

## **An Assessment of the Relationship Between Political Participation and Poverty in Jigawa State, Nigeria**

Suleiman Mohammed

Department of Public Administration, Jigawa State Polytechnic Dutse  
mohdtsada@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

*Poverty has serious effect on the development of Democracy because it is identified as the major cause of electoral violence, vote buying and other political instabilities; the study aimed at assessing the relationship between political participation and poverty in Nigeria with particular reference to Jigawa State, Survey research method was adopted, and the data was collected from secondary sources. The population of the study is entire Jigawa state. The findings of the study revealed that unemployment, corruption, poor enabling environment, lack of capital, lack of health care services delivery and lack of qualitative and standard educational system among others are the main causes of poverty and this poverty served as mechanism for political thuggery, and other socio economics and political instability in the state and entire country at large. The limitations the study encountered were inadequate time and financial constraints. The study recommends that the issue of persistence poverty poor qualitative and standard education and unemployment should be paid adequate attention by government at all levels in an attempt to increase political participation and poverty reduction also reduce insecurity in the local government states and the country at large.*

Keywords: Assessment, Poverty, Effect, Political, Participation, Local, government.

## Introduction

Poverty is a state or condition characterized by a lack of basic necessities and resources, encompassing financial hardship, inadequate living conditions, and limited access to essential services like food, shelter, health care, education, and security (Ahmad, 2010). Poverty is the most serious global problem which adversely affects sustainable development in developing countries; the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Rio De Janeiro 1992 defined poverty as the major factor militating against development be it social, economic or political, therefore, called for its eradication (Dandago, 2008), poverty in Nigeria is a menace that has continued to defy solutions irrespective of various reforms, policies and programs of poverty reduction and other efforts made by government in the past and present to find lasting solution, rather its continued spread (Yusuf, 2015). While the country is endowed with abundant resources, vast land and other endowment that are necessary for any functional society, the issue of Poverty has posed a big problem to Nigeria; she has been an example of the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty resource because she has been ranked as one of the poorest countries of the world in which the average income of its citizens is less than 1 \$ per day (Bello, 2016). The country's economy has steadily deteriorated leading to a steep decline in the living standard of the generality of the people and there exist an exceptionally large gap between the rich and the poor (Ajaney, 2016).

In Nigeria political participation had not been transformed into a higher degree of full citizenship for adults to be able to develop their fullest potentials to participate meaningfully in

the democratic process due to the existence of inexplicable poverty among the citizenry and the political implication of all these is political powerlessness and invisibility (Malumfashi, 2008). The effects of poverty on political participation in Jigawa state cannot be over emphasized because poverty is a product of underlined challenges effecting the area, there is a crucial need to strengthen and address the menace of poverty in the local government as a means of bringing rapid development to the people at the grass root level so as to improve the lives of the people and facilitate people's ability to

take part in political participation and to unveil the challenges encountered in the implementation of effective poverty reduction policies in the local government, the findings of this study would assist the policymakers at both federal, state levels as well as other stakeholders in the local government in solving practical problems related to poverty on political participation by the people. The study attempts to assess the relationship between the political participation and poverty in jigawa state Nigeria and looked at the challenges, issues and prospect and tries to fill the gap in knowledge on the acceleration of poverty in Nigeria. It is against this background that this paper examines the relationship between political participation and poverty in jigawa state Nigeria from 2015-2023.

## Theoretical Framework

Though, there are many theories that can explain the relationship between political participation and poverty in jigawa state Nigeria from 2015-2023 general election in Nigeria and used the Elite theory, Rational Choice theory and the Marxist theory of capitalism among others but the Rational Choice theory is hereby adopted to explain the topic under consideration in this article.

## Rational Choice Theory

It is concerned with rationality in a theoretical or philosophical discourse; the pioneer of this theory was a sociologist George Humans (1961), the rational choice model is abridged concisely by Down (1959) as a rational man is one who behaves as he can always make decision when confronted with many alternatives and always makes the same decision each time he is confronted with the same alternative (Downs 1959). The fundamental subject of this theory is that individuals choose a course of action that is in tandem with their personal preferences.

