The 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index of Nigeria: A Sociological Review

Solomon John Akoji* Abdullahi Salamatu Abaji†

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Nigeria, home to over 200 million people and the most populous Black nation in the world has approximately 133 million individuals trapped in a multidimensional poverty trajectory. This crisis has been worsened by socioeconomic challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and its lasting impacts. The 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report provides a holistic framework for understanding poverty through four key dimensions—health, education, living standards, and work and shocks—each comprising 15 critical indicators that measure deprivation across various aspects of life. The study reveals that employment, years of schooling, and child school attendance represent the most significant contributors to poverty, reinforcing the cycle of deprivation. Additionally, indicators under health and living standards—including child mortality, malnutrition, lack of access to clean water, poor sanitation, inadequate housing, limited access to electricity, and reliance on unsafe cooking fuels—account for 10% of the poverty burden. This study employed a qualitative research methodology, utilizing secondary data sources such as the 2022 MPI report, government publications, and scholarly articles. The Structural Theory of Poverty was adopted as the theoretical framework, emphasizing that poverty is not merely a result of individual shortcomings but a systemic issue driven by factors such as unemployment, underemployment, poor education, and inadequate living conditions. The theory argues that poverty persists due to structural deficiencies in governance, economic

* Federal University of Lafia, Nigeria. Email: john.solomon@socsci.fulafia.edu.ng
† Federal University of Lafia. Email: abaji_salamatu@socsci.fulafia.edu.ng

policies, and social welfare systems, which hinder individuals from accessing opportunities for upward mobility. The findings indicate that poverty in Nigeria is deeply entrenched, with rural areas disproportionately affected. While the government has introduced several initiatives—such as the Community-Based Vocational Rehabilitation (CBVR), National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE), and school feeding programs—poor implementation and lack of sustainability have limited their impact. The study recommends a multi-sectoral approach to poverty reduction, including strengthening education policies, improving healthcare services, investing in rural infrastructure, and promoting inclusive governance. Child poverty reduction should be a top national priority, with increased funding for early childhood development programs, nutrition initiatives, and school enrollment incentives. Additionally, state governments must integrate MPI data into budget planning to ensure targeted interventions. Ultimately, addressing multidimensional poverty in Nigeria requires collaborative efforts between the government, civil society organizations (CSOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local communities to create sustainable and inclusive development policies that break the cycle of poverty.

Keywords: *Multidimensional Poverty, Sociological Implications, Structural Poverty, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Policy Interventions*

Introduction

Nigeria is the most populous country on the African continent and the seventh largest in the world. The United Nations forecasts that the population will double by 2050, making it the third largest country in the world. Given Nigeria's size and growth potential, the pressure to safeguard

and improve the lives of its citizens is significant. Nigeria was still recovering from its 2016 economic recession when another recession hit in 2020 due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, further derailing its economic recovery. While the COVID-19 regulatory measures implemented in Nigeria helped to control the spread of the virus, many of these necessary and lifesaving measures had deleterious effects on livelihoods, health, human wellbeing, state-society relations, and social harmony (The MPI Report, 2022). The lingering impact of the 2020 recession has undermined household welfare and exacerbated poverty and vulnerability. In August 2019, the former President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, pledged commitment to empowering an additional 100 million people to escape extreme poverty by 2030 (UNDP, 2022). That meant that, on average, 10 million people were supposed to be out of poverty each year, starting from 2020. However, with the adverse impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods, unemployment, and the economy, this challenge has become even more complicated. It is within this prism that the Nigeria MPI (2022) elaborate survey was conducted across the 109 senatorial districts, establishing a baseline for the Local Government Area (LGA) survey due in 2023 and future two-yearly national surveys. The extent to which this MPI has stressed the implication on the livelihood of everyday Nigerians and the need for policy change towards the eradication of poverty is not fully known. This is because, quite recently, millions of Nigerians keep getting swallowed within the multidimensional poverty trajectory. According to the World Bank (2022), Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, grapples with a complex web of challenges, and multidimensional poverty stands out as a pervasive issue. While economic indicators like gross domestic product (GDP) growth are often used to gauge a country's progress, they may not capture the full extent of poverty. This paper examines the 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index of Nigeria in four dimensions: health, education, living standards, and work and shocks, with the motivation to lay bare its sociological implication on the country and its people.

Statement of the Problem

The 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of Nigeria reveals a troubling reality where 133 million people experience poverty, which poses significant challenges to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. This issue cuts across four critical dimensions: health, education, living standards, and work and shocks. The health dimension is defined by high child mortality and malnutrition rates, limited access to health care, which undermines SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), and increasing vulnerabilities, especially among children and

aged citizens. Inadequate years of schooling and low child school attendance hinder SDG 4 (Quality Education), limiting human capital development and future economic mobility. Poor living standards, characterized by lack of clean water, inadequate sanitation, and reliance on unclean cooking fuels, directly impact SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), worsening the daily hardships of millions.

Additionally, widespread unemployment and underemployment not only perpetuate economic instability but also threaten SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), trapping individuals in cycles of deprivation. The persistent rise in multidimensional poverty creates critical gaps in understanding how health, education, living standards, and work-related shocks contribute to systemic deprivation. An in-depth sociological examination of these dimensions is needed to uncover the structural barriers that sustain poverty and hinder progress toward the 2030 SDG agenda in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to critically examine Nigeria's 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to provide a comprehensive understanding of poverty dynamics in the country. Specifically, the study analyzes four key dimensions - health, education, living standards, and work and shocks - to explore their sociological implications for the Nigerian population.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, utilizing document analysis as the primary method to critically examine the 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report of Nigeria. The study relies on secondary data sources, including official publications from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the World Bank, to explore poverty across four dimensions: health, education, living standards, and work and shocks. By employing content analysis, the study systematically interprets the data to identify patterns, trends, and sociological implications of multidimensional poverty in Nigeria. The Structural Theory of Poverty serves as the theoretical framework, providing a lens through which systemic factors influencing poverty are analyzed.

