

Effect of Chronic Poverty on Girl Child Exploitation and Human Right in a Depressing Economy

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Abstract: *This study seeks to determine the extent poverty increases the girl child exploitation in a depressing economy. Also, the study further seeks to examine the impact of poverty on human rights in a depressing economy. The study employs descriptive research design (DRD) and library research strategy (LRS). Indications from literature reviewed show that poverty promotes GCE and promotes violation of the girl child rights (GCR). The study further revealed that the number of out-of-school children in Nigeria increased significantly in 2024. The study therefore concludes that there is a need for partnership with SMEs like Restfarms and Associates following the increased rate of out-of-school children in Nigeria despite the yearly budget and programs by the WHO, UNICEF, ILO, among others in Nigeria. The study strongly recommends that investors, international companies should make funding available, either as a grant or foreign direct investment to Restfarms and Associates to commence operations in Nigeria in April 2025.*

Keywords: *Chronic poverty; Girl Child Exploitation; Human Rights; Restfarms and Associate*

1. Introduction

Chronic poverty has been a persistent issue in Nigeria, profoundly affecting vulnerable groups, particularly girl children. Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has faced systemic economic challenges such as corruption, political

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instability, and over-reliance on oil exports. The oil boom of the 1970s, while initially promising economic growth, led to the neglect of other critical sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, creating structural inequalities and increasing regional poverty disparities (Akinyele, 2001). Economic adjustments during the 1980s, such as the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), further deepened poverty, disproportionately affecting marginalized groups, including children, by reducing access to essential services like education and healthcare (World Bank, 1994).

Recent economic downturns in Nigeria have exacerbated these issues, with inflation, unemployment, and currency devaluation worsening the exploitation of girl children. Many families have turned to child labor as a survival mechanism, with young girls forced into hazardous jobs in mining, domestic work, or street trading (AP News, 2023). For example, illegal lithium mining operations in Nasarawa State have been reported to employ children as young as six, exposing them to dangerous working conditions and denying them education (AP News, 2023). Such practices violate children's right to education and protection, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and exploitation.

Early and forced marriages remain another significant issue exacerbated by chronic poverty. Families struggling economically often view marrying off daughters as a way to alleviate financial burdens. This practice not only denies girls their right to education but also subjects them to lifelong health risks, domestic violence, and psychological trauma (IAWJ, 2023). Despite international commitments like the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), these human rights violations persist due to weak enforcement of protective laws in Nigeria (State.gov, 2023).

Efforts to combat these challenges must include multi-dimensional strategies aimed at addressing poverty and improving gender equality. This involves implementing robust child protection policies, enhancing access to education for girls, and fostering community awareness about the importance of upholding children's rights. Tackling the root causes of poverty, alongside enforcing existing laws and international conventions, is critical to breaking the cycle of exploitation and ensuring a brighter future for Nigeria's girl children. This study therefore to determined the extent poverty increase the girl child exploitation in a depressing economy. The study further seek to examined the impact of poverty on human right in a depressing economy.

2. Conceptual Review

2.1. Chronic Poverty

Chronic poverty refers to a prolonged and often intergenerational state of deprivation that goes beyond mere income insufficiency. It captures the enduring inability of individuals or households to escape poverty due to systemic barriers such as limited access to stable livelihoods and opportunities (Hulme & Shepherd, 2003). This form of poverty encompasses multidimensional disadvantages, including inadequate access to education, healthcare, and social services, which are essential for personal and community development (Alkire & Foster, 2011). Structural inequalities like discrimination, poor governance, and underdeveloped infrastructure further entrench this cycle, preventing the affected population from improving their living conditions (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2009).

Additionally, chronic poverty often perpetuates itself across generations, as children born into impoverished families face significant obstacles such as malnutrition, lack of education, and restricted economic opportunities (Bird, 2007). People living in chronic poverty are also particularly vulnerable to external shocks like economic downturns, natural disasters, and health crises, which worsen their already precarious situations (World Bank, 2006). The absence of social safety nets leaves them reliant on unsustainable livelihoods, such as low-wage jobs or subsistence farming, further hindering their ability to escape poverty (Devereux, 2002). These interlinked factors highlight that chronic poverty results from deep-rooted structural issues requiring comprehensive and long-term interventions.

