

## **Poverty Trap in Nigeria's Electoral Process: Implementing Alternative Policy Options for Effective Electoral Culture**

**Hafsat KIGBU and Erunke Canice ESIDENE**

Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences,  
Nasarawa State University, Keffi NIGERIA

### **Abstract**

*The main objective of this paper is to examine the nexus between Nigeria's political economy and poverty and how the menace has affected, not only the Nigerian electoral politics generally; but also to interrogate the extent to which the changing nature of the nation's political economy and poverty has impinged on the morality of the vast majority of the teeming populace in the country in relation to the conduct of elections. This paper is a theoretical exploration of the works of scholars and experts in the broader field of democratic elections and poverty questions. The paper relies on secondary sources for data collection. The study discovers that the rising tides of money politics and poverty has has, and will continue to have tremendous impacts on the general psyche of the electorates as well as misguide the good intentions of the principles and letters electoral efficiency, and thereby truncate our nascent democracy if no urgent step in taken to forestall money politics, burgeoning squalor and the ever increasing poverty among the already impoverished electorates in the country.*

**Keywords:** Poverty trap, Election, Culture, Democratic Sustenance

### **Introduction**

Quite a number of political science scholars that have written on elections, electoral culture and the challenges that have continued to fester in Nigeria in relation to credible elections, argue in favor of the increasing incidence of the nation's spiraling political economy and the menace of poverty (Onapajo, Francis & Okeke-Uzodike, 2015). Their theoretical perspectives have hinged on the prevailing debates about the lack of sanity in the nation's electoral and/or democratic system ever since the unfortunate separation that occurred between the erstwhile military dictatorship and the cross pitching of military autocracy to a civilian oligarchy. First, the contention has been that the Nigerian political process is a function of the stability and socioeconomic well-being of the Nigerian electorates and vice versa. The underlying intrigue here is that economic variables such as poverty, ignorance, unemployment, illiteracy and all what nots have constituted themselves into huge albatross standing on the path of sustainable electoral processes. In this circumstance, the defining factor that is common place during electioneering periods is the tendency for the political elites to cash into this kind of economic deficiency and uses the medium as avenue to manipulate the electoral process.

Empirical evidence from the Poverty and Equity Brief (2021) has alluded that poverty in Nigeria is on the rise. Conversely, four persons in every ten Nigeria are at risk of excruciating poverty, while millions more are living below the poverty threshold of less than one (\$1) United States of America dollar per day. The statistics of poverty presented by PEB (2021) has been corroborated by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in its recent national poverty survey index. According to the NBS report, 39.1 percent of Nigerians, inclusive of women and children are said to be currently living below the internationally acclaimed poverty line of \$1.90 per day. This scenario is in view of the devastation of the recent global crunch occasioned by the eruption of corona virus (covid-19) pandemic, the over-dependence on a monolithic oil economy, poor policy structuring/initiation and management as well as the recent global shock arising from the war between Russia and Ukraine in 2022.

From the classic works of Lewis(2006), USAID(2007),Chukwuma(2009) and Ucha (2010) cited in Jaja and Agumagu (2019, argue that as a nation with very impressive socio-economic opportunities as well as abundant natural endowments ranging from oil and gas, bitumen, iron ore, among others, the Nigerian state has hardly faired any better. Consequently, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its reports noted that the nation's crude oil reserves estimated at over 24 billion barrels as well as its ranking as the world's number eight in terms of natural gas endowment has further plunged the Nigerian state into intolerable state of poverty and misery. This is aside from billions of dollars the Nigerian authorities are believed to be raking into the nation's treasury from other sectors ranging from agriculture, the mining sub-sector, maritime, customs, federal road safety agencies and many others. It is in this light that Jaja and Agumagu (2019) have queried that in spite of the enormous natural endowments, both human capital and nature's own benevolence, the nation and its teeming populace remains the most poorest by all standards, with per capita income dangling around \$350 or less. In the context of the foregoing, it can be said that Nigeria presents a paradox of itself as it were, and that poverty at whatever level of analysis can be viewed from the political economy perspective of a state whose inability to tap, harness and utilize its resources (both human capital and natural endowments), has been unarguably the architects of its own misfortune. The multiplier effect of this ugly situation is that rather than building its democratic structures on equitable and credible electoral system, the power elite have continued to feast on the poverty and ignorance of the electorates who are compelled to mortgage their future over a morsel of financial gains in the interim. It is little wonder then that the several scholarly writings have continued to gravitate on the question of stomach infrastructure, money politics, vote buying and all kinds of denigrating sarcasms that rightly or wrongly describe what we are as a people.