Literature Review

Concept of Multidimensional Poverty

Multidimensional poverty is the condition of experiencing multiple deprivations, including inadequate access to clean water, poor sanitation, malnutrition, lack of electricity, limited education, and household unemployment (Alkire & Foster, 2011). According to Rippin (2016), multidimensional poverty provides a holistic assessment of poverty by considering the interconnections between different dimensions of deprivation and their simultaneous impact on individuals and communities. This concept extends beyond traditional income-based poverty measures to incorporate various aspects of wellbeing, such as limited educational attainment, inadequate living standards, poor health, lack of empowerment, and exposure to environmental hazards. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), developed by Alkire and Santos (2010), offers a comprehensive tool for measuring poverty by capturing multiple deprivations across households and populations. The MPI framework enables the disaggregation of poverty data across different regions, age groups, and socioeconomic categories, providing a more nuanced understanding of poverty patterns (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2022). By integrating a diverse set of indicators, multidimensional poverty measurement offers policymakers and development practitioners a more robust foundation for designing targeted poverty alleviation programs (World Bank, 2023). The MPI is currently used to compare poverty levels in over 100 countries, allowing for cross-national assessments and informed policy interventions. It is calculated by evaluating both the incidence (headcount) and intensity (severity) of multidimensional poverty, making it a valuable tool for understanding and addressing poverty in its various dimensions (Alkire, Roche, Santos, & Seth, 2015).

Overview of Nigeria's 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

Nigeria published its first national MPI in 2018, which was constructed by the National Bureau of Statistics in the Human Development Report (UNDP, 2018). From there, further consultations with stakeholder groups concluded that additional indicators were needed to accurately reflect poverty following the pandemic – including among children (MPI Report, 2022). The Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (2022) report uses data from the Multidimensional Poverty Index Survey 2021/2022, the most extensive multidimensional poverty survey to date, designed to provide nationally representative results from all 36 states, FCT Abuja and 109 Senatorial Districts. The MPI survey was carried out between November 2021 and February 2022. The Nigeria MPI (2022) includes a linked Child MPI, which analyses poverty for children under the

age of 5 by adding a fifth dimension of child survival and development. This additional dimension contains eight vital aspects of early childhood development in physical and cognitive domains—including severe undernutrition, immunization, intellectually stimulating activities, and preschool. While it does not offer individual-level data, it uncovers additional children who, according to the extra dimension, should qualify as multidimensionally poor (MPI, 2022).

Generally, the MPI report uses 15 indicators grouped under four dimensions: ***health, education, living standards, and work and shocks.*** According to UNDP (2022), the number of indicators and their ambition have increased; security shocks were raised in consultations and have been added to the work dimension, which also now includes underemployment. Food security and time to healthcare have been added to the health dimension. School lag has been added to the education dimension as a proxy for quality, and water reliability has been added to living standards. The report includes a linked Child MPI, which analyses poverty for children under the age of five. It also provides insightful information at national and state levels, placing at the disposal of actors and policymakers a tool to pinpoint levels of deprivations and the kind of policy changes required for the reforms needed (UNDP, 2022).

More so, the Nigeria MPI (2022) survey questionnaire, therefore, included additional variables that were relevant given the new context and national priorities – such as food security, water reliability, underemployment, security shocks, school lag, and child deprivations (MPI Report, 2022). The survey was a collaborative effort between the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the National Social Safety-Nets Coordinating Office (NASSCO), the UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the European Union, Global Affairs Canada, the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), (UNDP, 2022).

NBS (2023) reported that the Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Survey was conducted between November 2021 and February 2022, and the results were launched in November 2022 (UNDP, 2022). The survey sampled over 56,000 households across the 36 states of the Federation and the FCT and provides multidimensional poverty estimates at the senatorial district level. According to the survey, 63% of people in Nigeria are multidimensionally poor, and 33.0% of the population in Nigeria (70,516 thousand people in 2021) is multidimensionally poor, while an additional 16.6% are vulnerable to multidimensional poverty, UNDP, (2022). The

National MPI is 0.257, indicating that poor people in Nigeria experience just over one-quarter of all possible deprivations (Nigerianstat.gov.ng). The Nigeria MPI (2022) is the first multidimensional poverty survey for Nigeria to be representative at the senatorial district level. According to the 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), almost 51% of Nigerians (roughly 103 million people) were multidimensionally poor in 2020. This translates to 1 in 2 Nigerians facing multifaceted deprivations impacting their wellbeing and opportunities. This means they experienced deprivations in at least 33.6% of the weighted indicators across the five dimensions mentioned above (OPHI, 2023).

The Main Indicators Used in Measuring the MPI Report

The Nigeria MPI (2022) report uses 15 indicators grouped under four dimensions to calculate the multidimensional poverty index. The four dimensions are health, education, living standards, and work and shocks. The indicators used to measure poverty in the Nigeria MPI report are equally weighted within their respective dimensions. In other words, the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) uses 15 indicators grouped under four dimensions to calculate a summary poverty figure for a given population. The 15 indicators are as follows:

Table 1: Indicators Used in Measuring Multidimensional Poverty

S/N	Dimension	Indicators	Condition of Deprivation
1.	**Health Dimensions**	Child Mortality	If a child under the age of 18 years has died in the family in the five years preceding the survey
		Nutrition	If any adult or child for whom there is nutritional information is undernourished.
2.	**Education Dimension**	Years of Schooling	If no household member has completed six years of schooling
		School Attendance	If no household member aged 7-12 years has completed six years of schooling
3.	**Living Standards Dimension**	Cooking Fuel	If the household cooks with dung, straw, or wood
		Sanitation	If the household uses unimproved sanitation facilities
		Drinking Water	If the household uses unimproved drinking water sources
		Electricity	If the household has no electricity
		Floor	If the floor of the household dwelling is made of natural materials
4.	**Work and Shocks Dimension**	Employment	If no adult is employed.
		Assets	If the household does not own more than one of the following assets: radio, TV, telephone, bike, or

			refrigerator
		Child Labor	If any school-aged child is working
		Child Schooling	If no school-aged child is attending school
		Child Birth Registration	If no child under the age of 5 has their birth registered

Source: Multidimensional Poverty Index of Nigeria 2022 Report

These indicators are used to capture the deprivations in non-monetary factors that contribute to wellbeing, providing a more comprehensive assessment of the nature of poverty in the people. These dimensions and indicators were used as pointers for sociological analysis.

