

## **POVERTY REDUCTION AMONG WOMEN IN NIGERIA THROUGH PAID CARE WORK: LESSON FROM LVLIANG CHINA**

Goodness Chichetaram Ndimele

Department of Political Science & Public Administration

Shanxi University, China.

### **ABSTRACT**

Poverty is basically the inability to meet the basic needs of life like food, shelter, and clothing. In Nigeria, like many countries of the world, women experience poverty more than men. This can be attributed to the burden of unpaid care and domestic work in the household which constraints them from building their human capitals like education and skills. Analysing the Lvliang Care Workers' project in China where the researcher conducted the research, this paper is of the position that the enhancement of the care and domestic skills of women through professional care work training, and the development of the care sector in Nigeria can provide good employment opportunities for poor women in Nigeria thereby reducing poverty. The qualitative research method was adopted in this study. Both primary and secondary sources were used to collect data. The Asset Building theory was employed in the research to portray that empowering the poor with skills to build financial assets is a more effective way to reduce poverty, than income transfers.

**Keywords:** Poverty Reduction, Paid care work, Asset building, Women Empowerment, Lvliang Health Workers, Sustainable Development.

## INTRODUCTION

From the inception of history, poverty has been a situation that has plied many members of any given society, irrespective of nation, country, race, tribe, or gender. Poverty can be defined as lack of adequate resources to meet one's basic needs in life like food, shelter, and clothing. It can be defined as lack of sufficient money to take care of oneself, family, or relations. Furthermore, poverty can be seen as the inability to enjoy the good things of life or achieve set goals. The experience of poverty goes beyond experiencing a deficiency in income. It creates paucity of information, loss of power, and little or no control over basic life decisions (Royce, 2018; Benatar, 2016).

In any given society, poverty is experienced by both men and women. However, statistics have proven that poverty ravages more women than men in many countries of the world. This discrepancy can be attributed to social norms and cultural factors which hinder women from having equal access to economic opportunities as the men. Unpaid care work remains one of the major causes of poverty among women worldwide. Women are known to be major care providers in many households. They take care of the children and the elderly, cook meals, clean the house, and fetch water and firewood, and other domestic chores. Across the world, women spend more hours each day on housework and care than men, while men spend more time on market activities.

Unstable and inadequate income remains one of the paramount causes of poverty among women in Nigeria especially those living in rural areas. Provision of stable and lucrative jobs will empower many rural women and bring them out of abject poverty. Empowering poor women through direct cash transfer to start a business has not helped in the reduction of poverty among women in Nigeria so far. This is because many poor women end up using the money to take care of their domestic needs, rather than invest it on a business. This creates the need to draft out and implement a policy which ensures that poor women have stable and lucrative employment to enable them to rise from poverty. For poor women to be gainfully employed in the society, they need skills and certificates. Seeing that women are natural caregivers, the position of this paper is that these natural skills can be sharpened through adequate trainings which will equip them to be fully integrated into the formal sector of Nigeria as professional caregivers.

The writing of this paper was influenced by the visit of the researcher to Lvliang Health School located in Lvliang municipal in Shanxi Province China. Lvliang Health School is one of the eleven designated centres where Lvliang Mountain Care workers are trained. Training of Lvliang care workers is an innovation created by the Local Government of Lvliang in Shanxi Province of People's Republic of China in response to the abject poverty that characterises the region. The municipal Party committee and the municipal government came up with this important measure to alleviate poverty among the poor people. One of the causes of poverty in the region is lack of skills and certificates among the poor people. This makes them not to access employment opportunities. The municipal Party Committee and Municipal government believed that training of the poor people in nursing skills and providing them with certificates will enable them get employments and be integrated into the society.

The policy was initiated in 2015, and till date, more than 45,000 people have been trained in 29 training batches. It has also achieved more than 24,000 employments. The monthly incomes of the trainees are 4000yuan (about US \$700). Some make as much as 8000yuan (about US \$1300) per month. The scheme has seen many people, especially women, leave the mountains to work as care workers in big cities like Beijing, Tianjin, Taiyuan, etc., after receiving the training. (Luyu, 2017). Some have even started their own businesses and set up housekeeping companies. Lvliang care workers' training has become a visible, tangible, and feasible way out of poverty for thousands of people living in Lvliang. It's a typical case of targeted poverty alleviation and development of domestic service industry in China.