This study is divided into four sections. The first section is an expose of the background thesis of poverty in Nigeria. The second phase x-rays conceptual issues in poverty discourse as it patterns to electoral culture and processes. The third section deals with theoretical and ethical issues surrounding electoral maladies, the consolidation and sustenance of viable political cum electoral culture. The last section is the conclusion and recommendations.

**Objectives of the Study:** The general objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between poverty trap and the extent to which the menace could impinge on Nigeria's electoral culture. However, for the purpose of this study, the specific objective is to interrogate the influence of money politics and the consequences of the latter on the political behavior and electoral culture of the electorates during general elections

### **Methodology**

This study is a theoretical exploration of works of experts and scholars in the broader field of political economy studies as it relates to investigations on the effects of poverty on citizens. The study relies on archival materials as method of data collection. The investigations made use of research materials from online journal sources, government gazettes and books.

### **Literature Review**

This section examines existing intellectual views of experts and their perspectives on what constitutes poverty trap in Nigeria, and the extent to which the menace of poverty has impinged on the socioeconomic, political and cultural psyche of the Nigerian people, electoral culture inclusive. In one of his research studies, Danaan (2018) posits that poverty is a social epidemic that has continued to fester in Third World countries (Nigeria inclusive). Danaan (2018) maintain that the enormity of increasing poverty among Nigerian households has continued to linger even though, successive governments have for several decades, attempted to formulate policy interventions aimed at mitigating effects of poverty on the people. Consequently, poverty has become a huge albatross in the country owing to its complex, multidimensional and multifaceted nature, and hence, continue to manifest on the nation's economic, social, political, environmental and even human realm of existence. This means that poverty is ubiquitous, the wave of its occurrence and infestation have hardly been contained using available resource infrastructure, or any other medium of national policy intervention.

On his part, Bhalla and Lapeyre(2016) consider poverty trap differently. According to the duo, poverty trap may be synonymous with social exclusion and social inequality. They contain that a vast majority of citizens in the Third World countries are either excluded from mainstream national framework for poverty reduction, or that the less privileged population is completely sidelined in the distribution of economic gains and commonwealth ,leading to inequality. The challenge with this assumption as proposed by Bhalla and Main (2016) is that government is simply perceived as sole proprietor in the control and distribution of national resources. From all intents and purposes, this notion is largely simplistic, and hence, failed to sufficiently address the important principles of democratic popular will as well as collective interest of the people. Unarguably, the peoples' will and sovereignty is paramount in any democratic environment, and far outweighs individual or personal whims, idiosyncrasy and aggrandizement.

In their analysis, Bradshaw and Main(2016) alluded that the burden of poverty in Africa rests squarely on children rather than all citizens of a nation-state.The argument

here is premised on the fact that most children, and particularly under-aged teenage children in Africa are prone and exposed to homelessness, sexual abuse, destitution, ethnic conflicts and terrorism, among others. This position, again, appears bias, and can hardly address the core questions of poverty and poor electoral culture in emerging societies, and the consequential roles these could play during elections. A number of other scholars have linked poverty trap environmental vulnerabilities and climate change (Thornson, et al, 2006); yet, a lot more others have claimed that social protection and gender inequality may literally define the extent to which poverty could affect individual members of society (Barrientos & Hulme, 2016; Shah, 2016). While this study tend to agree with the position held by economic experts such as Danaan (2018) on the pervasive nature of poverty in Third World countries (Nigeria inclusive), there are other critical issues that have been neglected in his analysis. Unfortunately, the Nigerian state has been greatly influenced by the dynamics of political economy of electoral malfeasance and vote trading or vote buying. It does appear that the culture of human physiological needs and the reality of human survival, which some of the analysts have tactically shied away from, is the central focus of all elections in Nigeria at the moment. In every elections, the common denominator is that the highest bidder gets away with the available opportunities depending on how much financial muscle and influence he or she is able to wield at every point in time. Unarguably, the directions of public elections in Nigeria today is guided and controlled by the nation's political heavy weights and money-bags. This is a serious departure from social, reality and a huge gap that has been left unattended to by some of the writers who merely see the question of poverty trap from a more or less superficial point of view, and hence, would rather choose to deconstruct the nation's peculiarities as regards elections in a more simplistic and inappropriate theoretical expose.