This paper decided to use the Rational Choice Theory in order to bring to attention the problem of poverty in political participation in Nigeria; the Theory is significantly appropriate to explain the problem under investigation, by going through the theoretical views of the rational choice theory which centrelised on the individuals choice of a course of action that is suitable to their personal preferences through rationality poverty is a major problem of Socio economic and political

development which negatively affect the level of political participation and poverty of the citizenry. The rationality of Human being shows how his/her participation in the political processes would be in a society that is adversely affected by poverty leading to low political participation. This explains the differences between developed and developing countries; in western countries participatory political culture is actualized because of their welfare practices which encourages the citizenry to participate actively in politics and helps their government in attaining their desired democratic principles through massive political education and mobilization of the society against the challenges of poverty, on the other hand in developing countries like Nigeria there is insular political culture because of poverty and her citizens tend to be inactive in politics especially in Jigawa state where the relationship between political participation and poverty is shown to be very strongly connected and that the relationship between income and political beliefs are widely accepted and agree that those living in poverty have lower participation in politics than those who are not. However, Rationality of individuals in the society significantly affects their level of participation in political activity due to poverty, this explains the reason why the developing countries are continuously having the problem of poor leadership and because of poverty other social vices tends to ensue.

This theory is important to the study because it explain how political culture emerges in society though the theory has been criticized for being to individualistic about the nature of man being selfish and neglect the idea of collective action in the process of solving societal problems; taking a look at the various poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria , they have left much to be desired because those charged with the responsibility of governance enunciate and implement policies that are not realistic, the poor masses whom the programs are meant for were often not consulted and are not given the opportunity to take active part in issues that affect them. Majority of the poor people were neglected in the areas of policy making, wealth acquisition, and welfare improvement. Therefore, the application of rational choice theory seems appropriate to explain the topic under consideration in this paper.

## **Research Method**

Secondary sources of data were used which comprised of newspapers, articles, journals, paper presentation, textbooks and internet materials related to the topic of study.

## **Findings of this Paper**

This paper found out that unemployment, poverty, corruption, poor qualitative and standard educational system, poor conducive enabling socio, economics and political environment, lack of capital, lack of effectives health care services delivery are the major causes of poverty not just only in Jigawa state and Nigeria in large but cultural factors are among the major cause of poverty in Nigeria particularly jigawa state being the area under investigation; not only that, families structure, lack of pragmatism in education and usage, rural-urban drift and poor effectives policies real effecting the poor and eradicating poverty. The result from this study indicated that there is high level of political participation and poverty in jigawa state despite the lack of social amenities across the local government and the state at large, that is the level of political mobilization and its assimilation by the people have impacted on the active politicking in the respective local government of jigawa state.

Many people believed that poverty has a serious negative impact on political participation in jigawa state because the challenges of poverty in the area under consideration makes them asses to participate in politics not for the sake of good governance but rather because of the impact of poverty among the people so they use electioneering campaign and election period to cast their vote in return for money or other gift from the politicians, this suggest that poverty provide opportunity to politicians to use money to ascend to power in government using poor people as hoodlums for political thuggery, hijacking of ballot box among the other form of political violence; because people in local government cast their vote in return for money or other gift poverty they don't engage in electoral violence , it could be deduced that the level of political mobilization and assimilation of people have

impacted on the active politicking because politicians dictate who the electorates vote for because they induce the electorates financially.

The result of the study also revealed that Poverty affect political participation in jigawa state due to weak political culture, corruption, illiteracy, bad government; so for the fact that poverty has negatively impact on Democratic Consolidation, this shows that there is significant relationship between poverty and political participation because poverty tend to determine the level of political participation by the people; respondents held that the possible solution to improve political participation in rural dwellers of jigawa state is to give poverty adequate attention in order to increase political participation and peaceful atmosphere also reduce electoral violence in Jigawa state and Nigeria in general.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, it could be deduced that, there is a high rate of poverty in the area under study and Nigeria in general; political participation which serves to consolidate democracy and governance to alleviate the menace of poverty has continued to serve the interest of the ruling class to the detriment of the masses which negates the reasons for political participation and democratic principles, Majority of the people which are supposed to be the beneficiaries of government policies and programs on poverty eradication are being manipulated by politicians to ascend to power. The research also reveals that the low political participation side by side whit pervasive poverty in Jigawa State and Nigeria at large has posed a considerable threat to Nigeria's democratization process.

