

## **Glocalization and the Politics of Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria's COVID-19 Era**

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### **Abstract**

*Over the years, poverty has remained a cankerworm that has continued to eat dip into the fabric of our populace and the attendant need for alleviation remains a continuum. Many poverty alleviation policies/programs were rolled out by previous administrations starting from the independence period till date, because no society can grow towards being sustainably developed and stable without ameliorating the ever troublesome rate of poverty in a covid-19 riddled world. In respect of this, this paper sees poverty as a social malaise that must be shown the exit door. Using qualitative method, it relied on secondary sources of data to interrogate the issues that relate to poverty alleviation and proffer the possible panacea. As a panacea; it submitted that for Nigeria to rightfully maintain her status as the giant of Africa, poverty alleviation must be vigorously pursued in keeping with the local needs of the people and in recognition of global best practices. It concluded that the basic needs of the people must therefore be guaranteed through the interplay of political, managerial, institutional and social sustainability in order to attain the status of a sustainably developed nation.*

**Keywords:** *Glocalization, Poverty Alleviation, and Basic Needs Approach*

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### **1. Introduction**

Covid-19 is a deadly virus that ravaged the world in several fronts. However, Nigeria was and remains largely affected and thus, a lot of businesses suffered shipwreck and poverty became a terrible ordeal. With regrets, we note that, Nigeria is by all standards of measurement, a poor country. Poverty is endemic in Nigeria (Jaja & Agamagu, 2019). Over the years, poverty has remained a cankerworm and the attendant need for alleviation a continuum. There is no better reason for this than the fact that, "Poverty has remained a threat and challenge to humanity in all ramifications. It is complex, multidimensional and multifaceted with manifestations in the economic, social, political, environmental and every realm of human existence (Danaan, 2018). In fact, it remains sacrosanct to aver that, The challenges of poverty in Nigeria have attracted the attention of successive administrations. However, it remains a paradox-poverty in the midst of plenty and rising in periods of economic growth (Omoyibo, 2013). The perceivable reasons for this are anchored upon diverse factors which include but not limited to: poor consultation, inadequate implementation of poverty alleviation programs, ineffective anti-poverty programs, corruption on the part of those implementers in-charge of poverty alleviation programs, lack of political will to prosecute corrupt masters, military coup and so on.

Some years ago, many poverty alleviation policies/programs were rolled out by previous administrations starting from the independence period till date. Oshewolo (2010) buttressed the foregoing assertion thus, Several poverty reduction policies and programmes have been adopted to alleviate or eradicate poverty in Nigeria. Some of these were sectoral interventions but their overarching goal was poverty reduction (Oshewolo, 2010). It is on this note that the following points are quickly highlighted: The perennial problems of poverty, unemployment, inequality among others have bedeviled every developmental effort in Nigeria. For instance, despite several efforts by successive governments in Nigeria through programs and policy measures as well as the various intervention programs and projects by Nongovernmental Organizations, and other foreign government agencies, it seem much has not been achieved in reducing the menace of poverty in the country as the rate of poverty is still on the high side (Asaju, Thomas & Silas, 2013). Indeed, Nigerians have witnessed one poverty reduction program or the other, which include *inter alia*: Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS); Agricultural Development Program (ADP); Mass Transit Program (MTP); National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA); National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP); National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS); Operation Feed the Nation (OFN); Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF); River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA); etc. However, the predominant status quo (economic imbalance, hunger, deprivation and allied matters) have remained unchanged. In this dimension, Asaju, Thomas & Silas, (supra) were right to have opined that, "...it seem much has not been achieved in reducing the menace of poverty in the country as the rate of poverty is still on the high side." Thus, there is a need for a glocalized dimension of poverty alleviation in Nigeria. In doing this, Nigeria government should look at what other poverty riddled countries have done and then juxtapose that with local needs while bearing in mind the existing differentia in environment and other social variables.

No society can grow towards being sustainably developed and stable without ameliorating the ever troublesome issue called poverty (Chioke, n.d). Meanwhile, "The modern State and government we have today was born out of necessity. Hence, the state was simply instituted to ameliorate the ills of the primitive society, where actions were prescribed and proscribed by the customary laws of the land, and these prescriptions and proscriptions engineered through traditional laws were more often than not to a greater degree repugnant to social justice, equity and fairness. The social contract theory holds that the State is as a result of the consent or agreement that was reached by people in the society (Chioke, 2014). This agreement has over the years been neglected as governments here and there in other African states do not care about the socioeconomic well-being of the masses. Thus, Nigerian citizens have been plunged into a primitive condition and semblance where laws are extensively repugnant to social justice, equity and fairness. In this sense, Since resources were limited and there was no authority to regulate their distribution, survival of individual became that of the fittest (Chukwuemeka, 2017). This trend is sequel to the inability of the state to considerably tame issues that constantly divide and plunge the nation into being the global headquarters of poverty.

