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Article

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### AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES UNDER THE PRESIDENT BOLA TINUBU ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA (2023-2025)

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#### Abstract

Poverty remains one of the most persistent socio-economic challenges confronting Nigeria despite numerous government interventions aimed at alleviating it. This study examined the effectiveness of recent poverty alleviation initiatives implemented under the administration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, particularly within the framework of the Renewed Hope social intervention strategy. The study situated these initiatives within the broader trajectory of Nigeria's anti-poverty programmes, including the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), and its flagship youth empowerment initiative N-Power. Using a qualitative analytical approach anchored on secondary data, the study evaluated the extent to which contemporary interventions have improved welfare outcomes, employment opportunities, and social protection coverage. Empirical evidence indicated that while earlier programmes achieved limited success due to weak institutional coordination, political interference, and poor targeting mechanisms, the Renewed Hope framework demonstrates broader coverage and greater institutional continuity. Expanded conditional cash transfers and infrastructure-based interventions have provided short-term welfare support for vulnerable households and small enterprises. However, persistent structural constraints including inflationary pressures, implementation inefficiencies, and uneven federal-state coordination continue to limit the long-term poverty reduction impact of these programmes. The findings suggest that although recent reforms represent incremental progress compared to previous interventions, sustainable poverty reduction in Nigeria requires stronger transparency mechanisms, improved beneficiary

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targeting, and enhanced intergovernmental policy coordination. The study concluded that while current initiatives provide short-term relief, achieving substantial poverty reduction will depend on deeper institutional reforms and long-term development strategies.

**Keywords:** Poverty Alleviation, Poverty Reduction Strategies, Bola Tinubu Administration, Nigeria Social Intervention Programmes, Conditional Cash Transfers.

## **Introduction**

Poverty has persisted as one of Nigeria's most intractable development challenges, affecting millions of households across urban and rural areas and encompassing multidimensional deprivation in income, education, health, living standards, and economic opportunities (Akinyetun, Alausa, Odeyemi, & Ahoton, 2021; Akoji, 2025). Recent data suggest that over 48 percent of Nigerians lived below the national poverty line as of 2023, driven by economic instability, inflationary pressures, and structural inequalities that erode household welfare (World Bank, 2023). Multidimensional poverty frameworks, such as the Alkire–Foster approach, reveal that non-income deprivation remains pervasive, indicating that traditional income-based measures underestimate the true extent of poverty in Nigeria. Historically, successive Nigerian governments have implemented a range of poverty alleviation initiatives aimed at addressing structural deprivation and supporting vulnerable populations. Post-independence interventions focused on agricultural development and rural extension, while the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), established in 2001, sought to provide vocational training, promote employment, and coordinate sectoral anti-poverty efforts. However, evaluations indicate that these programs achieved only limited reductions in poverty due to implementation constraints and inefficiencies (National Poverty Eradication Programme, n.d.). Subsequent initiatives, particularly the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) launched in 2015, incorporated targeted social protection measures such as Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs), youth employment schemes under N-Power, microfinance support via the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), and school feeding programmes. Empirical studies suggest that while these interventions improved household welfare to some extent, their overall impact has been moderated by macroeconomic challenges and structural bottlenecks (Oladipo & Falaye, 2025; Udotim & Joseph, 2025).

Since assuming office in 2023, the Bola Tinubu administration has maintained and expanded poverty reduction interventions within the framework of its Renewed Hope economic agenda. Key measures include an expanded CCT programme targeting 15 million households, the establishment of a National Social Register to improve beneficiary identification, and complementary social programmes aimed at stimulating livelihoods and addressing human capital deficits (State House, 2023). These initiatives reflect continuity with past social investment policies but occur amid persistent inflationary pressures and systemic implementation challenges. Given Nigeria's enduring high poverty incidence and the mixed performance of previous programmes, it is imperative to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the Tinubu administration's poverty alleviation efforts to inform evidence-based policy refinement and enhance socio-economic outcomes for vulnerable populations (Oladipo & Falaye, 2025; Udotim & Joseph, 2025).