Sociological Review of the 2022 MPI Report of Nigeria

Before delving into the sociological implications of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2022, it is essential first to understand what sociological implications entail. Sociological implications refer to the broader social consequences or impacts of a particular phenomenon, action, or concept within society. Sociologists analyze not only the immediate effects of social structures, institutions, and human behavior but also their more profound ramifications for societal functioning and dynamics. These implications provide insight into social patterns, inequalities, and structural changes resulting from specific circumstances (Laurenson, 1969).

With the MPI 2022 in focus, beyond the statistical representation of people trapped within multidimensional poverty are untold stories of hardship and deprivation. The implications extend across social, economic, physical, and psychological dimensions, affecting individuals and communities in profound ways. The MPI 2022 report reveals that 63% of Nigerians, approximately 133 million people, are multidimensionally poor. However, this poverty is not uniformly distributed; somewhat, it varies across socio-demographic groups and regional dynamics. For instance, children, rural dwellers, women, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) face higher levels of deprivation across multiple indicators, widening social inequalities. Rural populations are particularly vulnerable due to limited access to quality education, healthcare, and infrastructure, while urban poor communities struggle with overcrowded housing, inadequate sanitation, and employment instability.

Furthermore, the regional disparities observed in the report show significant differences in poverty levels across Northern and Southern Nigeria, emphasizing the structural factors

perpetuating deprivation in certain regions. Thus, it is necessary to consider how different social factors, such as education, employment, healthcare access, and regional inequalities, shape multidimensional poverty. By doing so, the MPI 2022 report not only quantifies poverty but also provides critical insights into the realities of those affected. Accordingly, the following are highlighted as some of the implications driven by the 2022 MPI:

The Health Dimensions

Health is critical to every society. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This definition emphasizes that health extends beyond the mere absence of illness to include overall wellbeing, access to quality healthcare, and social determinants of health. A healthy population is crucial for economic growth, social stability, and political development. However, the health status of Nigerians is characterized by severe disparities and structural challenges. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2022 has included food security and time to healthcare in the health dimension to reflect these challenges. The report highlights that approximately 47% of Nigerians (over 99 million people) experience health-related deprivations, indicating a lack of access to essential health services, medication, and sanitation facilities. Moreover, rural populations suffer more from health deprivation (54%) than urban populations (35%), underscoring the uneven distribution of healthcare infrastructure in the country (UNDP, 2022).

One of the significant sociological implications of this health crisis is the high child mortality rate, particularly in rural areas. According to UNICEF (2022), Nigeria has one of the highest child mortality rates in the world, with approximately 117 deaths per 1,000 live births. The MPI 2022 report indicates that 49% of children under five experience health deprivation, making them the most vulnerable demographic group. This high mortality rate contributes to psychological distress and social instability, as families who lose children often experience emotional trauma, economic hardship, and even social exclusion. Additionally, it erodes trust in healthcare institutions, as communities witnessing frequent child deaths may resort to traditional or alternative medicine, further worsening health outcomes (WHO, 2022).

Another significant implication is malnutrition, which has long-term consequences for education, economic participation, and intergenerational poverty. The Global Nutrition Report (2022) states

that over 35% of Nigerian children under five suffer from stunting due to malnutrition, with the rates being significantly higher in the North compared to the South. In the Northwest and Northeast, where poverty levels are the highest, malnutrition affects over 50% of children (NBS, 2022). Malnourished children are more likely to suffer cognitive impairments, leading to low academic performance, high dropout rates, and limited employment opportunities later in life. This creates a vicious cycle where poverty is transmitted across generations, making it difficult for affected populations to escape deprivation (FAO, 2022).

The healthcare infrastructure crisis further exacerbates the problem. Nigeria's doctor-to-patient ratio stands at 1:10,000, which is far below the WHO recommendation of 1:600 (WHO, 2022). Additionally, the country has only 35,000 registered doctors but needs at least 237,000 to meet its healthcare demands (UNDP, 2022). Many healthcare workers migrate overseas due to poor working conditions, low wages, and lack of professional opportunities, leaving the sector understaffed. As a result, patients in both rural and urban areas face long wait times, limited access to specialist care, and overcrowded hospitals. The delay in receiving timely healthcare services often leads to avoidable deaths, especially among pregnant women and children (NBS, 2022). This situation widens health inequalities between the wealthy, who can afford private healthcare, and the poor, who rely on the failing public health system.

Additionally, infectious diseases remain a significant health burden, disproportionately affecting rural and low-income populations. WHO (2022) reports that malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, cholera, and Lassa fever are still major causes of morbidity and mortality in Nigeria. Malaria alone accounts for 23% of child deaths in the country, while the maternal mortality rate stands at 512 deaths per 100,000 live births, one of the highest globally (WHO, 2022). Immunization coverage remains a concern, with outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases such as polio and measles occurring frequently. The MPI 2022 findings suggest that the lack of access to clean water, sanitation, and basic medical supplies exacerbates these health challenges, particularly in the North and rural areas, where over 70% of households lack improved sanitation facilities (NBS, 2022).

The health dimension of the MPI 2022 highlights the far-reaching sociological implications of Nigeria's healthcare crisis. High child mortality rates contribute to psychological distress, weakened trust in healthcare, and social instability, while malnutrition perpetuates educational

disadvantages and economic stagnation. The shortage of medical personnel and inadequate healthcare infrastructure further deepens health inequalities and reduces life expectancy. Moreover, the persistent burden of infectious diseases and lack of sanitation facilities continue to endanger millions of lives. These issues require significant investments in healthcare, improved maternal and child health services, nutrition programs, and policies aimed at retaining medical professionals. Without urgent intervention, the health-related deprivations outlined in the MPI 2022 will continue to undermine Nigeria's social and economic progress.