### **Conceptualizing Poverty and Poverty Trap**

In social sciences, many analysts who have come across poverty as a concept have used the concept loosely. To scholar such as Onwuama (2019) the concept could be used to denote the unavailability of sustainable means of income or the lack of it. In another dimension, poverty has been viewed as the absence of basic essentials of man namely; food, clothing and shelter (Chang, 2019). When this happens, the people directly affected are unarguably subjected to emotional torture and their sense of humanity can be threatened. However, the problem with this concept of poverty as put forward by Onwuama and Chang is that it presents itself in a rather simplistic manner. The concept has failed to address itself to the underlying issues bordering on the culture of corruption and the overall political economy of elections in the nation's democratic clime. Jaja and Agumagu had earlier pointed out that poverty in Nigeria finds expression in the adverse socioeconomic conditions of so many Nigerians so much so that it is no longer a 'big deal' to get involved in all kinds of irregularities during elections. The multiplier effect of this attitude is that the core values and processes of elections are largely jettisoned due to lack of economic stability and access on the part of the electorates. On the other hand, poverty trap encompasses those mechanisms created by the power elites to continue to oppress and subject the already impoverished section of the society to poverty. According to Iwara

and Obesam (2021) power elites in Nigeria have deliberately created the gap between their hegemony and those of the wider Nigerian people. To these scholars, lamented that since the emergence of democratic space in 1999, the dominant force in the nation's politics have been the average elite in power. They have gone ahead to subvert, acquiesce and distort the electoral processes using the instrumentality of poverty, wrong policy formulation and hence, sufficiently suffocated every cherished attribute of viable democratic principles one can think of. This challenge is an indication that the system has failed and the only option left for the powers that be is to continue to leverage on the poor moral judgments of the masses and cow them into all kinds of malfeasance to compromise their stance during elections. What happens usually is that a vast majority of Nigerian electorates have been incentivized by power elites to an extent that people have become irrational and ignorant with their votes. This kind of situation has allowed political elites to continue to exploit the people's poverty and illiteracy to mobilize votes with inconsequential food items such as rice, seasoning and paltry sums of money.

***Electoral Process; Towards an understanding:*** Every democratic system the world over, whether developed or developing has a set of procedures and mechanisms upon which political leaders are nominated or elected into representative offices. Othman and Ismaila (2015) have averred that elections and electoral processes are two sides of the same coin. What this implies is that the procedures for elections give rise to elections itself. The two concepts therefore reinforce each other, one against the other. However, one should not confuse the duo concepts as conceptual replacement for the other. It was Dickerson (1990) cited in Othman and Ismaila (2015) who alluded that electoral processes entails all the electoral activities that take place before and after elections without which elections are either considered as impossible or without its true essence. The process of elections, among other things, includes registration and deregistration of political parties, arrangement and organization of registration of voters, printing of electoral materials such as ballot papers, purchase of electronic machines and so on. They also include all laid down extant rules, regulations and ethical codes of conducts guiding the smooth operation of the elections.

***Electoral Culture*** What has come to be known as culture in sociological parlance is a way of life of people within a social system. Culture could be used to represent people's social attributes, ethnic configuration and the general behavioral repertoire. Electoral culture on the other hand is the attitudes of people towards elections. This attitude can be positive or negative. In either of the two extremes, the general outlook of electoral culture in advanced democracies is to be able to operate beyond those factors such as money politics, stomach infrastructure, electoral violence and many other strands of irregularities known to have inhibited democratic re-engineering (Adenekan, 2021). As a corollary to the assertion on poor democratic culture denoted by Adenekan, Jose (2021) has lamented that the nation's democratic trajectory ever since inception in 1999 has continued to show intractable, but avoidable defects in the practice of electoral culture. Among other things, the Nigerian state has demonstrate lack of commitment to democratic ethos through reoccurring incidences of electoral malfeasance, undemocratic behaviors, brigandage, ineptitude, and all kinds of personal idiosyncrasies. Some of these attitudes have literally destroyed the nation's democratic cultures and norms which ordinarily would have