## **Statement of the Problem**

Poverty remains a pervasive and persistent challenge in Nigeria, affecting millions of households across urban and rural areas and undermining socio-economic development. Despite decades of government interventions, including post-independence agricultural

programmes, the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), and more recent initiatives such as the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), poverty incidence remains high, with nearly half of Nigerians living below the national poverty line (World Bank, 2024). Empirical studies indicate that these programmes, while well-intentioned, have achieved only limited success in sustainably reducing poverty (Oladipo & Falaye, 2025; Udotim & Joseph, 2025). Factors such as poor targeting, implementation inefficiencies, limited coverage, inadequate monitoring, and systemic governance challenges have constrained the effectiveness of these interventions (Akinyetun, Alausa, Odeyemi, & Ahoton, 2021). With the Bola Tinubu administration (2023–present) introducing renewed and expanded poverty alleviation initiatives, most notably the Renewed Hope Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme and other social intervention schemes, it has become imperative to evaluate whether these contemporary programmes are achieving their intended objectives. Assessing the effectiveness of these interventions is critical for informing evidence-based policy adjustments, optimizing resource allocation, and ensuring that the most vulnerable populations benefit from social protection measures. Given the persistent high incidence of poverty in Nigeria and the mixed performance of previous programmes, systematic evaluation of Tinubu-era poverty alleviation initiatives is both timely and necessary to advance poverty reduction and promote sustainable socio-economic development.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What is the impact of the Bola Tinubu administration’s poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria?
- ii. What factors facilitate or constrain the effectiveness of these poverty reduction initiatives in Nigeria?
- iii. How do Tinubu-era programmes compare with previous national initiatives in improving access to social protection for vulnerable populations in Nigeria?

### **Research Objectives**

- i. To assess the impact of the Bola Tinubu administration’s poverty alleviation programmes, particularly the Renewed Hope CCT, on household welfare in Nigeria.
- ii. To identify and analyze the factors that enhance or limit the effectiveness of these poverty reduction initiatives in Nigeria.
- iii. To compare Tinubu-era programmes with previous national initiatives (e.g., NAPEP and NSIP) in improving access to social protection for vulnerable populations.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study is significant both academically and practically. This research contributes to the scholarly understanding of poverty alleviation in Nigeria by providing a systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of government-led poverty reduction programmes under the Bola Tinubu administration. It enriches the literature on social protection and public policy implementation in developing economies, particularly in the context of multidimensional poverty, and offers empirical insights that can guide future studies on the efficacy of targeted social interventions. The findings of this study have direct implications for policymakers and development practitioners. By identifying strengths, weaknesses, and implementation bottlenecks in Tinubu-era poverty alleviation programmes such as the Renewed Hope Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) scheme the study provides evidence-based recommendations to optimize programme outcomes, enhance resource allocation, and improve the targeting and delivery of social protection measures to vulnerable populations.

This can support the design of more effective, scalable, and sustainable poverty reduction strategies across Nigeria.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on poverty alleviation initiatives implemented across Nigeria, with particular attention to selected states where data availability allows detailed analysis of programme reach and effectiveness. The analysis is limited to government-led poverty alleviation programmes initiated since the Bola Tinubu administration assumed office in May 2023, including the Renewed Hope Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) and associated social intervention schemes. The study is confined to government-led initiatives and does not cover private-sector or non-governmental poverty alleviation programs. The focus is on evaluating programme design, implementation effectiveness, and socio-economic impact on beneficiaries.

### **Conceptual Review**

**Poverty:** Poverty is a complex socio-economic phenomenon that transcends simple income deficiency; it involves deprivation in basic needs such as food, shelter, health, education, and access to resources that enable individuals and households to lead dignified lives. Scholars emphasize that poverty should be understood not only in monetary terms but also through the lens of capabilities and well-being, reflecting multidimensional deprivation across several domains of life (Olowa, 2012; Sun, 2025). Conceptually, poverty has been categorized in both absolute and relative terms: absolute poverty refers to the inability to meet basic minimum requirements for survival, while relative poverty considers one's economic status relative to societal norms and standards (Moatsos, 2025). Measurement of poverty typically involves identifying a poverty line, often defined by income or consumption thresholds, and calculating headcount ratios to determine the proportion of the population below that line. Traditional income-based approaches focus on financial resources required to secure basic goods and services, whereas multidimensional frameworks such as the Alkire–Foster method incorporate indicators related to health, education, and living standards to capture a broader picture of deprivation (Olowa, 2012; Akoji, 2025). In the Nigerian context, multidimensional measures consistently reveal deeper layers of deprivation than income measures alone, highlighting education deficits, poor health outcomes, and inadequate housing as persistent facets of poverty (Akoji, 2025).