Education Dimension

The health dimension of multidimensional poverty includes key indicators such as years of schooling and school attendance, both of which are crucial to national development. The 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) reported that 29% of all school-aged children in Nigeria are not attending school. This is closely linked to multidimensional poverty, as 94% of all out-of-school children are poor, and 27% of them are both poor and out of school. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2022), net primary school enrollment in rural areas is 72%, compared to 88% in urban areas. The implication is that living conditions for out-of-school children in Nigeria are deplorable, requiring urgent intervention. A high number of out-of-school children threatens national development and undermines sustainable development goals. The COVID-19 pandemic has further worsened school attendance issues and years of schooling, with data collection frequency influencing the ability to track changes in these indicators (UNESCO, 2022). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report estimated that Nigeria had about 20 million out-of-school children and youth in 2021.

Access to education is a fundamental necessity for children, enabling them to chart a new course for their future, dream big, and achieve their aspirations. A nation with a failing education sector is in crisis, as a significant portion of its population remains uneducated. Adult literacy in Nigeria is also critically low. The MPI (2022) reports that adult literacy in rural areas stands at 57%, compared to 76% in urban areas. This equates to 39 million illiterate adults in rural Nigeria, hindering their ability to access information, participate in civic life, and secure better-paying jobs. The overall literacy rate in Nigeria is low, with 31% of Nigerians (approximately 65 million people) found to be deprived in the education dimension, with rural areas experiencing significantly higher deprivation. Education deprivation negatively affects national development, economic productivity, and political engagement. When a nation has a high percentage of

illiterates, infrastructure development, such as schools and libraries, is stifled. Illiterate individuals are more vulnerable to exploitation, manipulation, and misinformation, which affects their participation in labor markets and financial transactions (MPI, 2022).

Several factors can be attributed to the low literacy rate and the large number of out-of-school children in Nigeria. These include economic constraints, inadequate educational infrastructure, cultural norms, child labor, and insecurity. Economic hardship forces many families to prioritize survival over education, pushing children into labor. Inadequate school facilities, especially in rural areas, make education inaccessible. Cultural beliefs, especially regarding female education, also contribute to high dropout rates. Additionally, insecurity caused by insurgencies and banditry discourages school attendance, leaving many children vulnerable to poverty.

The effects of illiteracy extend beyond individuals to communities and the nation. According to the United Nations (2019), illiteracy hinders national development by preventing the growth of a skilled workforce, stifling innovation, and reducing global competitiveness. Illiterate individuals struggle to find well-paying jobs, perpetuating poverty cycles. Illiteracy also leads to social marginalization and exclusion, limiting individuals' ability to understand their legal rights, participate in community activities, and engage in meaningful social interactions. This isolation contributes to a cycle of poverty and stagnation (United Nations, 2019). A study by Okonna (2019) on child abuse in Eastern Nigeria revealed that child labor is prevalent, with many parents sending their children into domestic servitude in wealthy homes for financial gain. These children often face abuse and exploitation, with many cases going unreported. The widespread prevalence of child labor has a direct negative impact on children's physical and mental health, education, and future economic opportunities.

Living Standards Dimension

The living standard dimension is a crucial aspect of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), as it encompasses various indicators that measure the quality of life of individuals and households. These indicators include cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, and housing quality, among others. The disparities in living standards in Nigeria are vast and influenced by socioeconomic, political, and geographical factors.

Cooking Fuel and Socioeconomic Disparities

Cooking fuel remains a critical determinant of household health, environmental sustainability, and economic wellbeing in Nigeria. The reliance on biomass fuels such as firewood, charcoal, and dung by approximately 78% of Nigerian households (World Bank, 2022) underlined the deep-rooted inequalities in energy access. Despite Nigeria's vast natural gas reserves and electricity generation capacity, affordability and accessibility challenges persist. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of 2022 reported that 94% of Nigerians lack access to clean cooking fuels, a stark contrast to other developing nations with similar energy resources. The high cost of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) due to subsidy removal and inflation has worsened the situation. The price of a 12.5kg LPG cylinder, which was about ₦4,500 in early 2021, has surged to over ₦12,500 in 2023, making it unaffordable for most low-income households (NBS, 2022).

Beyond economic constraints, gender and health inequalities emerge from this deprivation. Women and children, traditionally responsible for cooking in many Nigerian households, are disproportionately exposed to indoor air pollution, leading to severe respiratory infections. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), household air pollution from solid fuels causes over 98,000 premature deaths in Nigeria annually. Moreover, the deforestation crisis in states like Taraba, Cross River, and Kaduna can be linked to the over-reliance on firewood, exacerbating climate change and desertification. The government's inability to provide a reliable electricity supply further pushes low-income households to adopt unsafe alternatives, entrenching energy poverty and environmental degradation.

Sanitation and Public Health Crisis

Sanitation remains a significant public health challenge in Nigeria, with only 44% of the population having access to improved sanitation facilities (United Nations, 2019). The lack of proper sanitation infrastructure disproportionately affects rural communities, where open defecation is still prevalent. According to UNICEF (2021), approximately 48 million Nigerians practice open defecation, making Nigeria the country with the highest number of people engaged in this practice worldwide. This situation has far-reaching implications for public health, particularly in states like Benue, Ekiti, and Kogi, where the prevalence of waterborne diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and dysentery remains high.

Urban slums and informal settlements in Lagos, Kano, and Port Harcourt further illustrate the crisis. The lack of sewage systems forces residents to rely on pit latrines and poorly maintained public toilets, increasing the risk of disease outbreaks. The cholera epidemic of 2021, which recorded over 3,600 deaths nationwide (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, 2021), is a clear example of the deadly consequences of poor sanitation. Despite government efforts such as the "Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet" campaign, progress remains slow due to inadequate funding, corruption, and public indifference. Without a comprehensive sanitation policy and large-scale investments in waste management, millions of Nigerians will continue to suffer from preventable diseases.

Drinking Water and the Urban-Rural Divide

Access to clean drinking water is a fundamental human right, yet over 70 million Nigerians lack safe water sources (UNESCO, 2019). The disparities between urban and rural areas are glaring, with cities like Abuja and Lagos benefiting from government investments in water infrastructure while rural communities rely on rivers, ponds, and unprotected wells. The National Bureau of Statistics (2022) reported that only 26.5% of Nigerian households have access to safely managed drinking water, indicating that the majority of the population remains vulnerable to waterborne diseases.

