of Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Finance etc, and the Private Sector cannot make it happen because of corruption, inefficiencies and lack of expertise, then what is the way forward? “Who will bell the cat?” It will appear that the paradigm of reoccurring blotted national budgets in Nigeria is like pouring water into a basket! This is food for thought.

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