### **Poverty Alleviation**

Globally, strategies for poverty reduction have evolved to include economic growth-oriented policies, social protection mechanisms, community-based interventions, microfinance, and governance reforms that enhance access to markets, education, and healthcare. Integrated approaches emphasize that sustainable poverty alleviation requires not only direct income support but also investments in human capital and institutional capacity (Singh, 2020; Nzasabayezu, 2024). For example, micro-financing and community organization initiatives have been widely adopted to empower disadvantaged populations and stimulate economic participation, while social security and capability-enhancing programmes aim to enhance resilience and opportunity.

In Nigeria, the poverty alleviation landscape has been shaped by successive government interventions, including the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and later the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), encompassing targeted schemes such as conditional cash transfers (CCTs), employment initiatives, and school feeding

programmes. Empirical assessments indicate that these strategies have yielded mixed outcomes, often constrained by implementation challenges, insufficient coverage, and coordination bottlenecks (Abubakar, Muhammed, & Uzomba, 2024; Oniyernama, Adekunle, Egwu, & Nwafor, 2022). Nigerian studies underscore the need for poverty reduction policies that are context-specific, participatory, and linked to structural economic transformation, rather than relying solely on short-term income support. Overall, the conceptualization and measurement of poverty and the design of strategies to address it suggest that effective poverty alleviation requires multidimensional understanding, robust measurement frameworks, and integrated policy responses that combine social protection with human capital development and economic inclusion.

### **Theoretical Framework**

To capture these dynamics, this study adopts Clientelism Theory and Federalism Theory as complementary analytical perspectives. Together, these frameworks provide a robust basis for analyzing how poverty alleviation programmes are designed, implemented, and politically mediated within Nigeria's competitive democratic environment. Key proponents and researchers include James C. Scott, Carl Landé, Luis Roniger, Susan Stokes, and Alex Weingrod. Clientelism theory explains the exchange relationship between political elites (patrons) and citizens (clients), in which material benefits, public resources, or services are distributed in return for political loyalty and electoral support. In many developing democracies, distributive social policies often function as instruments of political strategy, particularly where large segments of the population are economically vulnerable and dependent on state assistance (Kitschelt & Wilkinson, 2007). Within such contexts, political actors may strategically deploy welfare programmes including cash transfers, employment initiatives, and infrastructure projects, to consolidate support among specific constituencies or communities. As Stokes, Dunning, Nazareno, and Brusco (2013) observe, clientelist networks frequently operate through intermediaries or local brokers who distribute benefits to targeted groups in exchange for political allegiance. The Nigerian political environment provides fertile ground for clientelist dynamics. Scholars have long observed that political competition in Nigeria is shaped by patron–client relationships in which public resources are distributed through elite networks and local intermediaries (Joseph, 1987). Such dynamics can influence the design and implementation of poverty alleviation initiatives by affecting beneficiary selection, resource allocation, and programme monitoring. Within this context, poverty reduction programmes introduced or expanded under the Tinubu administration such as conditional cash transfers and other social protection initiatives may serve not only as mechanisms for alleviating economic hardship but also as instruments for sustaining political legitimacy, particularly in the aftermath of contentious economic reforms such as fuel subsidy removal.

Clientelism theory also highlights the risk of Elite Capture during decentralized programme implementation. When welfare programmes are administered at the local or ward level, political intermediaries responsible for identifying beneficiaries may manipulate the process to favour supporters, party loyalists, or influential local actors. This phenomenon has been documented in many developing democracies where social protection programmes operate through local patronage networks (Stokes et al., 2013). While clientelism theory explains the political incentives behind resource distribution, Federalism Theory provides insight into the institutional context within which poverty alleviation programs are implemented. Proponents of federalism theory advocate for a system dividing power between central and regional governments to balance national unity with local

autonomy. Key proponents include Johannes Althusius, Montesquieu, James Madison, and modern scholars like K.C. Wheare. They emphasize stability, liberty, and tailored regional governance. Federalism refers to a system of governance in which authority is constitutionally divided between a central government and subnational units, each possessing certain autonomous powers (Riker, 1964). In federal systems, the success of national policies often depends on effective coordination between different levels of government. Nigeria's federal structure, comprising the federal government, 36 state governments, and numerous local government authorities, creates a complex institutional environment for the implementation of nationwide poverty reduction programmes.