Hence this research is geared towards understanding how the municipal Party committee and the Municipal government initiated and implemented this targeted poverty alleviation policy, how it transformed the lives of these poor mountain dwellers, and how the Nigerian government can learn from this policy and implement it among the poor population of Nigeria, especially rural women. If the Sustainable Development Goal 1 which is the eradication of poverty is to be achieved in Nigeria, a practical measure geared at empowering rural women to get education and steady employment needs to be employed.

The qualitative research method was adopted in this study. Both primary and secondary sources were used to collect data. The Principal of Lvliang Health School was interviewed to get first-hand information about the operations of the school. Some of the trainees were interviewed as well about their experiences in the school and their expectations after their trainings. The age range of the women and men interviewed is 34 to 55 years. The principal of the school also supplied the researcher with some books and Chinese journals about the Lvliang care workers trainings and employments.

The paper is divided into five sections. The first section is the introduction; the second section reviews existing literature and theoretical framework; the third section gives a description of the Lvliang Health Work project; the fourth section discusses the lessons the Nigerian government can learn from the project; the fifth section is the conclusion.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **OVERVIEW OF POVERTY AMONG WOMEN IN NIGERIA.**

Poverty means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society, not having enough to feed and clothe, not having access to credit. (Ogu et al, 2016). According to the United Nations, the manifestations of poverty “include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion, as well as lack of participation in decision-making” (United Nations, 2020). Poverty remains a crucial problem that every nation in the world has tried to find a lasting solution to. Despite efforts of governments, NGOs, International Organisations and private actors, the world is not on track to achieve the target of less than 3 percent of the world living in extreme poverty as envisioned by the UN 2030 agenda (Moyer & Hedden, 2020).

Approximately 80 percent of the people considered as extreme poor are resident in rural areas (Castañeda et al., 2018). Across the globe, rural poverty continues to surpass poverty in urban locations (Ali & Thorbecke, 2017). Rural residents are more likely to experience and stay in poverty longer than urban residents (Cotter, 2002; Kyzyma, 2019). People, most especially women in rural areas, continue to live in extreme poverty and entrenched deprivation often exacerbated by violent conflicts and vulnerability to disasters (Cuarema et al, 2018). Specifically, various projections suggest that if governments do not embrace major modifications in policy, extreme poverty will remain high in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030 (Mubecua & David, 2019).

In recent times, Nigeria measures poverty using both multidimensional poverty and monetary poverty. (Aluko and Mbada, 2020). Whereas the monetary poverty measure assesses income or consumption and expenditure poverty according to national poverty lines, multidimensional poverty measure reflects relevant non-monetary aspects of poverty such as food insecurity, unemployment, dilapidated housing, lack of healthcare, meagre educational levels etc. (Kim, 2019).

Nigeria, like many other countries in sub-Sahara Africa (SSA) are largely rural (Madu, 2010; Farrel, 2018) with a high population of women. These women are mostly socio-economically disadvantaged and disempowered than men (Enfield, 2019; Obayelu and Chime, 2020), yet they constitute about 45.5% of the Nigerian labour force (World Bank, 2019). Inequality along gender lines in the labour market is seen as a propelling force fuelling feminization of poverty

both in the urban and rural areas. In Nigeria, women work in the formal, informal and agricultural sector, but more women work in the informal sector of the country. These women (most especially in the rural areas) are concentrated in low skill manual (which includes agricultural sector) and non-agricultural labour markets. The concentration of women in rural areas in low-paid skilled jobs may be attributed to low literacy and low skill levels. (Aluko and Mbada, 2020).

International Labour Organisation (2018) revealed the employment population ratio (female) in Nigeria started on a good note in 2000, but suffered a decline in subsequent years in comparison to the male ratio. The data revealed that the ratio for females were 25.9%, 26.3%, 21.9%, and 21.2% in the years 2000, 2010, 2015 and 2019 respectively. Meanwhile, the ratios for male were 28.8%, 29.9%, 29.1% and 29.3% for the same years.