Recent cholera outbreaks in states like Bauchi, Kano, and Sokoto have been linked to contaminated water sources, further emphasizing the urgency of addressing this crisis. In conflict-affected regions like Borno and Zamfara, insurgency has worsened the situation, with displaced populations struggling to access clean water. The destruction of water facilities by Boko Haram has forced many communities to depend on stagnant water, increasing disease risks. Moreover, the climate crisis has exacerbated water scarcity, with desertification in northern Nigeria reducing groundwater levels and making borehole drilling more expensive. The government's failure to implement sustainable water management policies has deepened inequalities, leaving millions in dire conditions (DailyPost, 2023).

Electricity and Energy Poverty

Electricity access is a key determinant of socioeconomic development, yet Nigeria remains the country with the most significant electricity access deficit in the world. According to the

Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC, 2023), over 85 million Nigerians are not connected to the national grid, while those with access experience frequent blackouts. The rural-urban divide is stark, with states like Borno, Yobe, and Jigawa having the lowest electrification rates due to insurgency, poor infrastructure, and government neglect. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (2022) states that 39% of Nigerians lack access to electricity, affecting education, healthcare, and economic activities. Furthermore, small businesses, particularly in states like Kaduna and Enugu, struggle with erratic power supply, forcing them to rely on expensive diesel generators. The recent removal of fuel subsidies has further increased operational costs, pushing many businesses into closure. Healthcare delivery has also been significantly affected, with rural clinics unable to store vaccines or operate essential medical equipment due to power outages. The lack of electricity also hinders educational opportunities, as students in many public schools are forced to study without proper lighting. Despite government initiatives such as the Rural Electrification Agency's solar power projects, progress remains slow due to bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption. The failure of the power sector privatization, coupled with issues of gas shortages and transmission losses, continues to trap millions of Nigerians in energy poverty.

Housing Quality and the Urban Slum Crisis

Housing remains one of Nigeria's most pressing socioeconomic challenges, with poor housing conditions exacerbating poverty and health risks. The Federal Ministry of Works and Housing (2022) estimates that Nigeria's housing deficit stands at over 20 million units, with rapid urbanization worsening the crisis. The reliance on substandard materials such as mud, sand, and thatch in many rural areas underscores the structural inequalities in housing. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (2022) highlights that a significant proportion of Nigerians live in overcrowded slums, particularly in urban centers like Lagos, Ibadan, and Kano.

Makoko, a floating slum in Lagos, exemplifies the dire housing conditions faced by millions. With little to no access to sanitation, electricity, or clean water, residents suffer from frequent disease outbreaks. Similarly, internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in the Northeast lack basic housing infrastructure, forcing families to live in makeshift shelters vulnerable to harsh weather conditions. The rising cost of building materials due to inflation has made home ownership unattainable for most Nigerians, pushing more people into informal settlements. Despite efforts such as the National Housing Fund (NHF) and various state housing schemes,

corruption and poor implementation continue to hinder progress. Without urgent interventions in affordable housing policies, millions will remain trapped in substandard living conditions.

The living standards crisis in Nigeria is deeply rooted in socioeconomic inequalities, poor governance, and infrastructural deficits. The lack of access to clean cooking fuels, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, and quality housing not only affects health and economic opportunities but also perpetuates generational poverty. The regional disparities in access highlight the need for targeted policy interventions that address the unique challenges faced by both urban and rural populations. Investments in energy, water supply, sanitation, and housing must be prioritized to bridge the gap between the privileged and the marginalized. Furthermore, corruption and mismanagement must be tackled to ensure that government initiatives translate into real improvements in people's lives. Without urgent and sustainable reforms, Nigeria risks deepening its poverty crisis, further marginalizing millions, and exacerbating socio-political instability.

Work and Shocks Dimension

The fourth dimension of multidimensional poverty, known as Work and Shocks, encompasses five key indicators: Employment, Assets, Child Labor, Child Schooling, and Child Birth Registration. This dimension is critical as it captures the ability of individuals and households to secure stable livelihoods while assessing their vulnerability to economic, environmental, and health-related shocks. Work refers to labor market participation beyond mere income generation, incorporating job security, working conditions, and employment benefits. Shocks, on the other hand, signify unforeseen events such as economic downturns, conflicts, and health emergencies that negatively impact household stability (UNDP, 2022). The work and shocks dimension as a critical part of the MPI 2022 report on Nigeria, can be sociologically analyzed under its five essential indicators:

Employment and Its Implications

Employment is a major driver of economic growth and poverty reduction. The 2022 Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Report highlights that 14.1% of Nigerians, approximately 30 million people, experience deprivation in employment. This includes underemployment, job insecurity, and vulnerability to external shocks like displacement due to conflict. Employment

deprivation is notably higher in rural areas (19.2%) than in urban areas (7.1%). Additionally, a gender disparity exists, with men facing slightly higher deprivation rates (14.5%) compared to women (13.7%). Unemployment and underemployment have far-reaching consequences. They limit access to essential resources such as healthcare, decent housing, and nutrition. The 2022 unemployment rate in Nigeria stood at 33.3%, disproportionately affecting youth (World Bank, 2023). The lack of employment opportunities has resulted in a high dependency ratio and economic stagnation. Many sectors, particularly manufacturing and agriculture, cannot absorb the growing labor force, exacerbating poverty. Moreover, employment deprivation significantly impacts life expectancy, which stands at 61.79 years in Nigeria, with marked regional disparities from 52.1 years in Borno to 69.9 years in Lagos (UNFPA, 2021).

Child Labor and Its Implications

Child labor in Nigeria remains a pressing issue, depriving children of their right to education and exposing them to various forms of exploitation. The 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) reveals that 67.5% of children aged 0-17 live in poverty, with six out of ten girls aged 12-17 classified as poor. Child marriage further exacerbates poverty, as married girls have a higher MPI score (0.338) than unmarried ones (0.256), highlighting the link between early marriage and economic deprivation. UNICEF (2022) reports that 15 million Nigerian children aged 5-14 engage in child labor, working in hazardous environments such as mining, farming, domestic servitude, and street hawking. The worst forms of child labor include human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and forced recruitment into armed conflicts. These exploitative conditions not only threaten children's physical and psychological wellbeing but also reinforce cycles of poverty by limiting access to education and future employment opportunities. For example, in rural parts of Kano and Katsina states, children as young as six are forced to work in quarries and mines, inhaling toxic dust and risking life-threatening injuries. Similarly, young girls are often sent into domestic servitude in cities like Lagos and Abuja, where they are vulnerable to abuse and maltreatment.

