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Gender, Security and Poverty in Africa: The Bane of Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria is now experiencing complex existential challenges related to gender inequity, citizen security, and poverty. The establishment and maintenance of states are heavily influenced by gender dynamics, which are further compounded by the disruptive effects of economic and social inequalities. Non-state actors perpetuate discrimination and violence, specifically targeting women and girls, as a result of entrenched cultural norms that dictate stereotypical gender roles and relationships. The primary aim of the research is to examine the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals pertaining to gender, security, and poverty in Nigeria. The six geographical regions are descending into a state of ungovernability, as terror squads have completely taken control of rural and suburban communities. The paper's theoretical foundation is based on Robert Merton's Anomie Theory. The research used a methodical approach by using content analysis, specifically relying on secondary data. The study mostly gathered statistical data from reputable sources such as the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigerian Living Standard Survey, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, and SDGs Base line reports. The findings indicate that implementing policies such as the Micro-Credit Scheme and Conditional Cash Transfer as part of Social Investment did not effectively address the issues of poverty and security. The results of the study indicate that gender inequality, insecurity, and poverty are still widespread in all aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Consequently, development is certain to be hindered. The article states that the expansion and implementation of universal social protection and social security schemes should not discriminate based on age, gender, disability, or education systems. The paper suggests In order to eradicate insecurity and poverty, it is imperative to develop more robust economies. This process starts by empowering women to transition from mere participation in the economy to attaining complete economic authority.

Keywords: Bane, Gender, Security, SDGs and Poverty

INTRODUCTION

The 19th-century intellectuals of the Enlightenment held that reason and the concepts of equality and liberty should govern human affairs. They added that governments are established by the rule of law and exist to serve the interests of the people [1]. According to [2], people made a social contract with the government in which they gave up some freedoms in return for the defense of their inherent rights. Locke argued that the consent of the governed was a prerequisite for the legitimacy of a government, and that citizens had the right to rebel against their government if it violated their rights. It is encouraging to see that world leaders now understand the complex connections between cooperation, peace, and development [3]. The New Partnership of African Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU) founding documents reflect the same general direction in African leaders' thinking about security. Nigeria started implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) almost immediately after the 2030 Agenda was adopted. Focused on the crucial issues of poverty (SDG-1), gender equality (SDG-5), and creating an environment that fosters peace and security (SDG-16). Gender, culture, and race are social constructions, according to constructivism theorists [4]. Indeed, poverty, security issues, and gender inequality pose serious bane to Nigeria's and many other African nations' attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. In Nigeria, there are still gender differences in the access to economic opportunities, health care, and education [5]. This contributes to a cycle of poverty in addition to limiting the potential of half the population. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

requires addressing gender inequality. Nigeria has had to deal with a number of security issues, such as kidnapping, banditry, terrorism, ethnic conflicts, and insurgencies. These conflicts impede economic activity, force people to relocate, and take funds away from development projects [6]. The recognition of economic, food, health, environment, personal, and community security highlights the multifaceted nature of human security. The fundamental premise is that a country cannot be considered secure if it ignores problems with poverty, unemployment, corruption, and governance—all of which have the potential to undermine the rule of law and jeopardize the welfare of its citizens [7].

[8], the convergence of gender, security, and poverty presents noteworthy obstacles to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. To tackle these intricate problems, practical guidelines are imperative. Gender differences in access to economic opportunities, health care, and education aggravate poverty throughout Africa, especially in Nigeria, these differences impede the Sustainable Development Goals progress [9]. In the 9th National Assembly, the bills endorsing women's inclusion, rights, empowerment, and guaranteeing their representation in legislative processes were not passed. According to [10], security issues like terrorism, cattle rustling, armed banditry, and conflicts between herders and farmers impede Nigeria's attempts at development. They emphasize how crucial a safe environment is to achieving the SDGs. According to [11], women and children are disproportionately impacted by security-related issues. Gender-based violence resulting from conflicts can impact development in the long run. [12], assert that achieving gender inequality and lowering poverty both depend on women's economic empowerment. Nigeria, wearing the glittering bracelet that reads "Poverty –Capital of the World," is still notoriously entrenched at the bottom of the global Poverty Index.