## **CAUSES OF POVERTY AMONG WOMEN IN NIGERIA**

Unequal access to and control over economic resources lie at the root of women's poverty. (UN Women, 2018). This includes women in Nigeria. Also, discriminatory legal frameworks and customary laws can place significant constraints on women's ability to earn an income by restricting their access to inheritance, land, property and credit as well as their mobility. Some cultural practices in many parts of Nigeria especially in the Eastern and Northern region do not permit women to inherit lands or other properties in their father's house. Women have little or no ownership, access and control to family assets and resources, as compared to their male counterparts. The lack of property incapacitates women from leaving poverty.

Furthermore, labour market segmentation, gender wage gaps and unequal access to social protection are also a persistent source of economic disadvantage for women in Nigeria and many developing countries. In many communities in Nigeria, women are paid lesser wages than the men for doing the same job. Discriminatory social norms and women's disproportionate share of unpaid care work further hamper their ability to earn a living. As a result, women are less likely than men to have an income of their own, rendering them financially dependent on their partners and increasing their vulnerability to poverty.

Finally, lack of professional skills has increased the occurrence of poverty among women in Nigeria over the years. Because many poor women in Nigeria are heavily engaged in child bearing and other domestic chores, they are deprived of the time to acquire skills that could empower them access decent jobs and step out of poverty. According to the World Survey on the Role of women in Development 2019, it is estimated that 15 per cent of all women in Nigeria between 18 and 49 years of age, or 5.2 million people, are simultaneously deprived in four dimensions related to the Sustainable Development Goals, namely, education, health, work and access to basic infrastructure. Such women were not only married before the age of 18 years and deprived of education, but also reported no agency in health-care decisions and that they were not working at the time of the survey. (United Nations, 2020). Thus, for Nigeria to attain the sustainable development goals of poverty eradication and gender equality, it is imperative that the income of the poor population, especially women, be strategically addressed. Poor women should be availed the opportunity to develop themselves via skills training in order to facilitate their being gainfully employed in the society.

## **GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS AT POVERTY REDUCTION AMONG WOMEN IN NIGERIA.**

Poverty Reduction is the strategy involving the efforts of different levels of government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Corporate Bodies and individuals to address poverty. It includes those acts and measures adopted to assist men and women improve their livelihood and welfare and participation in decision making. Successive governments in Nigeria have drafted out policies aimed at improving access to finances by low-income earning women.

The aims of these policies were to achieve not only economic independence for the women, but also improve their participation in public life and decision making process. Some of the policies include: Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Better Life for Rural Women Program (BLP) Family Support Program (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Program (FEAP) and National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS). Efforts at empowering women in Nigeria always fail because of the wrong notion that access to finance is largely what women need to improve their wellbeing (Iheduru, 2012).

Despite the Nigerian government's initiatives to stem poverty among its population, the 2018 Human Development report showed that a larger proportion of Nigerians (51%) are multi -dimensionally poor than those that are income poor (46%) (UNDP, 2018). Similarly, the 2019 Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria report, indicates that 40% of the total populace, i.e. about 83 million people (more women than men), live below the country's poverty line (World Bank, 2020). Unemployment and general condition of living among Nigerians continue to deteriorate without corresponding measures by the government to address the enormous challenges (Ogu, 2014).

### **PAID AND UNPAID CAREWORK.**

Paid care work refers to occupations where workers provide direct face-to-face care or indirect forms of care that provide the preconditions for caregiving. (England et al. 2002; Duffy 2005). It thus includes the work carried out by nurses, child-minders and elderly care assistants as well as domestic workers, cooks and cleaners, among others. Care workers perform their tasks in a variety of settings: public, market and not-for-profit as well as private homes.

Unpaid care and domestic work is a foundation of sustainable development (UN Women, 2018). It sustains people on a day-to-day basis and from one generation to the next. Without it, individuals, families, societies and economies would not be able to survive and thrive. However, caregiving is devalued in many parts of the world, as girls and women are the default providers of care. (Tronto, 2013) This means they are less able to access income-generating work, escape poverty, be financially independent and accumulate savings, assets or retirement income for their later years. It also means less time for schooling and training, political participation, self-care, rest and leisure. This has profound implications for gender equality and women's and girls' enjoyment of their rights, as well as having wider ramifications for poverty, inequality and the achievement of sustainable development (UN Women 2016).