It is important to note that in order to curtail this trend; Nigeria had over the years made policies and policy statements on poverty alleviation. For example, During the pre-SAP era, government only showed concern for poverty reduction indirectly through the launching of many programmes. These programmes had positive effects on poverty reduction although the target population for some of the programmes was not specified explicitly as poor people or communities (Ogwumike, 1995). Again, during the SAP Era (1986-1998), conscious policy effort by government towards poverty alleviations were made. The severe economic crisis in Nigeria in the early 1980s worsened the quality of life of most Nigerians. The government made determined effort to check the crisis through the adoption of SAP (Dakyes & Mundi, 2013). According to Anyanwu, (2004), the implementation of this policy further worsened the living conditions of many Nigerians

especially the poor who were the most vulnerable group. Thus, these points have further paved the way to advance intellectual debates on glocalisation and sustainable delivery of poverty alleviation in keeping with the glocalization model/principle.

### **Statement of the problem**

Regrettably, Nigeria is highly vulnerable to the economic disruption caused by Covid-19. Nationally, 40 percent of Nigerians (83 million people) live below the poverty line, while another 25 percent (53 million) are vulnerable. With covid-19 many of these 53 million vulnerable people could fall into poverty says World Bank (2020). With these, there is responsibility on the part of the leaders to make sure that the masses are not engulfed in poverty. In fact, it is clear that, “Naturally, as status changes or increase, social responsibilities are bound to increase as more expectations, like pressures and demands, are coming from people (Nwankwo, Amos, Mbamalu & Barnabas, 2021). So, the problem of the study is to explore the need for poverty alleviation in Nigeria from a globalised background.

Since covid-19, Nigerians have continued to battle with poverty. In fact, many scholars believe that Nigeria is the poverty headquarters of the world. “In Nigeria there is wide spread poverty as most of the people are unable to provide for themselves the basic necessities of life. Majority of the people are poor because they have no money, no power, no self-pride and no influence. They live in abject poverty (Nwankwo, *et al*, 2021).” The trend is severe disappearance of sincerity and other important dimensions that will aid sustainable delivery of poverty alleviation in Nigeria. To this end, the problem of the study is the need to interrogate necessary dimensions for sustainable delivery of poverty alleviation in Nigeria’s covid-19 era.

### **Objectives of the study**

This review sets to achieve the following specific objectives which include to:

- a. Explore the need to alleviate poverty in Nigeria from a glocalised background.
- b. Interrogate the necessary dimensions for sustainable delivery of poverty alleviation in Nigeria’s covid-19 era.

## **2. Literature Review**

We review related literatures under the following subheadings:

### ***Glocalisation: A precise and concise conceptualization***

Glocalisation is, the ability of a culture, when it encounters other strong cultures, to absorb influences that naturally fit into and can enrich the culture, to resist those things that are truly alien, and to compartmentalize those things that, while different, can nevertheless be enjoyed and celebrated as different (Friedman, 1999). In this sense, glocalisation would mean copying good practices but resisting incompatibilities in order to achieve growth and development needs of a distinct landscape. Therefore, by way of glocalisation, what is good for goose may not be good for the gander (Chioke, n.d). Interestingly, Alexander (2003) sees glocalisation as globalisation refracted through the local. “Through the metaphor of refraction, the local is not annihilated, absorbed, or destroyed by globalisation but, rather, it operates symbiotically with globalisation and shapes the telos or end point (Giampietro, 2016). To digress a little, it must be stated that, Although the term glocalization has come to frequent use since the late 1980s, there were several related terms that social scientists used and continue to use. One such related word, which has been in use in social sciences and related fields for quite some time is, indigenization. However, indigenization can be seen as similar to localization (Khondker, 2004). Be that as it may, while globalisation does not accommodate localization and indigenization, glocalisation to an extent considers localization and indigenization,

but the friendliest phenomenon which accommodates localization and indigenization is llobalisation (Chioke, n.d).