Conceptual Assessment

Gender The roles, behaviors, and expectations that come with being male, female, or non-binary are all included in the complicated sociocultural concept of gender [13]. It is different from biological sex and is influenced by societal, cultural, and personal elements that impact how people identify and communicate their gender in a particular community. Gender is a crucial factor in social structures, impacting different facets of life such as opportunities, responsibilities, and roles [14]. Gender structures power through a variety of mechanisms in every sphere (education, economics, politics, and security), including the family, the institution, and culture [15].

Security is the state's obligation to protect people as well as each person's feeling of safety and well-being in a particular setting. Is a broad notion that includes safeguarding people, groups, or countries against different dangers and threats, such as physical harm, criminal activity, and unstable economic conditions [16]. According to [17], security is a state that results from measures taken to shield people and property from unfriendly individuals, groups, and actions.

Poverty: When people or communities are unable to provide for their basic needs—such as clothing, food, shelter, and access to healthcare and education—they are considered to be in a state of poverty [18]. One can categorize structural, economic, social, cultural, and political deprivations as characteristics of poverty. Poverty compromises human dignity and self-esteem in addition to implying a deficiency of resources essential for material well-being. Hunger, homelessness, unemployment, lack of education, and incapacity to meet their fundamental needs [19]. They have a short lifespan and are illiterate [20].

Bane: An idea that harms, distresses, or has detrimental effects on people or society as a whole. Smith (2005) bane draws attention to the drawbacks of social structures and practices that, in order to improve society, must be addressed and lessened.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global objectives that were adopted by the UN in 2015 with the intention of addressing a range of social, economic, and environmental issues and advancing sustainable development. They cover a broad range of goals, such as the elimination of poverty, gender parity, the development of clean energy, and environmental preservation [21]. By 2030, the SDGs are intended to direct global efforts toward building a more just and sustainable world [22].

Empirical Review

SDG1 aims to eradicate poverty in all of its manifestations throughout Nigeria; however, according to data made public by the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), 133 million Nigerians live in multidimensional poverty. According to the NBS, shocks, unemployment, and a lack of access to health, education, and decent living conditions account for 63% of Nigerians' poverty [23]. NBS report (2022) states that 86 million poor Nigerians lived in the North, while approximately 47 million in the South. The substantial efforts made by the federal government to provide social welfare to the increasing number of low-income households are not going nearly far enough, deeply enough, or quickly enough. Many more people remain in poverty as a result of macroeconomic growth that is unstable and slower than population growth in Nigeria [24].

SDG 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The gender inclusiveness of this goal has not advanced very far. Engagement in politics has declined. As long as there is a lack of strong political will and a sincere commitment to upholding deeply ingrained values and social norms, there is very little chance that the SDG targets will be met by 2030. Sexual violence is a highly gendered act that is widely accepted as part of national

culture, it is systematic and pervasive. [25], claims that the status of the law makes it difficult to address patriarchy and the underlying social structures that support violence against and subjugation of women. In fact, there has been uneven implementation thus far, and policies and laws that make gender-specific commitments have not been matched by equally robust gender-related policies.

SDG 16 focuses on inclusive institutions, access to justice, and peaceful and inclusive societies. Notwithstanding the signs, it is crucial to draw attention to the nation's grave security concerns, which include conflicts between farmers and herders, armed bandits, terrorists, and unidentified gunmen in each of the six geopolitical regions. Nigeria's social fabric is extremely brittle, as crime and insurgency erode the government's ability to deliver social services like security and other economic and social goods. It has to do with security of life and property as well as corruption. Poverty and violence against women spiral out of control as a result of the growing levels of insecurity and vulnerability in the humanitarian and development contexts [26]. In contemporary political economy, structuralist functionalists contend that the institutions that govern the nature of interactions between individuals and the economy are the source of economic and social change.