Poverty is a multifaceted issue that manifests in different forms, each affecting individuals and communities in unique ways. Absolute poverty refers to the inability to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare, often defined by living below a set income threshold, such as \$2.15 per day (World Bank, 2022). In contrast, relative poverty is measured against societal standards, highlighting disparities in access to resources and opportunities within a specific community (Townsend, 1979). Chronic poverty is characterized by long-term deprivation, often persisting across generations due to systemic barriers like discrimination and lack of opportunities (Hulme & Shepherd, 2003). Similarly, generational poverty arises when poverty is passed down from parents to children, perpetuating a cycle of limited access to education, jobs, and essential services (Bird, 2007).

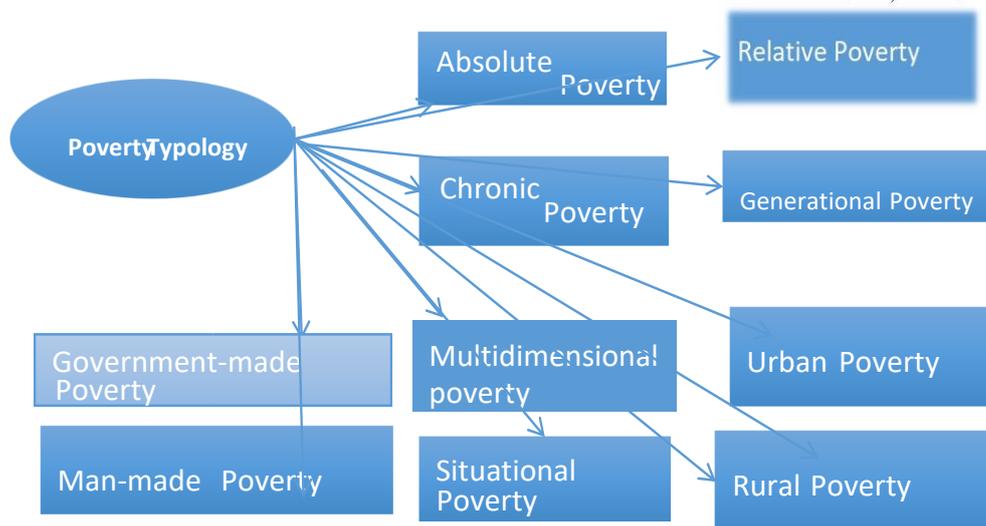


Figure 1. Poverty typology and division

Source: Authors presentation 2024

Other forms of poverty include situational poverty, which is temporary and typically results from unexpected crises like natural disasters or economic downturns (Bradshaw, 2006). Urban poverty affects those in cities, manifesting as inadequate housing, unemployment, and exposure to crime, often exacerbated by rapid urbanization and insufficient infrastructure (UN-Habitat, 2020). Meanwhile, rural poverty affects those in remote areas, where limited access to markets, education, and healthcare compounds their reliance on vulnerable agricultural systems (IFAD, 2016). Finally, multidimensional poverty expands beyond income measures, considering factors such as lack of education, clean water, and healthcare to provide a more comprehensive understanding of deprivation (Alkire & Foster, 2011). These types of poverty highlight the need for targeted approaches to effectively address their diverse causes and impacts. Man made poverty is the type of poverty experience by people who where once rich but wasted their resources and are currently poor. While the government made poverty is the poverty created by government through embezzlement of public resources and the citizenry are left to suffer in penury due to absence of economic means and opportunity.

2.2 Girl Child Exploitation

Girl child exploitation (GCE) encompasses a wide range of abusive practices that undermine the rights, safety, and development of young girls. One prevalent form is child sexual exploitation (CSE), where perpetrators manipulate or coerce girls into sexual activities in exchange for goods, money, or affection, often exploiting power imbalances to manipulate victims (Safeguarding Network, 2023). Similarly, child trafficking for sexual purposes remains a severe violation of human rights, involving the recruitment and transportation of girls for exploitative purposes, and is often recognized as a modern form of slavery (Wikipedia, 2023). Forced marriage is another significant form of exploitation, where young girls are married without consent, exposing them to lifelong sexual abuse, domestic servitude, and denial of education, a practice condemned by the United Nations (UNICEF, 2023).