Today, glocalisation is (the result of the failure of) globalisation, which was lost in its own hegemonic project (Giampietro, 2016:2). This goes to suggest that just like the failure of League of Nations necessitated the formation of United Nations Organisation (UNO) now called, United Nations (UN), the failure of the globalisation to unite the world via globalism has given fillip to glocalisation of development and associated ideas. By this, it is expected that all dissenting lines enthroned through globalisation would be deleted via the conscious use of glocality. Towards a definition of glocality, Giampietro (2016) predicated that, “Glocality is defined as experiencing the global locally or through local lenses (which can include local power relations, geopolitical and geographical factors, cultural distinctiveness, and so on).” Kraidy (2001) is of the view that glocalisation changes norms and practices, tailoring to local mindsets, balancing cultural homogenization and heterogenization, standardization and adjustment, convergence and divergence, universalism and particularism.

### ***Conceptual clarifications of ‘Poverty’ and ‘Poverty Alleviation’***

There is no standard definition of poverty because of its multi-dimensional nature. Poverty is commonly defined as a situation of low income or low consumption. It can also be viewed as a situation in which individuals are unable to meet the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, education, security and health (Mustapha, 2011). Ajaikaye and Adeyeye (2000) conceptualized poverty as a function of education, health, child mortality and other demographic variables. Scott (2013) is of the view that, “Poverty reduction has been a major goal of economic development since the thrust toward basic human needs and redistribution with growth identified in the Second Development Decade, 1970–80 documents. The focus on basic needs encouraged development programs to address the concerns of people not just countries and promoted the women in development movement.” Simply put, poverty is, lack of multiple resources that lead to hunger and physical deprivation (Eze, 2009). In a nutshell, poverty can be seen as a situation in which an individual is unable because of economic, social, political and psychological incapacitation, to provide himself and his family the barest basic necessities of life (Mustapha, 2011).

To begin with, poverty alleviation/reduction usually occurs when there is overall economic growth in a country. It is a set of measures in form of policy templates engineered to substantially or permanently take indigent people out of the poverty line (Chioke, nd). Owen (2009) wrote, Poverty reduction is often used as a short-hand for promoting economic growth that will permanently lift as many people as possible over a poverty line.” In spite of the controversies surrounding its conceptualization, it is generally agreed that poverty has adverse effects on individuals and communities; it breeds social exclusion, isolation fear, distress and deprivations (Backwith, 2015). In the year 2002, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) adequately came up with the position that the poor are those who live on less than \$1 per day. Chen & Ravallion (2007) were in affirmative when they contended that, The PL adopted by the World Bank for international comparison is \$1 per person, per day.” However, there are various parameters that could be used to determining a poor person, but it appears that income and consumption levels are arguably the most popular parameters in having a mental picture of the poor and the resultant poverty line (Chioke, n.d).

Poverty is humiliation, the sense of being dependent on them, and of being forced to accept rudeness, insults, and indifference when we seek help (Latvia 1998). Also, we hasten to add:

Don’t ask me what poverty is because you have met it outside my house. Look at the house and count the number of holes. Look at my utensils and the clothes that I am wearing. Look at everything and write what you see. What you see is poverty. —A poor man, Kenya 1997

It is necessary to state that, The above depicts poor people's mentality and view about poverty. What else do we say about poverty, except that poverty is a state of acute and chronic deprivation of essential needs, which could be in form of: money, water, shelter, food, security, land, education, etc., which form the basic essentialities to good and considerable standard of living. Therefore; poor people's mentality/view about poverty as communicated above, those not communicated herein and many factors converge and intermingle to make poverty a multidimensional and complex problem (Chioke, n.d). This being the matter, we ask: What about culture of poverty? To answer this we reproduce Jeremy's view: The culture of poverty today presents itself as "a culture of welfare depending"- a useful distraction from material deprivation. When the term culture of poverty was first used by anthropologist Oscar Lewis in 1959, it was seized upon as "evidence" that poverty is not caused primarily by an absence of material resource. This was never Lewis intention." In a 1966 essay for Scientific American, he wrote, A culture of poverty is not just a matter of deprivation or disorganization – a term signifying the absence of something. It is a culture in traditional anthropological sense in that it provides human beings with a design for living, or ready-made set of solutions for human problems, and so serves significant adaptive functions (Jeremy, 2014).

### **3. Methodology**

Qualitative approach was adopted. Sources of data employed for the study are books, journal, and other useful documents. In this regard, qualitative approaches mainly document analyses, personal experiences and discussions were employed in generating relevant data that were analyzed and thematically presented using content analysis.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

This section deals with a detailed presentation and discussion of the findings in relation to the specific objectives of this review.