Theoretical Framework: The paper is based on social strain theory, which defines "Anomie" as a state of normlessness or the disintegration of social norms within a society. According to Merton, tension or strain arises in society when cultural objectives and institutional means are not aligned. The incapacity of individuals to attain these culturally prescribed goals through socially acceptable means gives rise to this strain [27]. Merton's theory, is pertinent to the study, poverty can arise from a mismatch between the acceptable means of reaching culturally prescribed standards of success and economic well-being and those goals themselves. People who don't have many opportunities in life may feel pressured and turn to unethical methods. Anomie can be used to better understand security concerns by looking at how criminal behavior can result from a person's frustration at not succeeding in society. Due to a high degree of anomie in society, people turn to criminal means to obtain the material wealth they desire, which increases crime and insecurity. The idea of anomie can be used to examine how people are affected by gender norms and expectations. Gender norms can cause tension and nonconformity when they clash with a person's personal objectives and opportunities. For instance, women who want to challenge conventional gender roles could run into opposition and frustration. The theory can be used to examine how specific patterns of adaptation, like innovation or rebellion, can be attributed to discrimination, socioeconomic inequality, and gender-related expectations [28].

METHODOLOGY

The methodology in relation to the study of gender equality, security, and poverty in Nigeria, is an exploratory research design used to investigate the phenomenon under study to explore different options and to clarify the exact problem to be solved, and it adopted anomie theory. The study area is Nigeria one of the most ethnically diverse country in Africa, is a Federal Republic with 36 states, a FCT, 774 local government areas. With a population of 200 million people according to 2006 population census, located in the center of the nation, has the biggest economy in Africa. The sampling procedures is the six geopolitical region of Nigeria Utilizing secondary data, the study primarily drew statistical information from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Nigeria Living Standard Survey (NLSS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), and SDGs Baseline report. Interpreting the findings and comparing each reports with another as regards to the problem being investigated [29].

RESULTS

Gender Equality: Out of 146 countries, Nigeria is ranked 123rd with a score of 0.639 in The World Gap Report (2022). The ranking of gender gap parity takes into account factors such as female financial exclusion and wealth accumulation, educational attainment, health and survival, political appointment, and economic participation and opportunity. Nigeria, ranked 27th out of 36 countries in the region, has a 63.9% gender gap. A lower percentage of girls enrolling in school, unequal treatment of women in the corporate sector, and a low representation of women in the legislature and other government positions. In terms of security, ironically, state formation and governance are the main causes of human insecurity, which is brought on by preventative actions and poor management techniques. The state of insecurity has also resulted in the rises in kidnapping, terrorism, armed banditry, and other violent crimes. The phenomenon of insecurity in Nigeria has caused fear and anxiety in every Nigerian's, which is detrimental to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the results on poverty showed that Nigerians are multifaceted impoverished. Among the obstacles Nigeria faces in its attempts to eradicate poverty are widespread corruption, a dearth of efficient policies, a lack of accountability, insecurity, and inadequate infrastructure.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study's finding with regard to SDG 1- poverty, it is necessary to make it easier for the households that are most food insecure to obtain credit, agricultural inputs, markets, and infrastructure. Increasing village savings and loan programs and providing cash transfers to extremely vulnerable families—including those headed by the elderly and disabled—are some possible strategies. In order to remove obstacles to participation for women, the extremely poor, and people with disabilities, market systems should also be restructured [30]. Creating a social intervention