Thus the opinion of the writer is that women and girls, who are major care givers in every society including Nigeria, should be provided with a corporate platform or structure where they can get paid for these care works. This will not only reduce poverty among women in Nigeria, but will further contribute to the GDP of the Nigerian economy. Nigeria can learn from the experience of Lvliaing China where this has been tried and was successful, and implement same among our poor women.

In 1995, the United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action highlighted the importance of addressing the unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work between women and men as an essential step towards achieving gender equality. (UN General Assembly 1995). Since Nigeria is a signatory to this and other United Nations Declarations on fundamental human rights, there is need for Nigeria to have a national framework which will promote and protect the rights of women to have education and decent jobs and enjoy equal rights as the men. Thus, for the Nigerian Government to efficiently reduce poverty among women in Nigeria, they have to be gender-responsive in drafting out policies. Women's unpaid care and domestic work must be taken into account in the drafting and implementation of poverty reduction policies. Liberating women from the unequal burden of unpaid care work and giving them access to acquire skills, is a major step into poverty reduction among women in Nigeria.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **ASSET BUILDING THEORY**

The concept of asset-building evolved over the last several decades out of discussions regarding alternative methods for social and economic development of disadvantaged populations and geographic regions. Policymakers were specifically interested in exploring asset accumulation strategies to reduce poverty that were outside the realm of customary means-tested social programs such as welfare (Sherraden, Curley, and Grinstein-Weiss 2003). The rationale for building assets through mechanisms other than income support stems in part from what Sen (1985, 1993,) identifies as strengthening human and economic capabilities. Asset-building policy was developed to influence and improve many aspects of individual and household welfare including knowledge, resources, and functioning skills (Sherraden, Schreiner, and Beverly 2003).

This asset-building approach, referred to as capacity building, can be examined in a variety of dimensions. One of the most important aspects stems from the concept of human assets or capital. According to Becker (1964), human capital is the range of personal assets and resources belonging to an individual, such as skills, education, and intellectual ability that influence future money and psychological outcomes. He maintains that human capital represents an estimated 75 percent of total wealth. Thus, the training of the Lvliang Mountain care workers by the Lvliang municipal Party Committee and municipal government is a great step towards developing the human capital of these poor people, thereby equipping them with skills and education that can enable them generate wealth on their own.

Another dimension of capacity building is through the growth of tangible and financial capital. Sherraden (1988, 1991), whose work has been instrumental in advancing this concept, proposes that building financial assets has far-reaching effects on the current well-being of individuals, in addition to the well-being of future generations. Thus, building financial assets is the key to breaking trans generational poverty in many Nigerian households.

It has been known for some time that income transfers to the poor do not reduce pre-transfer poverty (Danziger and Plotnick, 1986). In other words, while income transfers have helped to ease hardship, they have not enabled families to develop. Such policy might be considered sufficient in the case of the elderly or severely disabled, for who care and maintenance is the primary concern. But it is insufficient in the case of most households, particularly those with children. The conventional approach of assisting the poor by giving them grants or loans to start a business or vocation, which was the approach of some poverty alleviation initiatives that was initiated by governments of Nigeria like the Better Life Program and Family Support Program (FSP), so far has not helped to eradicate poverty among women in Nigeria. Within one or two years, both the capital and yield would have been plunged into family needs such as education, health, feeding, and other domestic needs.

The best policy alternatives move beyond the idea of consumption-as-well-being, toward what Sen (1985, 1993) identifies as functioning or capabilities. Asset building is one policy pathway to increase capabilities. The Nigerian government need to develop the functioning and capabilities of its poor population through empowering them with skills and providing them with employment assistance. This will strengthen the human and economic capabilities of the poor population of Nigeria, thereby enabling them to build assets and step out of poverty.

In addition, asset-building policies and programs should be made more inclusive by bringing the poor into the system, and by providing subsidies to low-income households to assist and encourage participation in these programs. (Sherraden 2001). The Lvliang municipal Party Committee and the municipal government adopted this proposal by including the poor in the policy formation, and by subsidizing the training of the Lvliang care workers, providing free training, free feeding and free accommodation throughout the one month duration of the program. They went further to assist the trainees secure employment after the trainings.