The issue of poverty must be addressed to allow full political participation by the people; democracy does not thrive well in an environment infested with poverty, the findings in this research suggest that democracy cannot not flourish well in Jigawa state where the rate of poverty is high and that the challenge of poverty to the survival of democracy has been monumental raising fear of the possibility of democratic reversal if urgent measures are not taken. Therefore, to consolidate democracy in jigawa state, the

political class must embrace good governance through prudent use of available resources, provision of social amenities and critical infrastructures so as to reduce or eliminate poverty among the people and allow them to participate in the political development of the local government, the state and the country at large.

### Recommendations

From the foregoing, it is pertinently clear that the phenomenon of poverty in Nigeria is a reality tied to the nature and character of the capitalistic Nigerian state, and its criminal elements with modern manifestation of the culture of impunity among the political and ruling class that uses the instrument of poverty to ascend to power. Based on the findings made from the study, the following recommendations are merely proffered.

1. Government should provide employment opportunities, standard and qualitative education and create an effectives and enabling environment for wealth creation aimed at eradicating poverty among the populace.
2. Corrupt politicians should be discouraged from enticing the masses with money to vote for them.
3. People should be allowed to participate in the decisions making process regarding steps taken by government towards eradicating poverty among the people.
4. There should also be a diversification of state or national economy in order to increase the income level of the entire population of the states or nation at large so that people can participate in politics freely.

### Bibliography

- Ajakaiye & Oyster (2002), Overview of the Currant Poverty Eradication in Nigeria. In Jega, A.M. & Wakili, H. (ed), the poverty Eradication Programmers in Nigerians: Problems and Prospects. Kano: Benchmark Publishers Limited.
- Ajane, R. (2016). Violence and politics in Nigeria: The liv and Yoruba Experience. Enugu: Nok Publishers. Ltd.

- Akande, A. (1997). Contributing factors of Poverty in Nigeria: A Comprehensive Approach. Abuja: Longman press.
- Ake, C. (1993). "Is Africa Democratizing". CASS Policy Dialogue Paper
- Akintunde, O & Amaefule, K.W. (2016). The Nigerian Federal Election of 1959. London: OUP
- Albert, 1.0 (2007) "Re-conceptualising Electoral Violence in Nigeria" in Alberts 1.0, Marco, D and Adetula, S, A (eds) Perspectives on the 2003 Elections in Nigeria. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers (Nig) Ltd.
- Almond, G.A (1974). "Political Participation ", in Almond: Barghorn; Ebraman; Perry; Rose; Scott; Townsend (3) Comparative Politics Today: A World View; Canada: Little Brown Company Limited. Ltd.
- Anifowose, R. (2006), Violence in Politics in Nigeria: The Tivi and Yoruba Experience; (2nd ed.), Lagos: First Academic Publisher.
- Babashola, O (1997). Causes and effect of Poverty: The study of Nigeria Lagos: Macmillan Press.
- Barigbon, C.B (2006) Constraints to Sustainable Democracy: Study of Events in Olusegun basanjo's Administration (1999-2005).
- Bello, M. (2017). Inter Governmental Relations in Nigeria and Development. Humanity: Jos Journal of General Studies 3 (1), May.
- Cohen, L. and Manion L. (1989), Research Methods in Education, Edition, London: Routledge
- Croteau, D. (1995) Politics and Class Divide: Working People and Middle Class. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- D.P.M. (2019). Director Personnel Management Dutse Local Government. Jigawa State.
- Dandago, K.I. (2008), Poverty Alleviation Initiatives in Nigeria: Lemp as a Reassuring Alternative Strategy in Duze, M.C. Muhammad, H. And Kiyawa, I. A. (Eds.). Poverty in Nigeria: Causes, Manifestation's and Alleviation Strategies, London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd.
- Dandago, K.I. (2008), Poverty Alleviation Initiatives in Nigeria: Leemp as a Reassuring Alternative Strategy ", in Duze, M.C. Muhammad, H. and Kiyawa, I.A. (Eds.). Poverty in Nigeria: Causes, Manifestation's and Alleviation Strategies, London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd.
- Downs, A. (1957) "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy" .In Ferguson, T. and Rogers, J. (1984) Political Economy: Readings in the Politics and Economics of America Public Policy: New York. M. E. Shar Ltd.
- Duru, O. (2001). Ethnic Politics and Development in Nigeria. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Duyile, D. (2007). Makers of Nigerian Press. Lagos: Gong Communications (Nigeria) Ltd.
- Easton, David (1960). "The Political System". New York: Alfred & Knopf.
- FUD, Student handbook, 2014. Zaria, Kaduna State: Published in Ahmadu Bello University Press Ltd,
- Haralambos, M. (2004). "Poverty and Social Exclusion", in Holborn, M. Heald, R. (6th ends.) Sociology, Themes and Perspectives. London: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd.
- nationalpopulation.gov.ng/2006/censorship
- Ikeagu, J.N. (2006). The Nigerian Politics: Values and Leadership in Nigeria. Zaria: Hadahuda publishing Company Ltd.
- International Crisis Group (2007). Failed Elections, Failing State? Crisis Group African Report, NO. 126, 30 May.
- Malumfashi, S. L. (2008). "Concept of Poverty and its Various Dimensions ", in Duze, M.C. Mohammed, H. and kiyawa, I.A.(eds) Poverty in Nigeria: Causes: Manifestations and Alleviation Strategies, London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd.
- Malumfashi, S. L. (2008). "Concept of Poverty and its Various Dimensions " in Duze, M.C. Mohammed, H. and kiyawa, I.A.(eds) Poverty in Nigeria: Causes: Manifestations and Alleviation Strategies, London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd.