program with the express goal of lowering the rate of poverty among Nigerians, extending and implementing universal social security and protection programs that do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, disability, or any other basis. According to structural functionalist viewpoints, social services must be created and promoted in order to meet the unmet needs of society's members [4]. This is because social services have traditionally been provided on the premises of "Moral Man." Within the framework of these works, it is argued that the state must become the primary regulatory agency to take on responsibilities of the economy and social security of its citizens, among other things, due to the complexity of its economy and technology [7]. A commonly held belief is that policies that support openness to international trade, education, the rule of law, and macroeconomic growth stability—that is, low and stable inflation, low budget deficits, and sustainable external debt—can all help to promote economic growth [8]. Using a cross-country regression approach, there is a correlation between sound macroeconomic policies and quick improvements; lower inflation and economic growth are prerequisites for reducing poverty [9]. According to Weber (1864), "an individual's poverty is based on their make-off." The consoling knowledge that the equitable distribution of worldly goods is a unique manifestation of divine providence, which, in these variations, as in the case of grace, pursued goals hidden from human view. This lays the groundwork for economically productive societies that are struggling. Opportunities and resources will be created for every person when economic productivity increases. Aliko Dangote, the president of the Dangote Group, discussed the alarming extent of poverty in the north during the 4th Kaduna Economic and Investment Summit in 2018. He stated: "It is instructive to know that only 21% of the total sub-national internally generated revenue in 2017 was generated by the 19 northern states, which together account for over 54% of the country's population and 70% of its landmass. Corruption, poor management, and improper use of public funds are major causes of bad governance. It is more severe in areas with high rates of poverty and low literacy [10]. SDG 5-Gender Equality—which aims to reduce inequality and gender stereotypes—can be achieved by raising awareness of and appreciation for women's vital roles in ensuring the food security of households. Stronger ownership rights for women are necessary for various livestock species, such as large ruminants, which can be profitable ventures for their economic empowerment. These rights should also grant women access to agricultural support programs, which will enable them to engage in profitable income-generating ventures and the development of entrepreneurship. In order to fulfill its obligations to achieve gender equality, including the abolition of all forms of discrimination against women, the government must reorganize its priorities and reallocate resources. Implement changes to ensure that women have equal access to financial services, land ownership and control, and other types of property [11]. And "the first step in achieving that, is assisting women in moving from being mere participants in the economy to becoming full participants. There has never been a more compelling, hopeful, or doable argument for enhancing women's economic power" [14]. SDG 16-Security, by demonstrating how transparent procedures, regular oversight, and strong accountability frameworks can lower the likelihood of engaging in corruption while fostering strong leadership at all governmental levels. Nigeria will not be able to meet the overall Sustainable Development Goals, if there are not peaceful societies, justice for all, and responsible institutions, according to the conclusion of the SDG-16 review. Section 172 (2) (c) of the 1999 Federal Republic of Nigeria Constitution (as amended) declares that "governmental actions shall be humane," while Section 14 (2) (b) declares that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government [15]. The Northwest of Nigeria continues to be one of the deadliest areas, accounting for over 29% of all organized armed bandits, terrorists invade prosperous areas and raise their flags as a sign of victory. Maintaining strategic engagement with the Nigerian public in the fight against corruption is one of the areas for improvement recommended by the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution in its review of Sustainable Development Goal 16 in Nigeria. According to [14], people freely pursuing their own interests will eventually produce a stable, cohesive social whole. However, [16] contended that social arrangements, particularly those related to the division of labor stage of development, are what give rise to individual behavioral patterns. [16], postulated that deviants arise when there is a disconnection between the social and cultural spheres, in line with the functionalist theory that views society as a system of interdependent parts. When a society's values and the resources available to attain them diverge, deviation results. As Merton notes, social policies, laws, norms, values, and the like all lead to dysfunction and unforeseen consequences. The pattern of social life, according to structural functionalists, is the result of historical circumstances or structural arrangements that face individuals or groups. Thus, society is conceptualized as a top-down system that determines the parameters of the social order by working down on individuals and groups. The apparent orderliness of social life as it pertains to individuals and groups is produced by such preexisting social arrangements.

CONCLUSION

Achieving gender equality, security, and poverty reduction in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach. Prioritize education for all, promote women's empowerment, enhance law enforcement for security, and implement economic policies to address poverty. Engage communities, foster inclusive governance and collaborate with international partners to create sustainable change.

RECOMMENDATION

The need for Education Awareness; Legal Reforms, Women's Empowerment, Security Infrastructure, Poverty Alleviation Programme, Community Engagement, Data collection and Monitoring, Inclusive Governance, Health Access, and Environmental Sustainability. The ancient ideas of ethnicity, nepotism, and religion are what Nigerian leaders must abandon and focus on governance to the benefits of Nigerians.

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