In practice, intergovernmental relations within Nigerian federalism are characterized by a combination of cooperation and tension, particularly in areas involving fiscal control, resource allocation, and administrative authority (Ewetan, 2013). Although the federal government possesses considerable fiscal capacity, states retain constitutionally recognized autonomy and often exercise discretion in the implementation of national programmes. Consequently, the effectiveness of poverty alleviation initiatives frequently depends on the willingness of state and local governments to cooperate with federal directives and integrate national programmes into their local governance frameworks (Othman, Othman, & Shehu, 2021). Federalism theory is therefore particularly relevant for analyzing poverty alleviation initiatives under the Tinubu administration. National programmes designed to reach vulnerable population such as expanded cash transfer schemes or community-level development initiatives require extensive coordination across Nigeria's diverse states and local governments. Variations in administrative capacity, political alignment, and fiscal priorities among states may significantly influence programme delivery and outcomes. In some instances, state governments may fully cooperate with federal initiatives, facilitating efficient program implementation; in others, institutional tensions or political rivalry may hinder coordination, resulting in uneven program coverage and limited impact.

When combined, clientelism theory and federalism theory provide a comprehensive analytical framework for evaluating poverty alleviation initiatives in Nigeria. Clientelism highlights the political motivations and patronage dynamics that may influence the allocation of welfare resources, while federalism illuminates the institutional and intergovernmental processes through which these policies are implemented across the country's complex governance structure. By integrating these perspectives, the study is able to examine both the political and administrative factors that shape the effectiveness of poverty reduction strategies under the Tinubu administration. The adoption of these frameworks is particularly appropriate because they directly address the key dimensions of this study, programme delivery, political legitimacy, and implementation dynamics within a federal system. Unlike purely economic approaches to poverty reduction, which focus primarily on income redistribution or market mechanisms, clientelism and federalism provide insight into the political and institutional realities that influence policy outcomes in developing democracies. In Nigeria's competitive electoral environment, where patronage networks coexist with a decentralized governance structure, these theoretical perspectives offer a nuanced lens for assessing whether poverty alleviation initiatives effectively address socio-economic deprivation or are mediated by political and institutional constraints.

### **Empirical Review**

Empirical literature on poverty alleviation policies provides substantial insights into the performance and limitations of government interventions aimed at reducing poverty and improving household welfare. Globally, empirical studies demonstrate that well-designed

social protection programmes particularly conditional cash transfer (CCT) schemes, can significantly improve short-term welfare outcomes, though their long-term impact on structural poverty often depends on governance quality, institutional capacity, and programme design (Fiszbein & Schady, 2009; Bastagli et al., 2016). In Nigeria, the experience of poverty reduction initiatives such as the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), and the N-Power initiative reflects this broader pattern: while these programmes have produced measurable welfare benefits for beneficiaries, their overall effectiveness in substantially reducing poverty has remained mixed due to persistent institutional and political constraints. Early empirical assessments of Nigeria's National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), established in 2001, reveal modest successes alongside significant structural limitations. Antai and Anam (2014), using survey data from beneficiaries in Cross River State, found that NAPEP contributed to entrepreneurial development through microcredit schemes and vocational training programmes. Their statistical analysis indicated that beneficiaries experienced improvements in small-scale business development and income generation, suggesting that the programme had localized economic empowerment effects. However, the study also observed that programme coverage was limited and uneven across rural communities, thereby restricting its broader poverty reduction impact.

Similarly, Okah, Iyiani, and Aghedo (2020) examined the perceived effectiveness of NAPEP in Ebonyi State using a mixed-method approach combining surveys and qualitative interviews. While some beneficiaries reported improvements in their livelihoods, the majority of respondents believed that the programme had not significantly reduced poverty within their communities. The authors attributed this outcome to inadequate targeting mechanisms, weak institutional coordination, and insufficient monitoring systems. Abbas (2016), in an evaluation of NAPEP's implementation in Yobe State, reached a comparable conclusion. Despite the programme's objective of reducing extreme poverty and supporting the Millennium Development Goals, poverty levels in the state remained high. Abbas argued that the programme suffered from bureaucratic inefficiencies, inadequate funding, and weak grassroots participation, all of which undermined its effectiveness. Collectively, these empirical studies suggest that while NAPEP introduced important institutional mechanisms for poverty intervention, its impact was constrained by systemic governance and implementation challenges.

