

# The Nexus Between Poverty And Violence In The Society: The Nigerian Experience

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*Abstract: This paper analyzes the eruption of some overt and covert forms of violence in Nigeria and how offensive economic, intellectual and psychological dimensions of poverty have been connected to them. Since Nigerian independence, the country seems to tilt more towards a theatre of war than peace, development and cohesion. From the electoral violence in the western Nigeria in 1962, to the Nigerian Biafran civil war between 1967 to 1970, as well as other scores of religious and ethnic violence between 1970 and 1999. At the return of civilian rule in 1999, come the Sharia crises, the Niger Delta struggle, the Boko Haram terrorists and the Biafran uprisings which have claimed thousands of lives and unquantifiable property. All these violence have direct connection with dimensions of poverty arising in Nigeria. They are bringing Nigerian existence to the edge of precipice.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Lately, there are at least four issues that have passionately dominated public discourse in Nigeria with their attendant misgivings. Probably, in a saner clime, they would not generate these heights of misgivings. These issues are the Biafra agitations, the horrible economic recession, President Muhammad Buhari's health and the "restructuring" of Nigerian state. These factors have heated up Nigerian socio political environment and they have connections with levels and dimensions poverty in Nigeria. The issues of poverty and violence have continued to attract debates among many people depending on their leanings. Some have taken the position that poverty on its own cannot cause conflict while others think otherwise. With strong emphasis on Nigerian state, this study briefly analyses the correlation between poverty and violence in Nigeria. It then considers how some variables such as deprecating religiosity, economic, political, clueless governance structures, unequal access and distribution of social amenities, economic resources and ethnicity have contributed to the connection between poverty and violence. All these are readily fuels for destructive violence that has been the lots of Nigerian fragile state. However, there is need to define and explain the terms in the study.

## II. CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

*Nexus*: can simply be understood as the complex connection between different things. *Poverty*: has many definitions and perspectives depending on how it is viewed. Poverty in this study simply stands for extreme economic poverty where people are living in an environment that lacks adequate food security, shelter, clean water, sanitation, basic health service, literacy and basic income. *Violence* can be understood from the multidimensional aspect and this includes violent conflicts such as terrorism, civil war, riots, genocide, communal clash and criminal attacks. Violence can be explained as an action or behaviour that intends to hurt or kill somebody. *Society* can be described as an organized group of persons associating together with the aim of achieving economic, religious, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political, patriotic or other purposes. It is a voluntary association of individuals who desire common ends. *Nigeria* according to Amanambu (2017), is a name given by Flora Shaw, who later became the wife of Lord Lugard, the first Nigerian Colonial Governor-General (p.3). Nigeria can be briefly defined as the conglomerates of nations that were amalgamated into one country in 1914 but on 1st October, 1960, it gained political independence from Britain. *Experience* has also different entries but for the purpose of this work, it considered as event

or activity which affects somebody or something in some ways.

Contextually, the Nexus between Poverty and Violence in the Society: the Nigerian Experience means expounding on how the lack of means of meeting basic needs of an individual or groups' have connected, related, correlated, influenced and turned their actions and activities into destructive agenda against themselves and Nigeria in general. It analyses the dangerous and destructive implications of denying people the reasonable and meaningful means of livelihood to the society.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Frustration-Aggression and the Relative Deprivation Theories

According to Crossman (2014), the Frustration-Aggression theory tells us that social movements occur when frustration leads to collective aggressive behaviour. He states that frustration-aggression and relative deprivation theories have variety of sources but can take two forms. The first form happens when people do not have enough resources to survive on. The second form happens relatively when people have enough to survive but have less than those around them. The theory has strong link with sociologist Samuel A. Stouffer (1900–1960) who is credited with developing relative deprivation theory after the Second World War. Frustration-aggression and Relative Deprivation theories argue that individuals will become aggressive when there are perceived or real impediments to their path to success in life and meeting their material basic needs. These theories are adopted in this study because they focus on feelings and actions of an individual or groups when certain rights, privileges and expectations are seemed or realistically denied. They advocate the exploration of an individual's or groups' feelings when deprived of the means to livelihood and the likely results from comparing their situations with a referent person or persons. Above all, they support the thesis that poverty is concerned with violent activities in a society.