helped to sustain environments for credible and viable electoral revolution. In Nigeria, electoral competitors are believed to have engaged electoral process with all sorts of anti-democratic values and attitudes that largely inhibit the rise to impressive political development. To be sure, and from the point of view of Jose (2021), political culture to a greater or lesser extent, influences the way and manner people see the world around them. Rather than participatory electoral culture, the nation has witnessed all forms of parochialism the result of which produces apathy, cynicism and distrust.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In social science discourses generally, a number of theories have been used and applied as underpinning to discuss and understand issues on elections, democratic consolidation and electoral culture. Most often, scholars adopt and apply theories ranging from prebendalism, elite theory, structural functionalism, systems thinking and a host of others. Some of these theories might be appropriate because of the very essence they are designed to accomplish, and given the prevailing socioeconomic and political epoch at the given time period. For the purpose of this study however, the resource curse theory becomes fashionable, and hence, will be used as a point of departure. The concept was initially coined by Richard Auty way back in 1993. The theory describes how developing countries, though blessed with nature's abundant resources have, through greed and policy somersaults, become the poorest among their peers across the world. According to Onapajo, Francis and Okeke-Uzochike (2012) insist that over-reliance on a monolithic economy where oil resources becomes the centre of attraction could effectively undermine not only the nation's economic growth and development, but also could impede electoral processes and culture.

The centrality of the oil curse thesis, going by empirical examples cited from most Middle-East and African countries who are richly endowed with oil indicates that excessive crave for opportunities by the political class in this kind of system could snowball into oppression, prebendalism and primitive accumulation. To most critics, argue that the pictures painted above clearly represent a perfect example of the Nigerian state. In Nigeria, the rentier posture of the economy has unarguably limited the status of the social class strong enough to pull through the numerous challenges posed by the opportunistic elites. The continuous oppression of the middle class by the elites and the corresponding anti-thesis it produces has degenerated into extreme poverty among the already impoverished army of the poor. There is therefore no gain saying that the vast majority of the masses who have literally no economic muscle to cater for themselves and their immediate families have become stooges in the hands of the political power elites. This no doubt, is the root of poverty and the attendant beleaguered electoral culture which seem to fester in the nation's democratic process and the struggle for nationhood.

### **Poverty Trap and Nigeria's Electoral Process: Implications for Electoral Culture**

Available statistics on Nigeria's poverty index as at 2021 indicates that the overall poverty head count rate has skyrocketed. According to Olawoyin (2022) and citing the World Bank demographic survey (2021), the number of Nigerians who are poor is estimated to hit over

95 million citizens by 2022. Although, many analysts have alluded to the fact that the covid-19 has played significant role in the current poverty index, a situation where the entire global economic system was affected by lockdown and many other restrictions to international capital mobility. A corresponding argument has it that there appears to have been a huge gap between how to manage challenges of the pandemic and the political will to weather the storm brought about by the emerging scourge of the corona virus pandemic. Be that as it may, either of the two extremes-covid-19 and economic policy deficiencies and distortions have both congealed to stir up the prevailing pandoras box!

From the earlier works of Kareem and Lawal (2017) maintain that there appears to be hardly any meaningful socioeconomic transformation and change in the nation's economy ever since the inception of Nigeria democracy in May 29,1999. Their assertion is hinged on the fact that poverty has been on the increase, and finds expression on the depreciating human development index of the nation, increasing rate of illiteracy, rising insecurity, electoral malpractices, misgovernance, among others. Conversely, the speed with which poverty has taken across the nation, and among the citizens (electorates), it only incumbent on the system to use this as a launch pad to manipulate the collective conscience of the people. This tendency has had very devastating consequences on the nation's democratic, nay electoral process. However, from the many scholarly writings available in public domain, it is not clear the extent of controversies accruing to this. Nonetheless, it can also be said that the maladies of poverty in the nation could unleash distortions on the democratic processes. In Nigeria, it does appear that the rain of godfatherism and money politics has greatly impinged on the smooth conduct and integrity of the electorates. The apparent paradigm shift by Nigerians towards pecuniary gains as well as the ineptitude and leadership crisis that has permeated the political terrain with its boomerang effects have adverse ripples on the nation's electoral system. So, at the local, state and federal levels of political representation, the story goes in the same direction. In the early writings of Akindele (2005)Omodia (2007) and Ochulo (2011) the respective organs of government as cited above have become available platforms for political misgivings and electoral corruption. It was Momoh (2005) cited in Kareem and Lawal (2017) who lamented that the impacts of poverty on the nation's electoral process are grievous. He went further to point out that electoral system in Nigeria is characterized essentially by a number of corrupt tendencies ranging from multiple registration of voters, hoarding of ballot papers, illicit use of security personnel to intimidate electorates, vote buying, impersonation, and all what nots. All of these attitudes affect the electoral procedure one way or the other. As if that is not enough, Ayoade (2008), Walfure 2012 and Iro (2012) have gone ahead to decry the unfortunate scenario created by poverty. To these scholars, most ad hoc staff recruited for electoral jobs have become crazy for 'quick cash'. Some of them have been used by the political class as agent of destabilization and corruption. The 'boys' who mostly are young graduates from higher institutions of learning in the country such as universities, among others, and without gainful employment, have become avenues for corrupt practices during elections.