More recent empirical scholarship has focused on the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), introduced by the Nigerian government in 2015 as a comprehensive social protection framework. The NSIP integrates several major interventions, including the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) scheme, the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), and the N-Power youth empowerment initiative. Empirical evaluations of these programs generally indicate measurable improvements in household welfare among beneficiaries, although implementation challenges remain significant. For instance, Salihu (2025) reassessed the impact of the NSIP on grassroots poverty reduction in Kano State using survey data and semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries. The findings showed that approximately 72 percent of respondents reported increases in household income after participating in NSIP initiatives, particularly through N-Power and GEEP programmes. The study therefore concluded that the programme contributed to short-term poverty reduction and improved economic resilience among low-income households. However, Salihu also identified operational constraints such as delays in stipend payments, political interference

in beneficiary selection, and weak accountability mechanisms, which limited the sustainability of these outcomes.

A significant portion of the empirical literature focuses specifically on the N-Power programme, which was designed to address youth unemployment through skills development, public sector placements, and entrepreneurship training. Empirical evidence generally suggests that N-Power has contributed positively to youth empowerment and skills acquisition. Nnaeto and Nwambuko (2023), for example, assessed the programme's contribution to youth entrepreneurship development using a descriptive survey design. Their findings indicate that participation in the programme enhanced beneficiaries' entrepreneurial capacity and employability by providing practical work experience and vocational training opportunities. Similarly, Komolafe, Taiwo, Fapojuwo, and Oyewole (2024) examined the effects of the N-Power Agro component on youth empowerment and income generation in Lagos State. Their analysis revealed that approximately 79 percent of participants reported improved financial independence and work experience, suggesting that the programme played a role in enhancing economic opportunities for young people. Despite these positive outcomes, several studies highlight structural limitations in the programme's capacity to address unemployment sustainably. Efayena and Buzugbe (2020), in a study of N-Power implementation in Delta State, found that although the programme provided temporary employment opportunities, it did not significantly reduce unemployment rates in the long term. The authors argued that the programme lacked adequate mechanisms for post-programme transition into permanent employment or entrepreneurship. Similarly, Anam et al. (2025), in their evaluation of the programme in Cross River State, observed that while N-Power significantly improved skills acquisition among participants, the absence of complementary infrastructure and access to capital limited the ability of beneficiaries to translate these skills into sustainable livelihoods.

Beyond Nigeria, empirical studies from other developing countries provide valuable comparative insights into the performance of poverty alleviation programmes, particularly conditional cash transfer schemes. In Latin America, Brazil's Bolsa Família programme has been widely studied as one of the most successful CCT initiatives globally. Soares, Ribas, and Osório (2010) found that the programme significantly reduced income inequality and extreme poverty while improving school attendance and health outcomes among poor households. Similarly, Mexico's Progresa/Oportunidades programme has demonstrated strong impacts on education and health indicators. Schultz (2004) showed that cash transfers tied to school attendance increased school enrollment rates among poor children, while Gertler (2004) found that the programme significantly improved child health outcomes and reduced illness rates among participating households. In Asia, Indonesia's Programme Keluarga Harapan (PKH) has also been widely evaluated. World Bank assessments indicate that the programme contributed to improvements in maternal health service utilization and school participation among low-income households (World Bank, 2017). These global studies collectively demonstrate that conditional cash transfer programmes can effectively improve human capital outcomes when accompanied by strong institutional frameworks and effective monitoring systems.

Empirical evidence from African countries similarly highlights the potential of social protection programmes to reduce poverty and vulnerability. In Kenya, the Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC) programme has been shown to improve household consumption and educational outcomes. Evans, Hausladen, Kosec, and Reese (2014) found that beneficiary households experienced increased food security and higher

school enrollment rates among children. In Ghana, the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme has also produced measurable welfare benefits. Handa et al. (2014) reported that LEAP transfers contributed to improved household consumption and reduced extreme poverty among beneficiary households. South Africa provides another important example through its extensive social grant system. Research by Samson, van Niekerk, and Mac Quene (2006) demonstrates that social grants, including the child support grant and old-age pension, have played a significant role in reducing poverty and inequality. These programmes have also contributed to improved access to education, nutrition, and healthcare among vulnerable populations.