### IV. UNDERSTANDING SOME PERSPECTIVES ON POVERTY

Probably, the best way to understand and explain the horrible nature of poverty may be for one to experience its scourge. This is because, it is difficult to judge a situation which an individual has not been into. According to the United Nations Human Development Report (1998), poverty is defined as a complex phenomenon that generally refers to inadequate resources and deprivation of choices that would enable people enjoy decent living conditions (p.8). It is the denial of human rights relating to the fulfillment of basic human needs. There are people who believe that the poor people are the cause of their poverty. They based their arguments on the notion that anything is possible in life. There are others who have reasoned that the poor people often have little concern for the future and preferred to live for the moment while few others have accused them of engaging in self-defeating behaviour. Still others have characterized the

poor as fatalists, resigning themselves to a culture of poverty. Poverty usually provokes strong emotions, many questions and often tilts towards the negative dimension. Poverty is not necessarily economical but according to Ogugua (2012) it can be intellectual, spiritual, social, mental and psychological (p.415). All the perspectives on the concept of poverty seem to agree that poverty has connection with hunger, lack of medical care, marginalization, denial of human rights, limited or no access to the fulfillment of basic human needs such as adequate and nutritious food, clothing, housing, clean water and health services. Hence, the dimensions of poverty shall be succinctly discussed.

### V. APPRAISING THE DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY IN NIGERIA

To understand the dimensions of poverty in Nigeria the following shall be considered:

*Marginal poverty:* This can be referred to as the economic status or condition of a family or person whose income is insufficient to meet its basic needs. In this case, it can be argued that overwhelming majority of Nigerians is marginally poor. For example, between 1999 and 2015 Nigerians were buying a bag of rice between five and seven thousand naira (7,000) with the minimum wage of eighteen thousand naira (18,000). Today, a bag of rice is sold for about twenty five thousand (25,000) naira yet the workers are still receiving the minimum wage of eighteen thousand (18,000) naira. Of course, with this, Nigerians are no more meeting up with their basic needs and there is aggression in the land.

*Successive/Generational poverty:* It occurs in a situation where families of at least two generations have been born into poverty. The obvious example is a situation where some families in some communities have not produced an economic entrepreneur or a graduate even after three generations of their existence. Those families living in this type of poverty are not equipped with the right tools to walk out of poverty.

*Intellectual poverty:* Intellectual poverty happens when one stops asking rational questions and loses inquisitiveness. This occurs when people arrogantly believe that they know more than they actually know. It occurs when people cannot learn anything new. Meanwhile, according to UNICEF (2015), no fewer than 10.5 million Nigerian children are out of school. Nothing else could have taken these children out of school if not poverty. Intellectual poverty occurs when people cannot cognitively decipherer reasonably between wrong and right.

*Social poverty:* Human beings are basically social animals and an individual's action hardly affects the individual alone but as a social being, it affects others. Social poverty happens when (for whatever reason) a person cannot socially get along with other members of the society.

*Offensive economic poverty:* Arguably, this dimension of poverty is why Nigerian is grouped into the third world or later developing nations. This involves all the above dimensions especially the scarcity of such necessities as rewarding jobs, payment of bills, shelter, clean water and food. People who live in absolute poverty tend to focus on daily survival. Arguably, it is this dimension of poverty that actually gives birth to other forms of poverty.

## VI. SOME MAJOR CAUSES OF POVERTY IN NIGERIA

Poverty is largely a man made problem and it is an exceptionally complicated social phenomenon. Sometimes, trying to discover its causes is equally complicated, however, the following causes of poverty in the context of Nigeria shall be considered.

*Dependence on oil/National Cake Mentality:* In Nigeria, the major source of government revenue is the crude oil. The revenue accruing from this oil apart from the 13% derivation given to the oil producing states, the other monies are shared between the federal government, states and local government areas while there are others that are shared by other few individuals through the allocation of "oil block". In view of the forgoing, many Nigerians especially politicians depend wholly on this oil revenue for everything. It is referred to as the "national cake" and because of that, politics becomes the most lucrative career in Nigeria. This is because anybody who secures the political offices secures the platform for the allocation of these oil resources is idolized. With this type of mentality, Nigerian rulers have lost their creativity rather they are only champions at allocation and siphoning of oil money. The uneven allocation of these state resources and without concrete effort at broadening other economic spaces, many Nigeria will remain poor.