### **Poverty Trap and its Implications on Nigeria's Electoral Culture**

As stated earlier in this paper, the squalid nature of the greater majority of the Nigerian populace largely defines the direction of the electoral conditions and momentum of the nation's democracy. Obafemi (2014) had earlier claimed that in the Nigerian political landscape, poverty is essentially the most overriding factor whenever general elections or election at the grassroots are being conducted. During this period in question, the assumption is that major contenders and/or political parties in the political game run head to head, one against another. It follows logically that such parties with the most glaring and assuring financial gains wins the respect, legitimacy and supports of the poor electorates. The implication of this is the ensuing trade off of votes and consciences of the electorates whose overall interest and focus is on the immediate pecuniary gratifications rather than what the future holds for the people. Again, when the poor sell their will and individual conscience on the altar of immediate gain, everything about dividends of democracy and development concerns, whether critical infrastructures or otherwise, are compromised (Chika, 2004). The adverse multiplier effects on the nation's democratic system is that democracy itself is stifled and assaulted. To many scholars, the circumstances of poverty graduates to what is called 'money politics' and what critics refer sarcastically as stomach infrastructure. In either of the two extremes, money seems to have greatly influenced the behaviors and attitudes of the voting public, especially the poor. According to Davies (2006) the question of money has continued to play increasing role so much so that the only language people (electorates) understand in today's political currency is money. Thus from the twilight of democratic experimentation since May 29, 1999, money politics has reigned supreme over and above other considerations. Again, poverty leads to selling of votes by the electorates. In its literal connotation, when vote buying occurs, the poor sell and exchange their future. In Nigeria, and due to this singular fact of electoral marketplace exchange, it is obviously difficult for the 'sellers' of votes to seek or subject their respective representatives or hold them accountable for any form of misgovernance.

According to Suberu (2001) poverty gives rise to indecency and shamefulness. What this means is the comportment and integrity of voters are simply thrown to the winds, while all forms of electoral maladministration holds sway. Buttressing the position put forward by Suberu (2001), Obasanjo (2005) cited in Jaja and Agumagu (2019) lamented that when the political space is highly bastardized and compromised in a nation such as Nigeria, the greatest losers are the same poor. To this end, the question of sovereignty and popular will is at risk. Again, poverty breeds political materialism as opposed to politics of ideas, accountability, probity and overall socio-economic and political development.

### **Combating poverty for an enhanced electoral culture in Nigeria**

From the foregoing analysis on the challenges of poverty and how the same affects the overall integrity of elections and the electoral process, one thing that is common in the ensuing narrative is the malady of poverty. Unarguably, what has been found in this study points to the fact that aside from the lack of adequate sustenance on the part of the Nigerian people, the dearth of integrity is another obstacle. Again, the continuous as well as



inordinate quest to satisfy human existentials of life stares every voter and the Nigerian masses in the face. What can be done at the moment is for relevant government agencies to muster adequate political will to go on a reverse gear, examine their respective moral consciousness and allow the process to experience a fair share of openness, accountability and probity. Accordingly, with the kind of frenzy that greets every other general election in Nigeria, everyone – politicians and the electorates should realize and understand that circumvention of every right thinking channels for democratic an electoral consolidation is an aberration to democratic culture. In the words of Kelechukwu (n.d) elections should provide opportunity for the electorates to peruse and ascertain the veracity or otherwise of political office, holder, and not avenue for deceit. It is, again, a period where those seeking public offices should be at the mercies of the electorates. The latter groups should be seen as supervisors and superintendents to persons or groups clamoring for representation.