- MCNabb, E.D (2009). Research Methods for political science: Quantitative and Qualitative.
- Nnoli, O. (1986). Introduction to Politics. Nigeria: Macmillan Publishers.
- Nwaobi, G. C. (2003). Solving the Poverty Crisis in Nigeria, An Applied General Equilibrium Approach, Quantitative Economic Research Bureau: Gwagwalada, Abuja.
- Odo, Ozongwu Maurice, (1992), Guide to Proposal Writing in Social and Behavioral Sciences, Enugu Snaap Press Limited.
- Ogunna, A. E. C. (2003). Dynamics of Military and Politics in Nigeria, Owerri: Whyte Publishers.
- Oko, O. (2008). "The Challenges of Democratic Consolidation in Africa. From the Selected Works.
- Okpanachis, Eyene.(2010), " Youth Participation, Citizenship and Development in Nigeria " , in Wakili, H. Mohammed, H.; Aluaigba, M.T. and Ahmad, M(eds.) The Nigerian Youth Political Participation and National Development. Nigeria: Hallmark Publishers Nig. Ltd.
- Okpanachis, Eyene.(2010), " Youth Participation, Citizenship and Development in Nigeria " , in Wakili, H. Mohammed, H.; Aluaigba, M.T. and Ahmad, M(eds.) The Nigerian Youth Political Participation and National Development. Nigeria: Hallmark Publishers Nig. Ltd.
- Omotola, J. S. (2008). Combating Poverty for Sustainable Human Development in Nigeria; the Continuing Struggle. Journal of Poverty 12(4).
- Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (ninth edition), Oxford University Press, London
- Oyemoni, K. (2004). The structure of poverty in Nigeria: A critical Assessment. Ibadan: Longman Press.
- Powell. G.A., Dalton G.B., R.J. and Strom. K. (2004). Cooperative Politics Today : (9th eds)A World View: USA: Pearson International Ltd.
- Samuel, F.c, Ugot, U & Wilfred, F.O. (2002). Poverty and the Nature of Governance in Nigeria: Enugu, Nigeria: John Jacobs Classic Publisher.
- Stevenson, L.(2014).Introduction to development in Nigeria. Makurdi: Longman Group of company.
- Tamaude, T (2003). 'Poverty and Political Participation in Nigeria interface and Consequences. In Kwamashie, M. (Eds), politics and political power relation in Nigeria. (303-313). Lagos: Dates and partners logistics
- Tamori , K. (2016). Participatory Democracy and Development in Nigeria, Nigerian Journal of public Administration and Local Government, 4 ( 1 ), 53
- Taylor, O. (2009). Nigerian Government and Politics under Military Rule. Lagos: Daily Time Publication.
- Yamani, Taro, (1964), Statistics: An Introductory Analysis, New York: Harpes and Row Publishing Limited.
- Visa, D.J.M. (2018). Nigerian Politics and Money. Zaria: Hudahuda Publishing Company