*Debt Burden:* Debt burden has contributed to Nigeria's developmental failures and Nigerian rulers have unquenchable thirst and flare for borrowing. Hence, the debt portfolio which was slightly above US \$14.28 billion dollars in 1980 rose to about \$30 billion in the year 2000. Through the acumen of Dr Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, the debt was cancelled but according to Amaefule and Femi (2017), by March 2017, the debt has skyrocketed to 19.16 trillion naira. The servicing of this debt has encroached on the volume or resources needed for socio-economic development in Nigeria. The high debt service ratio has adversely affected the provision of public infrastructure and utilities such as hospitals, schools, roads, power supply and potable water.

*Unemployment and under-employment:* Olawoyin (2017) notes that Nigeria is presently facing its worst economic recession in thirty years. In December 2016, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said the country's unemployment rate rose from 13.3 per cent to 13.9 per cent. Underemployment occurs because of the fact that many offices are allocated base on tribe and religion instead of merit and competence. Poverty manifests where there is unemployment, underemployment and deterioration of social infrastructures. Part of the reasons why many people are unemployed are because many factories are not working and the few that are struggling to work are not working to full capacity. All these have led to the retrenchment of many workers. Those who escaped retrenchments find it increasingly difficult to receive their salaries at the end of the month. Some employers including governments sometimes owe their workers' salaries for many months or sometimes years. This has contributed to the terrible and alarming rate of suicide in Nigeria.

*Deprecating Religiosity:* Most of Nigerians are contented with what they understand from their sacred books and their religious leaders. Many pastors and Imams inject laziness in

the minds of the worshippers through uncritical sermons. Even those who attempt to rationally probe further often do it by disparaging other faiths while magnifying theirs. Of course, knowledge, reason and wisdom are incompatible with dogmatic religious ideologies. Deprecating religion is confining people's minds in the dark of ignorance and those who are in search of the light of truth are being condemned. In this way, deprecating religion keeps people blind by all sorts of beliefs that are not based on any factual or experiential evidence. There are many challenges facing Nigeria and her citizens which demand physical actions to handle but many Nigerians sleep in their houses, churches, mosques, night vigil, religious conventions and other religious activities because of these challenges.

Majority of Nigerians are made to pray for a solution on everything. Most Nigerians believe that everything is caused by the evil spirits. If the police and other security agencies arrest them, they attribute it to the evil spirit. For example, according to Seun (2017), the personal Assistant to President Muhammadu Buhari on Social Media, Lauretta Onochie, accused the political elites in Nigeria of travelling as far as India and Niger Republic to hire soothsayers and marabouts Pastors to pray for the death of Buhari (p.4). This assertion was probably made to placate the president and his ardent cohorts but it has brought the faith of the president and his followers to ridicule. It seems that their God could no longer answer prayer or defend him. Otherwise why should she fidget because the gods of India and Niger? Has the *triumphalistic* religiosity of Nigeria diminished? Nigerian will blindly and subjectively vote a mediocre into then turn back to pray for him or her to be directed by God.

*Clueless Governance and leadership:* Every year politicians make empty promises of eradicating poverty in Nigeria. They vote out monies that hardly get to the people. Hillerbrand (1968) notes that before the Reformation, the body of clergy lived in colossal luxury and splendor which was a paradox of a church whose purpose should have been to minister the spiritual needs of its flock. Luther offered an alternative that was appealing and the German peasants in the land flocked to Luther's camp. Even when Luther was not disposed to the revolution and wished to avoid social rebellion as seen in his An Admonition to Peace, the masses forced the revolution on him (pp. 62-90). The above situation has not changed either and in the Nigerian case, Achebe (1983) categorically said that the problem with Nigeria is simply and squarely failure of leadership (p.1).