## **OVERVIEW OF LVLIANG CAREWORKER'S TRAINING**

Training of care workers is a measure the Lvliang municipal Party committee and the municipal government adopted to tackle the abject poverty that characterises the inhabitants of Lvliang in Shanxi Province of China. The Lvliang municipal is the largest poverty area in Shanxi Province, with a poverty population of about 480,000 (Xiaoyu, 2017). However, this project of training and employing health workers is gradually changing the story of the region for the better. The success of this project reflects the sensitivity of the government to the plights of the poor people in the region, especially women.

After full investigation in this region, the municipal Party committee and the municipal government discovered that few employment skills and narrow employment channels are the main causes of poverty in the region. Seeing that a stable income is one of the strongest levers for the poor to get out of poverty, they embarked on a project that will empower the poor people with skills and decent employment. The project was initiated in 2015 and as at the time of writing this paper, it has trained about 45,239 poor people in 29 training batches. It has also achieved about 24,004 employments. (Feihang, 2019). It is interesting to know that about 85percent of the poor people trained and employed are women. This is a great stride by the municipal Party committee and municipal government to close the gender gap in income earning between the men and women in the region, and to protect the rights of women to have a decent job.

The training cost for the one month program is subsidized by the Lvliang municipal government who invests up to 40million Yuan annually in the project. Hence the trainees enjoy free training, feeding, and accommodation all through the training period. The trainees are provided with professional skills training in elderly care, maternal care, infant care, patient care, nutrition, common disease nursing, first aid, rehabilitation, home cleaning, professional ethics, etiquette, legal knowledge, employment guidance, common Chinese language, etc. (Yan, 2020). The municipal government does not just stop at training these poor women. After the training, the government goes further to provide employment assistance to the trainees by inviting many domestic service companies from all over China for job fairs at the training centres to recruit the graduated students.

To dispel the students' worry about employment prospects, the municipal nursing employment service centre annually investigates the labour market in Lvliang, Taiyuan and other cities. They make detailed statistics on the demand and wages of various types of work available for care and domestic workers.

Furthermore, to make the care workers get better employment and protect their life and work outside the mountains, the municipal government, who is in charge of the trainings and employments of the trainees, set up the Liaison Office of Lvliang Mountain care workers in some cities where the care workers are employed. They provide social insurance such as pension and medical treatment for the Lvliang Mountain care workers. (Xiaoyu, 2017) The workers can also go to the Liaison Office when they encounter some difficulties in their work or workplace to lay their complaint. The Legal Aid Centre was also set up in some cities to provide rights protection services to the care workers. (Quanming, Xiaoli, 2019)

The Lvliang Mountain care workers' initiative has been instrumental in lifting many women out of abject poverty and in giving them a decent means of livelihood. This giant step by the municipal Party Committee and municipal government demonstrates the efficacy of good initiation and implementation of good policies. It further shows that good social governance is an antidote to poverty among the population of any given society. It is also a proof that giving the poor some capital resources alone without professional training is not the best strategy to alleviate poverty among them. Having a stable income is a more effective strategy to reduce poverty among women. Owing to this good policy

implementation, many of the once poor women now earn as much as 8000Rmb (\$1300) per month. (Liuyu, 2017). Through the professional skills they acquired, they were able to enhance their natural skills as caregivers, get decent jobs, accumulate savings and assets and step out of poverty. This shows that supporting women's capacity to build up their savings and assets through paid care work is a great strategy for alleviating poverty among women.

The story of Ma Jinlian is a testimony to the above. Ma Jinlian is a 34years old woman who had to drop out of school early to shoulder the burden of her family as the eldest child of the family. She had to go into the business of selling fruits to take care of her sick parents. However, the huge financial needs of the family drained the capital of the business. She owed a lot of debts as a result. Eventually, she got information about the training of Lvliang Mountain Care Workers and registered for training in one of the batches. Today, Ma Jinlian did not only see her income increase, she went on to become the head of a domestic service company that has assisted in the employment of more than 1000 rural women in the care sector. (Feihang, 2019). Today, more and more rural women like Ma Jinlian have gone out of the mountains through systematic domestic skills training and found good jobs in big cities in China.