When viewed comparatively, the Nigerian experience with poverty alleviation programmes reflects many of the broader challenges observed across developing countries, particularly regarding governance capacity and programme sustainability. While initiatives such as NAPEP and NSIP have generated localized welfare benefits, empirical studies consistently emphasize that their long-term impact on structural poverty has been constrained by administrative inefficiencies, political interference, and limited institutional coordination (Okah et al., 2020; Efayena & Buzugbe, 2020). These challenges underscore the importance of strong governance frameworks, effective targeting mechanisms, and transparent monitoring systems for ensuring the success of social protection programmes. Taken together, the empirical literature indicates that poverty alleviation initiatives in Nigeria have produced mixed but generally modest outcomes. Programmes such as NAPEP, NSIP, and N-Power have demonstrated the capacity to improve household welfare, enhance skills acquisition, and provide temporary employment opportunities for vulnerable populations. However, their overall effectiveness in addressing structural poverty has remained limited due to persistent challenges including weak institutional coordination, inadequate funding, political patronage, and limited monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These findings highlight the importance of systematically assessing contemporary poverty alleviation initiatives introduced under the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. By evaluating the effectiveness of current programmes within the context of lessons learned from previous interventions, this study contributes to ongoing scholarly debates on social protection policy and poverty reduction in Nigeria. Such an assessment is particularly important given the country's continued struggle with high poverty rates and widening socioeconomic inequalities, which require evidence-based policy responses capable of delivering sustainable development outcomes.

Empirical evidence on the impact of recent poverty alleviation initiatives introduced under the administration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu remains emergent, as many of the programmes are still in their early stages of implementation. Nevertheless, preliminary assessments and policy analyses provide some indications regarding the potential effectiveness and operational challenges associated with these initiatives. Central to the administration's poverty reduction agenda is the expansion of social protection mechanisms, particularly conditional cash transfers and targeted development programs such as the Renewed Hope Ward Development Programme (RHWDP). Early policy evaluations suggest that these initiatives are designed to address structural weaknesses observed in earlier interventions such as the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP). Initial assessments of the RHWDP highlight its emphasis on grassroots development and decentralized implementation. According to the Independent Media and Policy Initiative, the programme represents a more structured approach to poverty intervention compared with earlier initiatives, particularly through its

focus on ward-level development planning and institutional continuity across federal and subnational governments. This approach is intended to broaden programme coverage and mitigate the socioeconomic disruptions associated with major policy reforms such as fuel subsidy removal. The emphasis on localized development planning is also expected to improve responsiveness to community needs, thereby strengthening the developmental impact of government interventions.

Despite these positive expectations, broader macroeconomic indicators suggest that poverty remains a major challenge in Nigeria. Estimates by the World Bank indicate that approximately 104 million Nigerians live in poverty, reflecting the depth of socioeconomic vulnerability in the country. While the expansion of conditional cash transfer programmes has contributed to increased enrollment among vulnerable households, empirical observations suggest that implementation challenges persist. These include uneven digital verification systems, weaknesses in beneficiary identification processes, and concerns about leakages in fund distribution. Such challenges are not unique to Nigeria; they reflect common implementation issues associated with large-scale social protection programmes in developing economies. There is also emerging evidence regarding the economic effects of infrastructure investments linked to the administration's development strategy. Reports suggest that infrastructure disbursements associated with the Renewed Hope agenda have been correlated with small and medium enterprise (SME) activity in several pilot wards. Improved local infrastructure, particularly road networks, markets, and public utilities, has the potential to stimulate local economic activity by lowering transaction costs and enhancing market access for small businesses. However, analysts caution that the broader macroeconomic environment may limit the extent of these benefits. High inflation, exceeding 30 percent in recent periods, has eroded household purchasing power and reduced the real value of income transfers and wage earnings. Additionally, coordination challenges between federal and state governments continue to affect programme implementation, reflecting longstanding structural tensions within Nigeria's federal system. Comparatively, the poverty reduction strategy of the Tinubu administration differs from previous interventions in several respects. Earlier programmes such as the National Poverty Eradication Programme under Olusegun Obasanjo relied heavily on ad hoc employment schemes, including the widely known "Keke NAPEP" tricycle initiative, which critics argued lacked sustainability and long-term development planning. Similarly, the N-Power initiative introduced under Muhammadu Buhari focused primarily on temporary employment and skills training for youth but faced challenges related to program continuity and long-term employment outcomes. In contrast, the Tinubu administration's poverty alleviation strategy adopts a more multi-sectoral framework that integrates social protection, infrastructure development, agricultural support, and human capital investment. By combining targeted welfare transfers with investments in productive sectors such as agriculture, education, and small-scale enterprise development, the approach seeks to address both the immediate and structural dimensions of poverty. Early observations suggest that this integrated strategy may produce modest improvements in welfare conditions, particularly in urban areas where infrastructure investments and economic activities are more concentrated.