Leadership problem in Nigeria cuts across every type and strata of leaders. There has been an unwanted disconnect between the leaders and the people which has provided the masses with the only alternative of resorting to violence. Naturally, people tend to defend where their interests are provided. The insatiable quests of these rulers to siphon the national patrimony have beclouded their sense of responsibilities thus creating the avenue for uneven distribution of the nation's wealth. Many of these politico-economic bourgeois build mansions and allowed cockroaches and weeds to inhabit them while a large percentage of the people live under the bridges and public motor parks. While most of the people are living without meals, many of these economic and political rulers eat and throw their leftovers into

the dustbin to show off their status. While many Nigerians are queuing for the problem-prone public transports to catch up with official appointments, these few rulers have all classes of vehicles in their garages and sometimes including jets which they will not finish using all in their life time. Generally, leadership is responsible for whatever happens in any society including the creation and maintenance of poverty. Confucius argues that “in a country well governed, poverty is something to be ashamed of. In a country badly governed, wealth is something to be ashamed of.”

*Systemized Corruption:* Awajiusuk (2014) defines corruption as generally anything that is debased, putrefied, degenerated from original value or state. It is the misuse and abuse of office and trust, using position or office to influence people for personal or group advantage. It is giving and taking of kickbacks, payoffs, palm greasing, bribery, forgery and embezzlement. He identifies the categories of corruption to include political, electoral and bureaucratic corruption. Corruption in Nigeria is mainly caused by extreme love for materialism, naked greed, over emphasis on paper qualification and other practices that have taken the place of honesty, norms and decorum (p.131). The systemized corruption means that malpractice and shortchange are instituted and freely allowed as a culture. Paradoxically, many agencies are created to checkmate corruption in Nigeria but they have been repeatedly accused of re-looting the seized and forfeited assets. Soniyi (2012) notes that the Global Financial Integrity reveals that between 2004 and 2015, the Nigerian rulers have looted over \$1 trillion that accrued to the country from the crude oil making over 80 percent of the population to lack access to drinking water, roads and basic health care services and functional education (p.9). Corruption cripples system, encourages impunity and makes people see violence as virtue thus making the country prone to poverty because prosperity thrives in the atmosphere of peace.

*Offensive Policies:* In Nigeria and perhaps as in some other limes, politics determines everything. It has been generally agreed that leadership defines the actual state of things. Even when many analysts will raise eyebrows and question its reports, however, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reluctantly released the unemployment statistics in Nigeria and it showed that Nigeria has the highest unemployment rate in the world. This statistics could not have been in this astronomical dimension if the economic policies of Nigeria are well defined, studiously coordinated and implemented. The soundness of policies determines the extent of people's access to good living. For example, Nwabughio (2016) said that Nigerian budget for the year 2016 was N6.06 trillion. But Sheriff (2017) notes that in the same 2016, the country has spent over N4.74tn on the importation of premium motor spirit (fuel) alone and this is the paradox of a country that adjudged to be the largest producer of crude in oil in Africa and the sixth in the world. Oxfam (2017) states in a study that the combined wealth of five richest Nigerians estimated at about \$29.9 billion could end extreme poverty in the country. The report argues that the economic inequality is a key factor in the conflict in the country. Oxfam International also revealed that Nigeria's richest man earned eight thousand times (8,000) times more in one day than a poor Nigerian would spend on basic needs in a year. The offensive policies

of the state keep majority of the citizens offensively poor while the few rich are made to get richer. Unarguably, when people are not working the poverty rate is doubled.

*Adverse Natural Occurrences:* This aspect of poverty is generally caused by a sudden crisis or loss and is often temporary and it is sometimes beyond human being. Factors and events causing natural poverty include environmental disasters such as earthquake an volcano. Also divorce of couple can cause poverty for children and severe health problems.

*Violence, Conflicts and War:* The Nigerian Biafran war arguably could have escalated poverty in Nigeria. This is because both Nigeria and Biafra have to pay and import arms and ammunition. No country doles out ammunitions and weapon free. Execution of wars cost money and resources. What is used in executing the war could have built many airports, seaports, industries among others and many will be employed thereby alleviating poverty. The violence across Nigeria especially the Fulani herdsmen's onslaughts, the Biafra struggles and Boko Haram terrorism have also destroyed both lives and property and then crippled general development. Taken that there is an aspect of poverty that cause violence, the fact is that violence and war are sure path to all kinds of poverty.

*Insecurity and Absence of Social Amenities:* There is no gainsaying of the fact that insecurity scares away investors and disquiets general existence of the people. When people do not have confidence in their environments, they will contribute less or nothing to its development. Nigeria is bedeviled by the absence of social amenities such as motor able roads and functional power supply. In this type of environment, the people cannot develop to their zenith. When people are not contributing to the social development, poverty will set in.