The prevalence of child labor is closely tied to broader socioeconomic issues, including poverty, lack of education, and weak law enforcement. The MPI shows that 91% to 99% of children under five are poor, and two-thirds of children aged 0-17 experience poverty compared to 58.7% of adults. This disparity underscores the vulnerability of children, especially girls, who suffer higher poverty rates when married—approximately 8 out of 10 married girls live in extreme

poverty. Economic hardship drives many families to push their children into labor, often under dangerous conditions. In cities like Port Harcourt and Onitsha, young boys work in mechanic workshops and open markets, carrying heavy loads beyond their physical capacity. Street hawking among teenage girls is also rampant, exposing them to exploitation and trafficking. According to Okonna (2019), in Eastern Nigeria, parents frequently send their children into domestic servitude in wealthy homes, seeking financial returns without considering the risks of abuse and exploitation. Many reports of child abuse in such situations go unrecorded, making it difficult to address the full extent of the problem. The continued existence of child labor despite laws prohibiting it is an indication of the failure of enforcement mechanisms, with many perpetrators escaping legal consequences.

The consequences of child labor extend beyond individual children to families and society at large. It exposes children to hazardous working conditions, increasing their risk of injuries, toxic exposure, and chronic health problems. Psychologically, children engaged in labor suffer from anxiety, depression, and trauma due to harsh treatment and excessive workloads. The educational impact is severe, as many are forced to drop out of school, limiting their ability to secure better opportunities in adulthood. UNICEF (2019) reports that children involved in labor often experience wage theft, long working hours, and physical abuse. The long-term effect on society includes a cycle of poverty, increased crime rates, and a poorly educated workforce that hinders national development.

Child Schooling and Educational Deprivation

Educational deprivation remains a critical challenge in Nigeria, contributing to persistent multidimensional poverty. According to the 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Report, 47.3% of children aged 6-17 experience educational deprivation, with disparities between rural and urban areas—62.8% in rural areas compared to 22.5% in urban centers (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative [OPHI], 2022). The lack of access to quality education stems from inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and high poverty rates that prevent families from affording school expenses. For example, in states such as Borno and Zamfara, where insurgency and insecurity are rampant, thousands of schools have been shut down, worsening the crisis (UNICEF, 2022). This disruption limits children's ability to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills, which are essential for future economic opportunities.

Girls face even greater barriers to education due to sociocultural and economic constraints. Early marriage, domestic responsibilities, and financial limitations force many girls to drop out of school. In northern Nigeria, over 50% of girls do not complete primary education, reducing their future earning potential and reinforcing gender inequality (UNICEF, 2022). Religious and traditional beliefs in some regions discourage female education, prioritizing marriage and domestic roles over schooling (Mbah & Igbokwe, 2021). A notable example is in Kano State, where many adolescent girls are withdrawn from school to be married off, limiting their ability to attain economic independence (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2021). Moreover, families struggling with poverty often prioritize boys' education over girls', viewing male children as future breadwinners (Ogundele, 2020). These patterns perpetuate generational cycles of poverty and reduce the overall development potential of affected communities.

Sociologically, the implications of educational deprivation are profound, affecting both individual and societal progress. A poorly educated population leads to a weak labor force, higher unemployment rates, and increased crime due to limited economic opportunities (Gambo & Musa, 2021). Additionally, low literacy rates contribute to misinformation and poor health outcomes, as uneducated individuals may lack access to critical information on healthcare and family planning (World Bank, 2022). The cycle of educational deprivation further widens social inequality as children from disadvantaged backgrounds struggle to compete in an increasingly knowledge-based economy.

Child Birth Registration and Legal Identity

Birth registration is a critical foundation for ensuring children's legal identity, granting them access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and social protection. It serves as the first step in securing nationality, preventing statelessness, and safeguarding children's rights under international conventions like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Despite its importance, birth registration rates in Nigeria remain low, with significant disparities between urban and rural areas. According to UNICEF (2022), only 57% of Nigerian children under the age of five have their births registered, with rural areas recording a much lower registration rate of 42% compared to 75% in urban regions. This gap is largely attributed to limited access to registration centers, lack of awareness, and cultural barriers, which prevent many parents, especially in remote areas, from registering their children's births. For instance, in the North-East and Northwest regions, where poverty and conflict have disrupted social services,

birth registration rates are even lower, leaving millions of children undocumented and unprotected (UNICEF, 2022).

The absence of birth registration exposes children to significant vulnerabilities, including child trafficking, forced labor, early marriage, and exclusion from education and healthcare services. Without legal identity, children may be denied enrollment in schools, medical treatment, or government assistance programs. In Nigeria, unregistered children are more likely to miss out on immunization programs, which are essential for reducing child mortality rates. The lack of documentation also increases the risk of children being exploited, as they cannot prove their age or nationality, making them more susceptible to illegal adoption and human trafficking networks.

Additionally, the MPI 2022 of Nigeria reveals that individuals with disabilities are disproportionately affected by multidimensional poverty. Approximately 71% of individuals in households with at least one disabled person live in poverty, compared to 62% in households without a disabled member. These individuals face significant deprivations in healthcare, education, and employment. Many disabilities could be prevented with better healthcare access, yet systemic inadequacies leave affected individuals and their families in deepening deprivation (UNDP, 2023). Persons with disabilities often struggle to access quality education due to inadequate infrastructure and social stigma. Their families bear additional financial burdens, increasing the overall household deprivation levels. Limited employment opportunities further marginalize persons with disabilities, leading to economic insecurity and social exclusion. This group is also more vulnerable to violence and exploitation, contributing to security-related deprivations within the MPI framework.