## **LESSONS FOR THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT**

The protection of women's rights, especially rights to education and a decent employment is an essential part of social governance and a reflection of a country's development. Poverty reduction among women in Nigeria is one of the most important ways the rights of women can be protected. To achieve this, the Nigerian government at all levels need to adopt a measure that will increase female labour force participation in the formal sector, especially rural women. The key to this is the enhancement of the skills of poor women as natural caregivers and the provision of steady and lucrative employments for them. Nigeria and Africa in general can learn a number of lessons from the success story of Lvliang Mountain Health Workers.

Nigeria can begin by introducing the professional training of women in care and domestic service in every local government. There should be publicity at the grass root level about this scheme. Since the target of this scheme is largely the unemployed rural women, every state government should embark on mass mobilization of rural women, educating them on how this scheme can transform their lives by equipping them with professional skills in care and domestic service, thereby enabling them get a decent employment and step out of poverty. University Teaching hospitals, Health Schools, and other accredited vocational institutes in every state of the federation can be the designated learning centres for this training. This will ensure the trainees get professional training from experts in care work. The courses they can be taught should include infant care, maternal care, elderly care, nutrition, first aid, etiquettes, as well as other care and domestic related courses.

Following the Lvliang Mountain Care workers' model, the training should be done in batches and the duration for each training session should be one month. The cost for the training will be subsidized by the government. Since giving direct grants and loans to poor people as poverty alleviation strategy has not helped in abating poverty in Nigeria, its high time the government drafts a new and more effective measure. This time, rather than giving the money directly to the poor people, these funds should be channelled directly to their professional training and employment assistance. The money will be paid directly to the designated training institutions and will take care of their training, feeding, accommodation, and employment assistance.

Just as the municipal government of Lvliang China did, the government of Nigeria, through the National Bureau of Statistics should annually conduct a research and get detailed statistics about the care labour market in Nigeria. This will provide adequate information about the demand for care services; at the same time alleviate the worry of the trainees about employment prospects after the training.

At the end of each training session of the care workers, the public and private care providers can come to the training centres and recruit these workers. Job fairs can also be regularly conducted in the training centres to introduce the workers to many companies. Their monthly salaries should be structured in such a way that they earn not less than the minimum wage of Nigeria. Lastly, social insurance such as pension and medical treatment should be provided for the workers as well as legal protection.

### **THE NEED TO DEVELOP NIGERIA'S CARE SECTOR.**

Before undertaking the above however, there is need for the federal government of Nigeria to develop its care and domestic service industry. The development of the care economy of Nigeria will boost the female labour force participation and help close gender gaps in the labour market. A well-developed care sector will create huge employment opportunities for the poor women at the conclusion of their care worker's trainings. This will further increase the economic growth rate of Nigeria. The McKinsey Global Institute suggests that under a 'full potential' scenario, in which women play an identical role in labour markets to that of men, global annual gross domestic product (GDP) could be boosted by as much as US\$28 trillion (26 per cent) by 2025 (Woetzel et al. 2015). The long hours spent by women in doing unpaid care and domestic works in their families can be converted into an asset building tool for these poor women. These unpaid care works can be transformed to paid professional work in an institutional setting. A series of recent research studies evaluate the implications of social care service expansion in terms of employment creation. They show that public investments in social care services have the potential to generate millions of decent jobs both in the care sector itself as well as in other sectors through backward linkages, reduce unemployment and boost labour force participation and growth (UN Women, 2018).

Investing in the care economy in Nigeria has the potential to act as a strategy for the achievement of Sustainable Development 1, which is poverty reduction. Hence, there is need for public allocation of resources to the development of the social care service sector in Nigeria. This includes building institutions and professional service centres in every local community, where professional care services can be gotten like childcare centres, pre-schools, after-school study programmes, day-care centres, and residential homes for the elderly and people with disabilities as well as home-based care services for people who are sick, elderly or with disabilities.

Thus, providing poor households in Nigeria with the necessary and affordable social care services, will help free women's time and enable their entry into income-earning activities, while at the same time creating decent jobs, increasing job opportunities for women and alleviating poverty. The federal government of Nigeria should regulate and subsidize both the public and private care and domestic service providers. The subsidization of the care sector will encourage many individuals to establish care and domestic service companies across the federation. This will help combat human trafficking, child labour and the exploitation of the vulnerable poor people in Nigeria as it will be only registered and accredited companies that can recruit the care workers.