*Laziness:* In this context, laziness stands for people who are unwilling to do anything to salvage their situations. This is one of the serious causes of poverty for many Nigerians today. Many Nigerians want to be rich and comfortable but many are not ready to work for it. In most families, many people depend on one or two bread winners for their upkeep. Hence, the death of a bread winner means the death of the whole family's fortunes.

*Faulty Educational System:* Education can play crucial role in reducing poverty. Functional education is central to development. It promotes economic growth, national productivity, innovation, values of democracy and social cohesion. In Nigeria, the population with no functional education account for most of the poor. The educational system in Nigeria can be regarded as a failure when compared to other countries in the world. The United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to education.” This right to education has been denied to many Nigerians and few that are opportune to study often are preoccupied with the desire of acquiring certificates so as to partake in the accumulation of national cake.

## VII. DANGEROUS IMPACTS OF POVERTY IN NIGERIA

The effects of poverty cannot be overemphasized. One serious problem created by poverty is that it reproduces

horrible effect that in turn contributes to another. Its effects are seemingly endless cascade of deleterious consequences. With limited access to adequate and affordable medical care, people especially children may experience cognitive or emotional problems, *retardedness*, mental illness or depression, shame, denial and personality disorder. The dangerous impacts of poverty can further be group thus:

*Poverty creates Hunger and Anger:* poverty makes most families to find it difficult to feed themselves or cater for other essential needs such as food, shelter, clothing and healthcare. Poverty especially its absolute or offensive dimension can lead to extreme hunger, starvation, malnutrition and anger among the people. "A hungry man" they say "is an angry man".

*Poverty Diminishes Values:* Due to the pathetic scenario of poverty, family norms and values have collapsed across the country. It contributes to the reason why people indulge in social vices such as drugs, prostitution and petty crimes. They exhibit all these unwanted behaviour as means to meeting their immediate needs

*Poverty promotes the Abuse of Human Person:* The Nigerian state seems to be in a siege because kidnappers are having free days, arm robbers and the Fulani herdsmen mindless and needless killing are all largely targeting the defenceless and poor people in Nigeria. Apart from these, most of the security agencies complete the abuse cycle with harassment, intimidation and even killing those they are paid to secure. A clearer example is that Nigerian Road Safety officials (FRSC) will not stop rich men or top government officials on the road even if they break the traffic rules. But they serially humiliate the poor and defenceless drivers for trivial issues. Many times they are dehumanized because they could not resist. For minor and little offences, they are hounded and kept perpetually under awaiting trial. Many Nigerians were shocked on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2017 when Senate President Bukola Saraki was discharged and acquitted at the Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT) of the false assets declaration charge preferred against him by the federal government. Okakwu (2017) said that there were one hundred and six (106) lawyers and over five Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SANs) in the defense team of Senate President Bukola Saraki (p.5). The cost of mobilizing these lawyers to court in one sitting alone can fix at least ten kilometers road in Nigeria. He acquired the best of legal team and service because of his wealth. Imagine the level of embarrassments and humiliations poor Nigerian go through in the hands of security agencies and other actors!

*Poverty makes people vulnerable to diseases:* UNICEF (2015) disclosed 90 per cent of child diseases in Nigeria were as a result of malnutrition. Nigeria's infant mortality rate has been estimated to be currently 99 per 1000 births which implies that Nigeria has the thirteenth highest infant mortality rate in the world. When people feed badly and have no access to adequate healthcare, they suffer vulnerability to diseases and death.

*Sometimes Poverty Creates Rebellious Associations.* Amanambu (2017) argues that one of the reasons why the masses rallied behind the Usman dan Fodio's jihad was because most of them cannot fend for their families and when Usman dan Fodio gave them meals, they wholeheartedly followed him (p.159). When grievances are not met, the poor

and deprived in the society will riot, question the leadership as well and even join rebel groups. When a person feels he/she has no stake in social dividends, the person works against it. A person who is well paid in an office or has a rewarding business cannot cause an uprising in the society. Poverty makes people congregate in a particular environment like ghetto. In this place, the people are more prone to violence. Apart from other ills, poverty breeds anger, hatred, envy and conflict in any social system.