Regionally, the MPI 2022 provides a comprehensive analysis of poverty across different Nigerian regions. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) estimates that 63% of Nigerians - approximately 133 million people - were classified as multidimensionally poor in 2022. Poverty levels are starkly higher in rural areas (72%) than in urban centers (42%). The regional disparities are driven by differences in employment opportunities, healthcare access, education, and basic infrastructure. Northern Nigeria, particularly states like Borno and Yobe, records the highest poverty levels due to persistent conflict, displacement, and economic instability. In contrast, southern states, particularly Lagos, record lower multidimensional poverty levels due to better infrastructure and economic opportunities. However, even in relatively prosperous regions,

pockets of deprivation exist, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address poverty at a localized level.

Theoretical Framework

There are many theories propounded by scholars about the phenomenon of poverty, including behavioral theory, structural theory, political theory, cultural theory, individual deficiency theory, and neoclassical theory. However, this paper adopts the Structural Theory of Poverty.

The Structural Theory of Poverty, rooted in Karl Marx's Structural Conflict Theory, provides a robust framework for understanding the multidimensional nature of poverty as captured by Nigeria's 2022 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The theory, advanced by scholars like Oscar Lewis, Michael Harrington, and Peter Townsend, asserts that poverty is not merely an outcome of individual deficiencies but is primarily caused by structural and systemic factors embedded within social, economic, and political institutions. The fundamental assumption of this theory is that poverty results from macro-level inequalities, including labor market disparities, inadequate public services, and economic structures that reinforce deprivation. The four dimensions of MPI, health, education, living standards, and work and shocks, are direct reflections of these systemic failures, demonstrating that poverty is sustained by institutional shortcomings rather than personal inadequacies.

The health dimension, which includes child mortality, nutrition, and access to healthcare, highlights the structural inequities in Nigeria's healthcare system. High child mortality rates and malnutrition persist due to inadequate healthcare infrastructure, poor maternal and child health services, and economic barriers that limit access to nutritious food and essential medical care. According to UNICEF (2022), 35% of Nigerian children under five suffer from stunted growth due to malnutrition. The Structural Theory of Poverty emphasizes that these disparities are shaped by policies that fail to ensure equitable access to healthcare. Karl Marx's perspective on structural inequalities aligns with this view, arguing that health disparities arise from economic systems that prioritize profit over social welfare.

Similarly, the education dimension, measured through years of schooling and school attendance, illustrates the impact of structural barriers on human capital development. The theory posits that limited educational access is not due to a lack of individual effort but rather systemic neglect and underinvestment in public education. In Nigeria, approximately 10.5 million children are out of

school, with higher dropout rates in rural and conflict-affected areas (UNESCO, 2022). Structural theorists like Peter Townsend argue that poverty is relative, meaning that deprivation occurs when individuals lack access to resources necessary for full participation in society. Poor educational opportunities perpetuate intergenerational poverty, limiting future economic mobility. Policy-driven interventions such as compulsory and free primary education, improved teacher training, and increased investment in educational infrastructure are necessary to dismantle these systemic barriers.

The living standards dimension further validates the structural approach to poverty by highlighting disparities in access to electricity, clean water, sanitation, and housing. In Nigeria, 43% of the population lacks access to electricity, while 60 million people do not have access to clean water (World Bank, 2022). These deprivations stem from governance failures and economic inequalities, reinforcing the Structural Theory of Poverty's argument that institutional inefficiencies perpetuate poverty. Likewise, inadequate housing and sanitation contribute to poor health outcomes, exacerbating the cycle of deprivation.

The work and shocks dimension underscores the vulnerability of impoverished populations to economic instability, unemployment, and child labor. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), Nigeria's unemployment rate stands at 33%, with youth unemployment exceeding 40%. Additionally, child labor remains prevalent, with 39% of children aged 5–17 engaged in economic activities due to household poverty (ILO, 2022). These issues align with Michael Harrington's concept of absolute poverty, which posits that structural deficiencies create persistent deprivation, making upward mobility nearly impossible through individual effort alone. Systemic labor market reforms, social protection programs, and policies promoting decent employment opportunities are critical for breaking the cycle of poverty and ensuring economic inclusion. This theory, therefore, provides a crucial lens for interpreting Nigeria's MPI.

Results and Discussion

The health dimension of the MPI, which includes indicators such as child mortality and nutrition, reveals significant structural inequities in Nigeria's healthcare system. The high prevalence of child mortality, particularly in rural areas, is largely due to inadequate healthcare infrastructure, insufficient maternal and child health services, and economic barriers that limit access to medical care. Malnutrition remains a pressing issue, with 35% of Nigerian children under five suffering

from stunted growth due to poor nutrition and food insecurity (UNICEF, 2022). According to Amzat and Razum (2018), structural poverty within the health sector is exacerbated by a lack of investment in primary healthcare, inequitable resource distribution, and governance inefficiencies, leading to preventable health crises. The Structural Theory of Poverty asserts that these deprivations are not incidental but rather the result of systemic failures embedded in economic and political institutions.

The education dimension, measured by school attendance and years of schooling, reflects systemic barriers that hinder human capital development and perpetuate intergenerational poverty. The findings indicate that approximately 10.5 million Nigerian children are out of school, with higher dropout rates in rural and conflict-affected areas due to economic hardships, inadequate school facilities, and insecurity (UNESCO, 2022). Structural theorists like Peter Townsend (1979) argue that poverty is relative, meaning that deprivation occurs when individuals are denied access to essential resources necessary for full participation in society, such as quality education. The lack of proper educational access limits future employment prospects, thereby reinforcing the cycle of poverty. The Structural Theory of Poverty underscores that underfunding of public education, lack of teacher training, and ineffective policy implementation contribute to this crisis. Bridging this educational gap requires strategic reforms such as free and compulsory basic education, school feeding programs to encourage attendance, and investments in digital learning infrastructures to support remote and conflict-affected regions.

The living standards dimension encompasses access to electricity, clean water, sanitation, and housing conditions, all of which remain significantly deficient for many Nigerians. Findings reveal that 43% of the population lacks access to electricity, and over 60 million people do not have access to clean water (World Bank, 2022). Poor sanitation facilities further exacerbate public health risks, contributing to waterborne diseases and higher mortality rates. According to Sachs (2005), inadequate infrastructure and poor living conditions are direct consequences of systemic governance failures and economic inequalities, which reinforce structural poverty. The Structural Theory of Poverty posits that institutional inefficiencies, corruption, and policy neglect contribute to these poor living conditions, making it nearly impossible for affected populations to escape deprivation through individual effort alone.