While we conveniently advocate for a turnaround maintenance on the policy framework of government as it affects the well-being of Nigerians through adequate provision of existential-job opportunities, housing, food, security checks and all what nots. The need to disabuse the minds of people who largely suffer from the poverty of ignorance is uppermost. It is in the view of this study that ignorance itself lies at the heart of the nation's democratic and/or electoral processes. When people do not know or understand the enormity of their actions and how elections and representative democracy works, they are confined to think and believe that immediate pecuniary interests are good enough. And from what we have seen and witnessed in Nigeria, the political class who literally 'buy' over the heart and minds of the electorates during elections hardly, or at best, do not come back to the people they govern to account for their stewardship. They only come around their constituencies once in every four years during election periods to continue the political gaming from where they had stopped.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has examined the relationship between the Nigerian political economy, poverty and the sustenance of Nigeria's electoral culture. What has been discovered in this paper is that though, there is increasing rate of poverty in the country, the aspect of ignorance is uppermost. In the course of this investigation, a number of statistical analyses available to us prove that the electorates can barely survive in the face of biting inflation, poverty, food shortages, insecurity and many other factors. From the political economy point of view, the absence or lack of provision for the people tend to have devastating effects in no small measure. To this end, people have decided to engage themselves in all forms of fraud, corruption and misgivings as part of survival strategies. Vote selling and vote buying have become a major imprint in the nation's democratic space. Unfortunately, the electoral integrity has remains abysmally low, while electoral culture has gradually diminished.

What the system can do is to enunciate policies and policies good enough to address the disturbing trends of poverty and ignorance in the country. These policies and programmes should specifically be directed at the grassroots. The latter houses an army of the forsaken electorates who only meet their representatives once in a blue moon!

Therefore designing such social and economic policies that are basically pro-poor will do the needful. Besides, there is need to build and strengthen the nation's jurisprudence and legal system. This can be done by ensuring that the rule of law is effectively in place and running. Again, elections should be run by professionals who are sufficiently versed or grounded in the techniques, principles and philosophies of elections. When this happens, people at the grassroots will have adequate training and orientation that clearly inform and educate their sub-conscious minds. They will also be aware that vote selling is like opening a Pandora's box, the contents of which could have adverse socioeconomic and environmental effects, with the poor masses suffering the consequences the most. Moreover, government, and indeed, all stakeholders in the nation's democratic process should synergize and frown at all forms of greed, 'winner-takes-all' syndrome, remove barriers that inhibits or prevents free consent-based voting. Besides this, the electorates should be sensitized and allowed to vote public office holders known to possess the needed charisma, drive and passion to lead. Lastly, and certainly not the least of the suggestions, there is need for the civil society groups to advocate and supervise the illicit flow of unchecked public or private funds into the mainstream politics. The arbitrary flows of monies have been known to stifle the Nigerian electoral process. Voters essentially lose focus whenever monies are displayed by desperate politicians at polling centers, or even periods preceding elections. It has been discovered that this kinds of development has the capability to change people's behavior and compel voters to begin to go towards the wrong candidates jostling for public offices. This call has become very critical and urgent in the face of corruption and corrupt practices that has become part of the electoral values. There is therefore the dire need for civil society organizations, especially those within the auspices of good governance and anti-corruption. These categories of CSOs can get involved in the democratic and electoral activities of their respective domains and ensure that voters do the right thing. Implementing all of the aforementioned can help to resuscitate our common sense of reasoning, integrity and inconclusive democratic and electoral process with greater multiplier effects on the overall electoral culture of the people.

## References

- Adenekan, S. (2021) "Omo-Agege, Jega, others canvass improved election culture in Nigeria" *Premium Times*, September 1.
- Akindele, S.T. (2005) A critical analysis of corruption and its croblems in Nigeria. *Anthropologist* 7(1): 7-18.
- Bhalla,A.S.; & Lapeyre,F.:(2016) Poverty and exlusion in a global wolrd.Springer.
- Bradshaw,J.;& Main,G.:(2016)Child poverty and deprivation:The well-being of children in the UK,31
- Barrientos,A.; & Hulme,D.:(2016)Social protection for the poor and the poorest:Concepts,policies and politics.Springer.
- Ayoade, J.A. (2008) God fathers politics in Nigeria. money and politics in Nigeria, IFES: Nigeria.
- Chen, J. (2019) Poverty. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms>
- jJonjChika, N.O. (2004). Poverty, social policy, and women participation in the Nigerian democratic process. In Michael, O.M. (ed) *Challenges and prospects of democratization in Nigeria* Nsukka: Multi-Educational Services Trust.