## VIII. UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

Violence being a social phenomenon is used in varying contexts but mostly indicating the infliction of harm upon person and individuals. Arguably, violence appears to be inescapable aspect of human existence. It underlies institutional and social practices in contemporary society. It can take many forms but some of them are overt while others are covert. Probably, that is why most of Nigerian security agencies when dealing with civilian unrest claim they use of "reasonable, minimum and acceptable force". These terms under certain circumstances and within certain culturally defined norms have long been deemed appropriate. However, what constitutes these levels of force in one clime may not necessarily apply in another. The question of when it is or is not permissible to use force differs from various culture and schools of thought. Ross (2004) informs us that it is dependent upon subjectivities that may be born of a variety of social, political, ideological and religious influences (p.1). One would like to know when violence is deemed appropriate and reasonable and when does its use pose a problem for individuals, communities and the environment?

## IX. SOME CAUSES OF VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

Arguably, no single factor can explain the causes of violence in Nigeria. For example, disagreements between friends and neighbour in a community can spiral into communal violence between different families and indeed inter-communal clashes if they belong to different communities and religious leanings. However, the following factors shall be highlighted as the cause of violence in Nigeria.

*Poorly Managed Disagreement:* With over 350 different ethnic groups, the country is one of the most volatile and violence-prone places in the world. Violence in Nigeria is often triggered by disagreements or contentious issues between two or more individuals, parties, ethnic, regions and religious groups. Violence is motivated by poorly managed political, economic or social grievances.

*Elections:* Arguably, political offices are the richest ventures in Nigeria due to corruption and everything is staked to acquire them. Apart from religion, this is one of the major causes violence in Nigeria. Political violence occurs because of the outcome of elections. In Nigeria, political power is gained by the highest and strongest bidders because of inadequate representation and corruption. Most times, these can snowball into ethnic and religious violence.

*Uncensored Reportage:* The negative reportage by some media also contributes to the escalations of violence. Many times the sensationalisation of violence by some media practitioners contributes to the escalation of violence in Nigeria. For example, during the sharia crises in 2000, the violence escalated to the southeastern Nigeria because of unfounded reports that Lorries conveyed the corpses of Igbo people to the East. Ogbече (2016) said that Methodus Chimaije Emmanuel, a 24-year-old Igbo Christian trader based in Padongari, Niger State was on Sunday 29th may, 2016 butchered with three other persons including one personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps and about thirty shops looted by Hausa Muslims over the allegations of blasphemy on face book (p.3).

*The Thirst for National Cake and Fear of Political Dominion:* This is caused by disputes over the availability and use of resources or simply disagreements about the way in which the country is constituted. Muslims and Christians are afraid of themselves, Igbos are afraid of Hausas, Yorubas are afraid of Ibibios- in fact everybody is afraid of everybody.

*Mutual Suspicion and Irrational Sentiment:* This occurs when people suspect that people from other tribes and religious groups are either planning their downfall or gaining more from the national cake.

*The Struggle for Resource Control:* There are claims that resources are not evenly distributed in Nigeria. Although there is a central resource-sharing formula, the sharing is based more on population than merit and resource derivation. The Fulani herdsmen's and farmers clashes with the contentious grazing reserve bills are all parts of the struggles for resources control in Nigeria.

*Failed Governance:* Poor governance manifests in all three levels of government in Nigeria. Poor governance leads to both overt and covert grievances, lack of social amenities, citizens' frustration, anger and therefore leads to violence. The Use and abuse of power by politicians also triggers violence in Nigeria. Political leaders use their power at will and in complete disregard of the rule of law. Quoting Femi Okunnu SAN, Balogun (2017) confirms that it is the indolence of governors and their lack of vision by leaders that brought Nigeria to a near failed state. To him, the leaders should be blamed for all inadequacies (p.5).

*Insecurity:* The number of officials and security system in Nigeria is inadequate for the provision of security to the populace. Therefore, many Nigerian citizens resort to the use of private arrangements often with undesirable consequences. Most time the non-state actors including security and other services fail in their services. The wealthy secure higher services of the security agencies and it leads to increasing difference and imbalance. In view of this imbalance, disturbances and violence reign supreme.