Nevertheless, important gaps remain. One of the most significant concerns relates to the scalability of these interventions in rural communities, where poverty rates are typically higher and infrastructure deficits more pronounced. Effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms also remain critical issues, as corruption and political patronage have historically undermined the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria.

These challenges reflect broader patterns identified in global empirical studies of social protection policies, which demonstrate that political incentives often favor highly visible development projects over sustained institutional reforms required for long-term poverty reduction. Overall, existing empirical evidence suggests that while the Tinubu administration's poverty alleviation initiatives exhibit some structural improvements over previous programmes, their long-term effectiveness will depend largely on implementation capacity, transparency in resource allocation, and effective coordination between federal, state, and local governments. Continued empirical evaluation is therefore essential to determine whether these programs can produce sustained reductions in poverty and contribute meaningfully to inclusive economic development in Nigeria.

### **Findings**

The findings of this study show that poverty alleviation initiatives under the administration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu combine policy expansion with persistent structural challenges in Nigeria's social protection system. Although recent programmes demonstrate broader intervention efforts, their outcomes remain shaped by political and institutional limitations. The evidence supports the relevance of Clientelism and Federalism in explaining programme performance. In relation to clientelism, initiatives such as Conditional Cash Transfers and ward-level development projects provide welfare support but also appear to serve political purposes. While these interventions help cushion the effects of economic reforms such as fuel subsidy removal, their distribution suggests that politically important constituencies often receive greater attention. This raises concerns about elite capture and weak monitoring at local levels. Federalism also explains important implementation challenges. The Renewed Hope Ward Development Programme depends on cooperation between federal and state governments, yet state participation remains uneven. Some states have aligned with federal efforts, while others show limited cooperation due to political rivalry or administrative constraints. This has produced regional disparities, especially in rural areas where delivery depends heavily on subnational institutions. Compared with earlier programmes, current interventions show wider coverage, particularly through expanded cash transfers targeting millions of vulnerable households. However, inflation continues to reduce the real value of these transfers, limiting their long-term poverty reduction impact. The study therefore suggests that stronger transparency mechanisms, improved federal-state coordination, and greater civil society oversight are necessary for better outcomes. In addition, rural capacity-building through digital literacy, agricultural support, and entrepreneurship programmes would improve beneficiary access and sustainability. Aligning poverty interventions with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals could further strengthen long-term effectiveness.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Overall, the poverty alleviation initiatives introduced under the administration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu represent an important evolution in Nigeria's social protection architecture. Compared with earlier interventions, the current approach demonstrates broader coverage, greater institutional coordination, and a more integrated policy framework linking welfare transfers with economic development initiatives. These measures have helped mitigate the immediate socioeconomic pressures associated with macroeconomic reforms and have expanded access to social protection among vulnerable populations. Nevertheless, the empirical evidence suggests that the overall impact of these programs remains moderate rather than transformative. Persistent challenges including inflationary pressures,

coordination gaps within Nigeria's federal system, and risks of political patronage continue to limit the long-term effectiveness of poverty alleviation policies. While the programmes have alleviated short-term welfare pressures, their scalability and sustainability remain uncertain in the context of Nigeria's large and structurally entrenched poverty population. Future research should therefore adopt longitudinal analytical approaches to evaluate the long-term outcomes of these initiatives. In particular, studies tracking the performance of ward-level development programs between 2026 and 2030 could provide deeper insights into their sustainability and institutional effectiveness. Additionally, emerging technologies including artificial intelligence-based beneficiary identification systems, may offer new opportunities for improving targeting efficiency and reducing administrative leakages in large-scale social protection programmes. Such research will be essential for determining whether Nigeria's contemporary poverty alleviation strategies can ultimately transition from short-term welfare interventions to durable instruments of inclusive economic development.

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