#### ***Need for Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria: Addressing the Issue from a Glocalised purview***

Poverty alleviation has become sacrosanct owing to Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria. Meanwhile, Danaan (2018) contends that, "...individuals below the PL are grouped into two categories; the poor and the extremely poor giving rise to two PLs; the Upper PL (UPL) and the Lower PL (LPL). The poor are individuals whose incomes fall below the UPL but are above the LPL, while the extremely poor are those whose incomes fall below the LPL." However, there are two classifications of poverty: absolute poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty is a situation where there is severe dearth of access to physiological needs of human existence, which include water, food, shelter, clothing, education, health and so on. But then again, "conceptualizing poverty in absolute terms is the most common practice even though it is problematic to determine what constitutes minimum standards of living given varied socio-economic conditions (Danaan, 2018)."

Now, we approach the matter from a global angle. As a useful impulse, we harvest from this perspective: "Relative poverty is a condition in which an individual or household's income falls short of the average income of the population in the society being considered. Individuals in relative poverty have their resources lower than those possessed by average individuals to the extent that they are excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities. It is context-sensitive and reflects the changing perception of acceptable minimum standard of living. It is also dynamic as it is subject to the needs and demands of a changing society. Sometimes even within a given country, what is luxurious in one period may become essential in another. For instance a 'non poor' person in Chad may be among the extremely poor in Denmark, while electricity, indoor sanitations and pipe borne water are essential in developed countries, they are not perceived as such in poor countries (Danaan, 2018).

Glocalization detractors argue that it has created a concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a small corporate elite that can gobble up smaller competitors around the globe (Jason, 2021). Viewed from this angle, we see that glocalization must have added to infestation of poverty as wealth is globally in the hands of a few and poverty/hunger has remained a nagging peril. To see the matter, the United Nations' World Food Program (WFP) (2010) stated that, "in developing countries, almost 60 million children go to school hungry everyday about 40% of them in Africa. Among the poor, there is often not enough food at home, and most schools in developing countries lack canteens or cafeterias (WFP, 2010)." In developing countries where poverty is the ordeal and school attendance low, the reverse becomes the case, because "the promise of at least one nutritious meal each day boosts enrolment and promotes regular attendance. Parents are motivated to send their children to school instead of keeping them at home to work or care for siblings (WFP, 2010)." Thus, we add that glocalization breeds corruption and corruption also contributes to poverty level. Corroborating this, we add that, "While corruption in the post-independence period has allowed a few individuals to amass enormous wealth for themselves, it has pauperized the African peoples and prevented the government from devising and implementing effective poverty alleviation programmes (Mbaku 2000:17)." In this sense, glocalisation paves the way for a reversal of such negative order. This is a constituent part of the rationale for a glocalised strategy in poverty alleviation.

Then coming home (local angle), covid-19 pandemic came at a time most firms and families are battling with hardship as a result of the unfriendly economic environment/poverty. This is evidenced by the following data of National Bureau of Statistics (NBS):

**Table3:PovertyandinequalityindicatorsinNigeriain2019**

	<b>Poverty Head Count Rate in Percent to Population Strata</b>	<b>Poverty Gap Index in Percentage of Poverty line</b>	<b>Gini Coefficient</b>
NIGERIA	40.1	12.9	35.1
Urban	18	4.5	31.9
Rural	52.1	17.4	32.8

**Source:** *Nigeria Living Standards Survey, 2018-19. Note: The estimates exclude Borno state.*

From the above data, poverty had been a troublesome issue in Nigeria prior to the March 2020 lockdown in Nigeria which was an aftermath of Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, the disturbing nature of poverty in Nigeria pinpoints the need for a glocalised strategy in any poverty alleviation of the government at all levels in Nigeria and even beyond. In fact, In Nigeria 40.1 percent of total population was classified as poor. In other words, on average 4 out of 10 individuals in Nigeria have real per capita expenditures below 137,430 Naira per year. This translates to over 82.9 million Nigerians who are considered poor by national standards. It is important to note that this number excludes households from Borno, that sample was not representative of the whole state since only households from 'accessible' (safe to visit areas only) were interviewed. Thus, the Borno sample is considered non-random and non-representative (NBS, 2020). Considering these data, we conclude that there is urgent need to roll out better poverty reduction programs in Nigeria.