*Increased Economic and Social Stratification:* Social stratification and fragmentation is becoming increasingly fashionable in Nigeria. For instance, the allocation of Government Reserved Areas (GRA) where social amenities are provided, Airports used by few rich are built and rebuilt while roads used by majority of the populace are not trek able. These are some of the indications of social stratifications in Nigeria.

*Indigeneship/Settlers' Dichotomy:* In virtually all Nigerian communities, citizens are grouped into original inhabitants and settlers. The allocation of privileges does not follow merit but emotional attachments related to the settler-citizen dichotomy. Owing to this, people fight for recognition so as to have access to social favours.

*Structured Injustice:* Nigeria is so badly structured that no poor man may walk out of poverty. They said there is no job yet people especially the highly connected and highest bidders are employed in various government offices. They harped that there is no money to pay workers but there are monies to offset the allowances of political office holders. Two years ago, the premium motor spirit (fuel) was hiked to almost one hundred percent and workers' stipends and other welfare have not been hiked till today. According to Adetayo (2015), Osinbajo asserts that over one hundred and ten (110) million Nigerians are "extremely poor"(p.16). It means that one hundred and ten out of one hundred and sixty million Nigerians are "extremely poor". The implication is that the leadership and Nigerian system have all failed in the midst of heavily endowed natural and human resources. This is evident in the insatiable quests of these rulers to siphon the national patrimony which have beclouded their sense of responsibilities thus creating the avenue for uneven distribution of the nation's wealth. Many of these bourgeois build mansions and allowed cockroaches and weeds to inhabit them while the rest of masses live in squalor or without shelters. While most of the masses are living without meals, many of these economic and political rulers eat and throw their leftovers into the dustbin to show off their status. While many Nigerians are queuing for the problem-prone public transports to catch up with official appointments, these few big shots have all classes of vehicles and sometimes jets in their garages.

According to Balogun (2017), Babatunde Jose Jnr. said "there is too much injustice in the land; people are dispossessed and impoverished as a result of the inequitable distribution of benefits which accrue from our God-given resources. The hungry poor will soon have nothing to eat and will begin to devour the rich. Then the fight will start! As long as the syndrome of the rich getting richer while the poor getting poorer is being pursued, people will have no other option than to be drunk in the wine of violence.

*The Forceful Language of Violence and Lack of Rewarding Jobs:* Many Nigerian have believed that the only language the government hears and responds quickly and promptly to is violence. Therefore, to have the government attention, they employ violence. Unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria especially among the youths are at alarming stage. An idle man is the devil's workshop.

## X. THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

While there are perspectives that fancy violence as requirement for social stability, its negative impacts on the individual's human rights go beyond the person involved. It destroys sense of self-worth. It causes general instabilities, it encourages bitterness, rancour and unforgiveness, it cherishes the adoption and adaptation of violence as a means to an end,

it endorses the abuse of human right, it breeds genocide and economic waste, it creates activities create negative global image, it disrupts social cohesion and creates unpatriotic spirit and it is capable of enthroning and recycling mediocre in leadership. Violence is generally a social ill, a flaw in the human race, a result of crime and war. The consequences of violence in a society including Nigeria are often undesirable because they lead to diseases, malnutrition, starvation, moral decadence and general extinction of mankind. Being aware of these, many nations of the world including Nigeria with little or no success has been making some efforts in confronting the pains of poverty through the establishment of poverty alleviation programmes.

#### XI. THE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN POVERTY AND VIOLENCE: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

Kelly (1999) asserts that there is a direct correlation between poverty and crime or violence (p.197). For example, a look at nations such as Pakistan and Afghanistan where the Islamic fundamentalists and radicals are having the field day will prove a strong point. Amanambu (2012) argues that the descent into zealotry in Pakistan had much to do with material neglect. Afghanistan fell into the hands of the Taliban after the United State pulled out of the country when the Soviet conflict ended. This is because the place lacked the beneficence of natural endowment and the people became desperately poor. In such an atmosphere, they became susceptible to the extremists' thought because of the seduction of all austere life and they became angry. Hence, Osama Bin-laden succeeded in Afghanistan instead of his hometown, Saudi Arabia where people are relatively comfortable economically (p.24). The above scenario is not different from the Nigerian situation. For instance, Clarke and Linden (1982) argue that one of the reasons given by the Commission of Inquiry into the Maitatsine riots was that the economic situation of the country left millions of people, especially the youths, without jobs or any means to live a decent life (p.107). Similarly, Adeogun (2006) affirms that poverty is the dominant factor in the rising trend of ethnic and religious conflicts in Nigeria (p.95). In the same vein, Alechenu, Chiedozie and Onwuamanam (2012) confirm that some kids released by military authorities in Maiduguri admitted that the Boko Haram sect paid them five thousand naira each to burn primary schools, spy on soldiers and set schools and offices ablaze with kegs of petrol (p.6).