It is worthy of note that investing in the care sector is an investment with future payoffs for the Nigerian government because aside from employment creation, the higher labour productivity will increase tax revenue. These tax

revenues would help to pay down the debt incurred to finance the original investment. (Seguino 2017). Whatever funds Nigeria spends in expanding its care sector will be regained through taxes paid by these gainfully employed women.

## CONCLUSION

Good social governance remains the solution to the high level of poverty that characterises Nigeria as a country. The case study of Lvliang Mountain Care Workers is a testimony to social governance that is inclusive and sensitive to the plights of women. Seeing that women are ravaged by poverty more than men in Nigeria, there is an urgent need for the government to adopt a targeted poverty reduction policy that is aimed at protecting the rights of women to have education and decent employments. Instituting paid care work and developing the care and domestic sector of Nigeria is a good policy that will bring the above into effect. This will enable the poor women build their capabilities, which will further empower them to build their own assets. This will promote the welfare and wellbeing of women in Nigeria.

## REFERENCES.

- Ali, A. A. G., & Thorbecke, E. (2017). "The state of rural poverty, income distribution and rural development in sub-Saharan Africa". In *Comparative Development Experiences of Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia* (pp. 359-392). Routledge.
- Aluko, O. Mbada, K. (2020). Rural Poverty among Women in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* (Volume 22, No.3, 2020).
- Becker, G. (1964). *Human Capital*. New York: Bureau of Economic Research.
- Benatar, S. (2016). "Politics, Power, Poverty And Global Health: Systems and Frames", *International Journal of Health Policy and Management*, 5(10), 599.
- Castañeda, A., Doan, D., Newhouse, D., Nguyen, M. C., Uematsu, H., & Azevedo, J. P. (2018). A New Profile of the Global Poor. *World Development*, 101, 250-267.
- Cotter, D. A. (2002). Poor people in poor places: Local opportunity structures and household poverty. *Rural Sociology*, 67(4), 534-555.
- Cuaresma, J. C., Fengler, W., Kharas, H., Bekhtiar, K., Brottrager, M., & Hofer, M. (2018). *Will the Sustainable Development Goals be fulfilled? Assessing present and future global poverty*. Palgrave Communications, 4(1), 1-8.
- Duffy, M. 2005. "Reproducing Labour Inequalities: Challenges for Feminists Conceptualizing Care at the Intersections of Gender, Race and Class." *Gender and Society* 19 (1): 66–82.
- Enfield, S. (2019). *Gender Roles and Inequalities in the Nigerian Labour Market*, K4D Helpdesk Report. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.
- England, P., M. Budig and N. Folbre. 2002. "Wages of Virtue: The Relative Pay of Care Work." *Social Problems* 49 (4): 455–473.
- Feihang, W. (2019). Three turn mother-in-law become expert in riches. "Lvliang Mountain Care Work" model becomes a new way out of poverty. *Xinhua News Agency*, Lvliang China.
- Iheduru, N. G. (2012). Women Entrepreneurship and Development: The Gendering of Microfinance in Nigeria. A paper Presented at the 8th International Interdisciplinary Congress on at Makere University, Kampala-Uganda Women, 21-26 July.