### ***Sustainable Delivery of Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria's Covid-19 Era: A Synopsis of the Necessary Dimensions.***

Having x-rayed poverty alleviation, it ought to be noted that the days of Millennium Development Goals have come and gone. To this end, attention has been shifted from MDGs to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The PAP (Poverty Alleviation Programmes) could be declared successful if they provide and promote sustainable means of livelihood to citizens especially during

Covid-19 era and even beyond. “In the direction of public service delivery, sustainability is neither merely associated with nor all about the sufficiency of man and material resources useful for driving a program. It entails the ability of such program/policy to adapt to changing sociopolitical cum socioeconomic conditions (Chioke, nd).” “If the public sector plays a pivotal role in ensuring the delivery of services for poverty alleviation as emphasized, then it follows that the success of antipoverty efforts are greatly dependent on the prevailing service delivery system. For sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation to be effective, service delivery must be sustainable. The object of sustainability in this sense is to achieve a self-sustaining improvement in medium to long-term life quality (Mubangizi, 2009).” Cloete (2000:11) noted that, “this implies a coherent systemic integration of development initiatives, resulting in structural, functional and cultural consolidation of a new way of life and the creation of a development culture in society.” In the light of the Npower scheme/program which is meant to reduce unemployment and poverty among the Nigerian labor force; there is a high degree of uncertainty over the sustainability of the program because the program which is antipoverty in nature lacks constitutional backing.

At this juncture, an examination of diverse dimensions of sustainable service delivery is imperative and they are:

- a. *Political sustainability* –It refers to “durable, effective political commitment and support founded on legitimate, democratic processes (Goldsmith, 1992:586).” Also, it should be added that, “Political sustainability is at the core because the politics of policy implementation is lubricated at the corridor of power and if the chief executive keeps mute or becomes nonchalant, service delivery would die a natural death and there will be nothing to sustain. For poverty to be fought to a standstill, poverty alleviation programs must therefore be politically sustainable at various tiers of government (Chioke, n.d).” Now, that the country is still battling with the third wave of Covid-19, there is need for political sustainability in poverty.
- b. *Institutional sustainability* – It refers to “the establishment of durable, effective and efficient institutions which have a good record of achieving strategic policy objectives and of learning from past failures and successes (Brown, 1998; Goldsmith, 1992). However, “To achieve institutional sustainability, there is need for pro-education/social investment programs like school feeding program to be adequately and manifestly institutionalized by the political system (Chioke, n.d).
- c. *Managerial sustainability* – Management loosely entails leadership. And “Leadership or being a leader is more of directing others (Chioke, 2012).” But then, “In this purview, it suffices to say that leadership is action oriented. Thus, leadership is sacrosanct in the actualization of any program of the government (Chioke, ndb).” That is why managerial sustainability includes “strong and committed leadership, clear and unambiguous policy objectives, a broad based consensus about these objectives, effective strategic and operational policy implementation, coordination, monitoring, assessment, review and redesign processes (Goldsmith 1992). With this, poverty alleviation policy when viewed from a glocal angle would attain the key objectives that premised its initiation and institutionalization.
- d. *Social sustainability* – This refers to durable patterns of social interaction and ways of life in society that result from political, institutional, managerial, economic and environmental sustainability (Goldsmith, 1992). Also, “This goes to suggest that without political, institutional, managerial, economic and environmental sustainability, there will be no social sustainability. This is true to a great extent because the society, which is the domain of social sustainability, is affected by the interplays of the aforementioned areas of sustainability (Chioke, ndb).

Evidently, a balanced and integrated programme incorporating the above-mentioned dimensions is a prerequisite if a public delivery system is to function and fulfill its objectives. Although regulation and control are important aspects of any functioning democracy, it is imperative to avoid a situation

where adherence to rules rather than outputs becomes the yardstick by which performance in service delivery is measured. What is needed is a bureaucracy that is pro-poor, delivery oriented, participatory and representative (Mubangizi, 2009).

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

In covid-19 era, poverty alleviation is sacrosanct. Also, we have seen the need for poverty alleviation in Nigeria from a global purview and the necessary dimensions for sustainable delivery of poverty alleviation. Thus, to rightfully maintain her status as the giant of Africa, poverty alleviation must be vigorously pursued in keeping with the local needs of the people and in recognition of global trends and best practices. This is where glocalisation comes into play as no one grows above his peculiar conditions. The basic needs of the people must therefore be guaranteed through the interplay of political, managerial, institutional and social sustainability in order to attain the status of a sustainably developed nation.

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