Meanwhile, Marama (2014) notes that a young man, named, Ibrahim Tilitili was paid the sum of two thousand Naira (N2,000) to burn down few houses at Mandara Girau village in Biu Local Government Area of Borno state. Some men were also given two thousand five hundred naira (N2,500) to carry out the attack. It was gathered that the Boko Haram insurgents instructed them to drop the explosive at a specific place in Bachure suburb, near the Army Barracks mainly inhabited by retired military personnel (pp.7-9). Inuwa (2017) avers that an eighteen year old would-be Boko Haram female suicide bomber, Amina who was intercepted by the Nigerian Security and civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in Maiduguri on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2017, told the New

Agency of Nigeria (NAN) that she was paid two hundred (N200) naira to carry out suicide bombing within Maiduguri and its environs (pp. 5-7). Most of the violent activities in Nigeria are reactions against the ever-increasing unemployment, poverty, hardship and other social disequilibrium occasioned by poor economic management. From the foregoing therefore, violence in Nigeria can be described as a negative aspect of reaction against offensive form of poverty in the country. The acting President, Yemi Osinbajo attributes the agitations and social tension in Nigeria to be primarily due to hunger and poverty. He said that political leaders across the country had failed to distribute equitably the resources accruing to their areas from the centre for the good of the people.

The Nigerian experience concerning the correlation between poverty and violence is that both of them create pictures and atmospheres for disintegration, destruction, despondent, human sufferings, destitution and even state failure or collapse. Poverty and violence have dashed Nigerian dream of a virile nation. This is because at the independence, Nigerians had unreserved expectations and dreams of sustaining the amalgamation with the aim of building a nation where even though tongues and tribes differ, on brotherhood, fairness, equity, equality and justice should stand. But all these hopes are on their path to destructive collision because of religio-political and ethnic inclined violence spurred by the horrible dimensions of poverty.

#### XII. TOWARDS ALLEVIATING POVERTY AND CURBING VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

- ✓ *The need for Purposeful Governance:* In view of the above, Nigerian leaders should rise to the occasion and establish good and purposeful governance, forge national integration and promote indiscriminate economic policy that will ameliorate mass poverty and unemployment because an idle mind is a devil's workshop.
- ✓ *Sound and Responsive Education:* Quality education empowers people to take advantage of opportunities around them. It helps people get the right knowledge, information and life skills they need to realize their potentials. It will help people decipher between right and wrong.

#### XIII. CONCLUSION

Poverty and violence are complex social and human phenomenon. The major cause of poverty in Nigeria is not only orchestrated by people's unwillingness and lack of skills to work but it is also caused by poor state policies, natural occurrences corruption and distributive injustice. When people perceived that their poverty is being inflicted on them in this manner, then frustrations and aggressions arise and they are expressed through violence. In as much as there may be disagreements about the specific correlation between poverty and violence, there is agreement that both impact negatively on any given social and general development. Majority of Nigerians are wallowing in offensive economic and materials

kinds of poverty and because of that they are being exploited by the political bourgeoisies. This is because what makes something sense and right to them is what solves their immediate needs. These few groups especially the political rulers who are economically strong are not free from intellectual, psychological and social dimension of poverty hence they are not willing to implement policies for common good. They feel that as long as the people are poor, they will remain willing tools in their hands to achieve their parochial interests. It is established that there is correlation between poverty and violence in Nigeria and activities are disrupting Nigerian peace, development and stability of its general system. Poverty and violence remains part of the most retarding, underdevelopment, insecurity and devastating factors in Nigeria.

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