

# A retrospective analysis of the Poverty rates in Nigeria

a case of the 2019 National Bureau of  
statistics report



**Sola Afolayan**  
Founder, SHE Foundation



**Aniekan Johnson**  
Researcher, SHE Foundation

[info@she.foundation](mailto:info@she.foundation)

The 2019 published report on poverty and inequality in Nigeria by the National Bureau of Statistics is developed from the Nigerian Living Standards Survey (NLSS) (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). The NLSS, on analysis revealed that about 82.9 million citizens in Nigeria (40.1 percent) of about 200 million are regarded “Poor” in a period spanning between September 2018 and October 2019. Therefore, 4 of 10 individuals living in Nigeria live below the Nigerian poverty threshold. This benchmark is an aggregate of N137, 430 per individual annually. This sum (N137, 430 or \$381.75) reflects the financial value of expenditure on food (N81, 767) and non-food items (N55, 633) necessary for a person to realize the basic level of welfare in Nigeria. The non-food items include healthcare, education, housing and housekeeping. In addition, the benchmark puts daily expenditure for an individual in Nigeria at N376.50 (\$1.04), at a rate of \$1 per N360. Further key outcome of the report shows that about 52 per cent of the poor reside in rural dwellings, while about 18 per cent live in urban areas. This finding points policy makers to the direction of where targeted and vulnerable groups are likely to be found, as well as areas of attention.

In respect to States, Sokoto and Taraba co-leads with a poverty head count rate of about 88 per cent, with Jigawa (87 per cent), Ebonyi (80 per cent), Adamawa (75 per cent) and Zamfara (74 per cent) among the chasing pack. Lagos (4.50 per cent) stands tall as the state with the least poverty stat, with Delta (6.02 per cent), Ogun (9.32 per cent), Osun (8.52 per cent), Oyo (12.52 per cent) in pursuit. The Federal Capital Territory (38.7 per cent) and Kaduna (43.5 per cent) sits just below and above the national average (40.1 percent) respectively. The absence of data from Borno state due to the insecurity may have undermine findings from Northern region (The Sun, 2020; National Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

A gender-based analysis with education in purview surprisingly showed that male and female share a similar stat in terms of those with access to primary education (19.16 per cent, 19.35 per cent) and secondary education (12.97 per cent, 11.2 per cent). Conversely, males (43.14 per cent) almost double that of



females (24.66 per cent) in those with little or no education as shown in Figure 1.

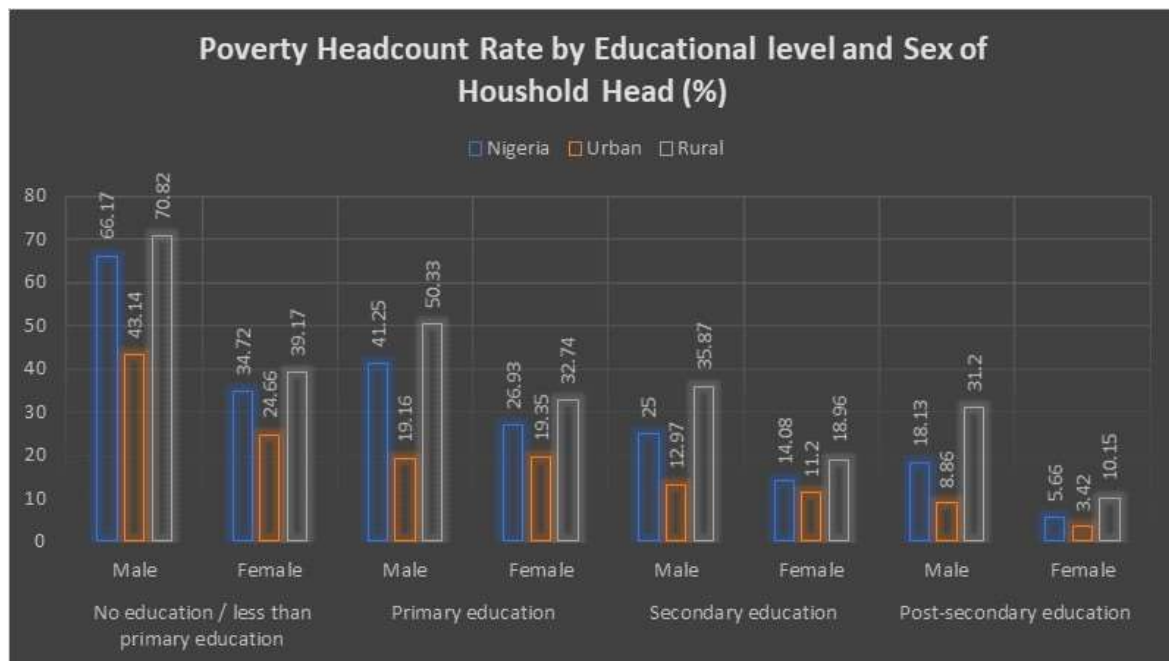


Figure 1. Poverty Headcount Rate by Educational level and Sex of Household Head in Nigeria

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2020)



Table 1. Poverty head ratio and States below national average

S/N	States Below the National Average	Poverty Head Count Ratio -% of population
1	Lagos	5
2	Delta	6
3	Osun	9
4	Ogun	9
5	Oyo	10
6	Edo	12
7	Ondo	13
8	Anambra	15
9	Kwara	20
10	Bayelsa	23
11	Rivers	24
12	Akwa Ibom	27
13	Ekiti	28
14	Kogi	29
15	Abia	29
16	Imo	29
17	Benue	33
18	Cross River	36
19	Federal Capital Territory	39

Source: Adapted from National Bureau of Statistics (2020)