- Kim, H. (2019). Beyond Monetary Poverty Analysis: The Dynamics of Multidimensional Child Poverty in Developing Countries. *Social Indicators Research*, 141(3), 1107-1136.
- Kyzyma, I. (2019). Rural-Urban Disparity in Poverty Persistence. *Institute for Research on Poverty focus* vol. 34 no. 3, 12.
- Liuyu, X. (2017). A Wide Way to Start a Brand: a summary of the training and Employment poverty Alleviation work of “Lvliang Mountain Care workers” in our city. *Lvliang Daily*, December 11. Lvliang China.
- Madu, I. A. (2010). The structure and pattern of rurality in Nigeria. *GeoJournal*, 75(2), 175-184.
- Moyer, J. D., & Hedden, S. (2020). Are We on the Right Path to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals? *World Development*, 127, 104749.
- Mubecua, M. A., & David, O. J. (2019). So Far So Good? Tracking the Poverty Eradication Goal of SDGs in Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 19(4), e1964.
- Obayelu, O.A. and Chime, A.C. (2020), "Dimensions and drivers of women's empowerment in rural Nigeria", *International Journal of Social Economics*, Vol. 47 No. 3, pp. 315-333.
- Ogu, U. K. (2014). Poverty and internal security threats in Nigeria: Examining the relationship. *Journal of Social and Policy Issues*, 11(2)
- Ogu, U. K., Ezeonwuka, E. C., Sule, R. K. (2016). Gender Equality and Poverty Reduction in the Post 2015 Agenda: Foundation for Sustainable Development in Nigeria. *Canadian Social Science* Vol. 12, No. 11, 2016, pp. 59-66
- Quanming, L. Xiaoli, L. (2019). “The Indigenous Brand of Poverty Alleviation”- decoding “Lvliang Mountain Nurse”. *Shanxi Economic Daily*, March 26.
- Royce, E. (2018). *Poverty and Power: The Problem of Structural Inequality*. Rowman & Littlefield. Maryland, USA
- Sherraden, M., Schreiner, M and Beverly, S. (2003). “Income, Institutions, and Saving Performance in Individual Development Accounts.” *Social Service Review* 78:404–28.
- Seguino, S. (2017). *Engendering Macroeconomic Theory and Policy*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Sen, A. (1985). *Commodities and Capabilities*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company.
- Sen, A. (1993). Capability and Well-being, in M. Nussbaum and A. Sen, eds., *The Quality of Life*, 30-53. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sherraden, M. (1988). Rethinking Social Welfare: Toward Assets, *Social Policy* 18(3): 37-43.
- Sherraden, M., Curley, J. and Grinstein-Weiss, M. 2003. “Wealth Creation and Rural America.” National Rural Funders Collaborative: Washington, DC.
- Sherraden, M. (1991). *Assets and the Poor: A New American Welfare Policy*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Tronto, J. 2013. *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality and Justice*. New York/London: New York University Press.

UNDP (2018). *National Human Development Report 2018: Achieving Human Development in North East Nigeria*. Abuja FCT, Nigeria: United Nations Development Programme. Abuja, Nigeria

UN General Assembly (1995). Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Adopted at the Fourth World Conference on women, 27 October, 1995. A/CONF.177/20 and A/CONF.177/20/Add.1. Beijing: United Nations.

United Nations (2020). Ending Poverty. Available at <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/ending-poverty>. Accessed 11/05/2022

United Nations (2020). World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 2019. Why Addressing Women's Income and Time Poverty Matters for Sustainable Development. United Nations Publication. pp. 51-56

UN Women (2018). Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment: Recognizing and investing the Care Economy. Issue Paper.

UN Women (2018). *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York: UN Women

UN HRC (United Nations Human Rights Council) 2016. "Redistributing Unpaid Care and Sustaining Quality Care Services: A Prerequisite for Gender Equality." *Policy Brief* No. 5. UN Women, New York.

World Bank. (2016). *Federal Republic of Nigeria: Poverty Work Program, Poverty Reduction in Nigeria*, World Bank, Washington D.C.

World Development Report (2012). *Gender Equality and Development*. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank, Washington DC.

World Bank (2020). Nigeria releases new report on poverty and inequality in country, Brief, Available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/lms/brief/nigeria-releases-new-report-on-poverty-and-inequality-in-country>. Accessed on 11/05/2022

World Bank (2021). Employment in Industry. % of Total Employment. Modeled ILO estimate- Nigeria. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.IND.EMPL.ZS?end=2019&locations=NG&start=1991> Accessed on 12/09/2022

Woetzel, J., A. Madgavkar, K. Ellingrud, E. Labaye, et al. (2015). "How Advancing Women's Equality can add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth." McKinsey Global Institute Report. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/how-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth#>. Accessed 12/05/2022

Xiaoyu, L. Yaping, L., Yang, W. (2017). Go to Beijing for "mother-in-law": Side notes of the Beijing employment promotion conference of Lvliang Mountain Workers' Protection. *Lvliang Daily*, December 16.

Xiaoyu, L. (2017). Come out of the Mountains and be happy: a summary of the training and Employment poverty Alleviation work of "Lvliang Mountain Care workers" in our city. *Lvliang Daily*, December 9.

Yan, Zhou. (2020). Employment of Thirteen Younger Sisters. *China Journal of Poverty Alleviation*. NO. 14

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Goodness Chichetaram Ndimele, Department of Political Science & Public Administration, Shanxi University, China.