- Davies, A.E (2006) Money and politics in the Nigerian electoral process: A memo of the Department of Political Science, University of Ilorin-Ilorin.
- Iro, I.U. (2012) The politics of poverty alleviation in a democratic Nigeria. In Otaki, O.A. (Ed.), *Studies in Political Sociology*, Abuja: Chartered Graphic Press.
- Ismaila, Y. & Othman, Z. (2015) Challenges of electoral processes in Nigeria: quest for democratic governance in the Fourth Republic. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5(22).
- Iwara, M.A., & Obasesam, O. (2021) The failure of governance in Nigeria: An epistocratic challenge. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* (No volume and page numbers).
- Jaja, J.M. & Agumatu, J. (2019) Stomach infrastructure: The poverty of the Nigerian electorates. *African Research Review*, 13(4).
- Jose, B. (2021) "Decline of values and political culture in Nigeria". *The Nation*. December 12.
- Kareem, A.O. & Lawal, M.O. (2017) Poverty and democratization process in Nigeria: Lessons from the Fourth Republic. *Journal of Management and Social Sciences*. No volume and number.
- Kelechukwu, O. (n.d) Consolidating democracy in Nigeria: The need to promote electoral integrity <https://www.civiens.org>.
- Obafemi, O. (2014) Poverty and voting behaviour: The Nigerian case. *Sahara Reporters*. August 8.
- Ochulo, G.I., Metuonu, I.C. & Asuo, O.O. (2011) Corruption in Nigeria: Historical perspective. *Review of African Political Economy*, 23 (69): 371-386.
- Olawoyin, O. (2022) Number of poor people in Nigeria to reach 95 million in 2022 – World Bank. *Premium Times*, March, 30.
- Omodia, S.M. (2007) Poverty, alienation and sustainable democracy in Nigeria: A case of Keffi town in Keffi local government area of Nasarawa State, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Abuja.
- Onapajo, H., Francis, S., & Ufo, O.U. (2015) Oil corrupts elections: The political economy of vote buying in Nigeria: *African Studies Quarterly*, vol 15 (2).
- Onwuama, E.M. (2019) Impact of poverty on political choices in the 2019 Nigeria general election. *International Journal of Academic Research in Public Policy & Governance*, vol 6(1).
- Poverty and Equity Brief (2021) Africa western and central Nigeria. *National Bureau of Statistics* (2019).
- Shah, M.K.; (2016) The myth of community: Gender issues in participatory development. ITGB.
- Suberu, R.T. (2001) *Federalism and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria*. Washington: United States Institute for Peace.
- Thornton, P.K.; Jones, P.G.; Owiyo, T.; Kruska, R.; Herrero, M.; Kristjanson, P.; ... Omolo, A.; (2006) Mapping climate vulnerability and poverty in Africa.
- Walfure, O.G. (2012) Democracy, good governance and economic development: Nigerian Experience. In Otaki, O. (Ed.), *Studies in Political Sociology*, Abuja: Chartered Graphic Press.

### Biographical Note

**Hafsat KIGBU** is a lecturer with the Department of Political Science, Nasarawa State University, Keffi. Her area of academic research interest is International Relations. Hafsat has published in both national and international journals.

**Canice Erunke ESIDENE PhD**, is an Associate Professor of Political Science, in the Department of Political Science, Nasarawa State University, Keffi Nigeria. He has a special interest in Public Policy as his core area of specialization. Dr Canice is a member of several scholarly professional organizations including, the Nigerian Political Science Association (NPSA), Social Science Academy of Nigeria (SSAN); American Association of International

Researchers under Political Science Forum(USA),Global Association for Humanities and Social Science(Thailand),International Association of Educators and Researchers(United Kingdom among others. Dr Canice is widely published in both national and internationally referred academic journals.Email:erunke@gmail.com