The work and shocks dimension assesses employment stability, asset ownership, and exposure to economic vulnerabilities such as unemployment and child labor. Results show that Nigeria's unemployment rate stands at 33%, with youth unemployment exceeding 40%, while 39% of children aged 5–17 engage in child labor due to economic necessity (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022; ILO, 2022). These statistics align with Michael Harrington's (1962) concept of absolute poverty, which argues that structural deficiencies create persistent deprivation, making economic mobility unattainable through individual effort alone. The Structural Theory of Poverty stresses how weak labor market policies, economic instability, and lack of social protection mechanisms keep individuals trapped in low-income cycles.

Conclusion

Nigeria, recently branded the poverty capital of the world, exemplifies a country plagued with multidimensional poverty. This is due to the surge in the number to the tune of 133 million poor people occasioned by the prevalence of hunger, poor nutrition, low living standards, deprivation, illiteracy, poor electricity, poor sanitation, and restricted access to potable water, particularly in rural areas, and the lack of access to the health care system. The Nigeria MPI (2022) was designed to reflect and monitor policy priorities in order to reduce the multidimensional poverty nature of the country. The MPI also comprehensively shows the dynamics of poverty in the country through four dimensions, which are health, education, living standards, and work and shocks, which further have 15 indicators. These areas vividly show the index poverty variations across sex, geographical space, physical traits, food and nutrition, and health, amongst others. The MPI, however, provides relevant information at the governance level, where political decisions can be made as a matter of urgency for a prosperous and progressive nation. The Structural Theory of Poverty provides a critical lens for interpreting Nigeria's MPI, reinforcing the argument that poverty is not merely an individual shortcoming but a systemic issue entrenched in institutional inefficiencies, economic inequalities, and policy neglect. The results show the structural barriers that perpetuate deprivation across the four dimensions, necessitating immediate and evidence-based interventions. The MPI serves as a crucial tool in guiding policy formulation, ensuring that governance structures prioritize poverty alleviation as a fundamental national goal. Without systemic reforms aimed at dismantling these structural inequities, the cycle of poverty will persist, further exacerbating socioeconomic disparities. Therefore, a

deliberate and inclusive policy framework is essential to drive sustainable development, promote economic opportunities, and create a society where basic human needs are accessible to all.

The Way Forward

Addressing Multidimensional Poverty (MDP) in Nigeria requires a practical, actionable, and community-driven approach that tackles the four major dimensions to ensure that policies and programs directly impact the daily lives of every ordinary Nigerian. The goal is not just to create policies on paper but to see real change in the wellbeing of people across rural villages, urban slums, and underserved communities. Social inclusion, as emphasized by Atkinson (2019), must be at the heart of this approach, ensuring that no individual is left behind and that poverty reduction efforts go beyond handouts to empowering people with the tools they need to improve their lives.

One of the most urgent dimensions of MDP that requires intervention is healthcare. In many rural communities, access to basic healthcare remains a significant challenge. A practical way forward is to strengthen primary healthcare by deploying mobile health clinics that can serve hard-to-reach areas. The federal and state governments should work closely with NGOs like Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) and the Nigerian Red Cross to provide emergency medical assistance to rural communities. Additionally, health insurance schemes such as the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) should be expanded to include low-income families so that people do not have to choose between buying food and getting medical care. The government's National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) must ensure that each ward in Nigeria has at least one fully equipped primary healthcare center with trained personnel.

Another critical dimension is education, which remains the most effective tool for breaking the cycle of poverty. In northern Nigeria, where millions of children are out of school, education must be prioritized. Programs such as the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) need to be fully implemented to ensure that Almajiri children receive proper education beyond just religious instruction. Practical steps include reviving and expanding the school feeding program in states like Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara, where food insecurity keeps children away

from school. When children are guaranteed at least one nutritious meal per day at school, attendance rates increase significantly. Additionally, technical and vocational education must be incorporated into secondary school curricula nationwide, especially in commercial hubs like Lagos and Kano, so that young people can graduate with skills in carpentry, mechanics, tailoring, and ICT instead of relying solely on white-collar jobs. NGOs like Teach for Nigeria can also be mobilized to deploy trained teachers to underserved schools, ensuring that quality education is accessible to all.

The third dimension, living standards**,** requires a hands-on approach to infrastructure development. In areas like Makoko in Lagos, where families live in shanties on stilts above the water, access to clean drinking water and sanitation is almost nonexistent. A practical solution would be to install water purification systems and public boreholes in such communities through government partnerships with organizations like WaterAid. Furthermore, electricity remains a significant problem across Nigeria, with frequent blackouts stifling productivity. The Rural Electrification Agency (REA) must speed up the deployment of solar mini-grids in off-grid communities, allowing small businesses and households to have reliable power. For example, the solar mini-grid project in Gbamu-Gbamu, Ogun State, has provided over 2,500 people with steady electricity and could serve as a model for other communities. Housing policies should also be reviewed to encourage the development of low-cost housing estates that provide affordable rent for low-income earners rather than allowing developers to build luxury apartments that remain unoccupied due to high costs.

Lastly, the work and shocks dimension requires a deliberate strategy to create jobs and provide social protection. Many Nigerian youths, despite being educated, remain unemployed because they lack the necessary skills to fit into the labor market. A practical way forward is to replicate initiatives like the "Lagos State Employability Support Project," which provides job-specific training for unemployed youths in partnership with private companies. More so, small businesses must be supported with microfinance schemes that offer low-interest loans. The Bank of Industry (BOI) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) must ensure that intervention funds reach actual small-scale entrepreneurs rather than being captured by political elites. For example, in Aba, Abia State, where thousands of young people engage in shoe and leather production, access to soft loans and modern equipment would help them scale up their businesses and create more

jobs. Additionally, social protection programs such as conditional cash transfers should be expanded to support the poorest households, particularly widows, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

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