Table 2. Poverty head ratio and States above national average

S/N	States above the National Average	Poverty Head Count Ratio -% of Population
1	Sokoto	88
2	Taraba	88
3	Jigawa	87
4	Ebonyi	80
5	Adamawa	75
6	Zamfara	74
7	Yobe	72
8	Niger	66
9	Gombe	62
10	Bauchi	62
11	Enugu	58
12	Nasarawa	57
13	Kastina	56
14	Kano	55
15	Plateau	52
16	Kebbi	50
17	Kaduna	44

Source: Adapted from National Bureau of Statistics (2020)



Table 1 and 2 shows that 17 states are above the national average, while 18 states and the FCT are below. The distribution appears to be relatively even. The report opines that around N17.4 trillion (about 43 percent of expenditure) was spent on non-food items in 2019. N2.6 trillion was spent on transportation, N2.5 trillion on health, and education stands at N24.4 trillion (Ventures Africa, 2020). On analysis of the report, it can be deduced that the North-East is the greatest poverty-stricken region, with the North-West in view. The South West tops with the least poverty rates, with the South-South, the South-East and the North-Central in order.

In addition, a cross-sectional review of the poverty figures geographically as shown in Figure 2. The intensity of poverty is greater towards the northern hemisphere, with Enugu and Ebonyi with the extreme rates on the southern hemisphere. This analysis provides a useful information that would guide goals and objectives and method of implementation of present and prospective social policies therein.



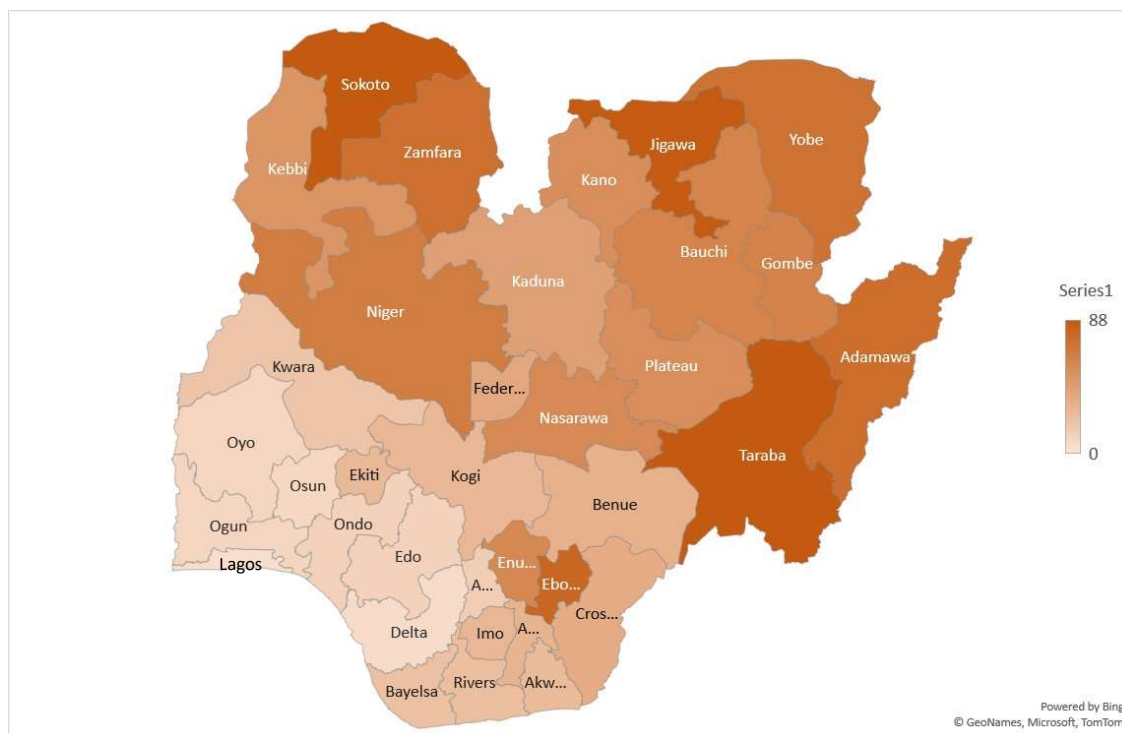


Figure 2. Map of Nigeria showing the poverty head count rate

The need to carry out a comparative analysis of the report of 2010 and that of the 2019 may provide useful insights on development of Nigeria’s human capital amongst others. However, the evaluation is stifled by alterations in the 2019 methodologies as reported by National Bureau of Statistics (2020). The basis of assessment of NLSS is centered on a sample size of 22,110 households per state, with focus on indicators such as age, marital status, access to education, health and basic services, employment, assets, and income, among others. The NLSS evaluates the frequency of poverty and to estimate utilising socio-economic indicators and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Businessday, 2020).

According to the World Bank (2020), the poverty benchmark for Nigeria sits at about 50 percent. This report is based on a general household survey (GHS) from 2012/2013. In addition, the World Bank reports that the NLSS is a less robust survey as it does not weigh in the extremely heterogeneity of



Nigeria. Therefore, the purchasing power parity (PPP) may not be appropriate for a country with extreme diversity. A more accurate report may require a robust and inclusive method of measurement that can cope with Nigeria's shortcomings. The Multidimensional Poverty index is a proven measure used in countries (India, Pakistan) with similar traits like that of Nigeria (OPHI, 2018). This approach could be handy in establishing a bird's view on the country's extreme poverty rates in Government's quest of elevating 100 million Nigerians from poverty.



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Ventures Park, No. 5, Kwaji Close, off Aminu  
Kano Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja – FCT



info@she.foundation  
www.she.foundation



+234 (0)803 474 8813



shefoundationng



she.foundation/linkedin