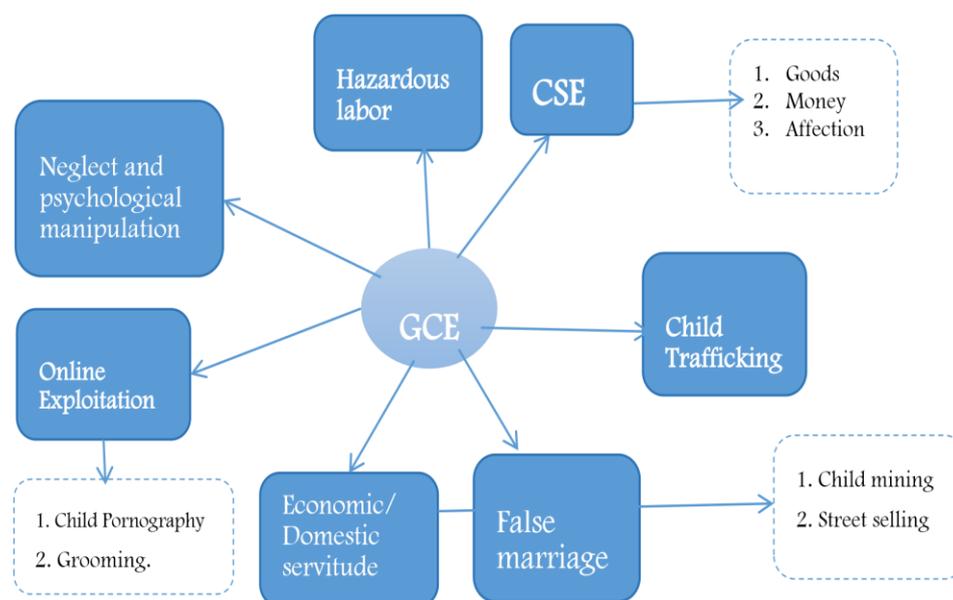


Figure 2. GCE Brands

Source: Authors presentation December 2024

In addition to these practices, many girls are subjected to domestic servitude, forced into unpaid or low-wage domestic work under coercive conditions, often denying them access to education and personal freedom (ILO, 2023). Economic exploitation forces girls into hazardous labor, such as mining, agriculture, or street vending, which not only endangers their health but also deprives them of their childhood and opportunities for development (AP News, 2023). Moreover, the rise of online

exploitation, including child pornography, grooming, and live streaming of abuse, highlights the risks posed by digital platforms that provide anonymity to perpetrators (ECPAT, 2023). Additionally, exploitation in armed conflicts, where girls are used as combatants, spies, or for sexual purposes, exposes them to extreme violence and abuse (Human Rights Watch, 2023). Lastly, neglect and psychological manipulation create vulnerabilities that exploiters can exploit, leading to long-term physical and emotional harm for the victims. These practices demonstrate the multidimensional nature of girl child exploitation and the urgent need for interventions to protect and empower young girls.

2.3 Human Right

Human rights are universally acknowledged moral principles that outline the fundamental freedoms and entitlements inherent to all individuals, regardless of their background, nationality, or status. These rights encompass a broad spectrum, from basic rights like the right to life to those that ensure dignity and well-being, such as access to education, healthcare, and liberty (OHCHR, 2023). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1948 by the United Nations, remains the cornerstone of modern human rights frameworks, asserting that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. It emphasizes the principle of non-discrimination, guaranteeing that these rights apply to everyone, without distinction of any kind (UN, 2023).

Human rights are commonly categorized into three generations: civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, and collective or solidarity rights. These rights are interrelated, interdependent, and indivisible, meaning the promotion of one right supports the advancement of others, while the violation of one can negatively affect others (OHCHR, 2023). Contemporary discussions highlight their role in protecting individuals from severe political, legal, and social abuses, while ensuring freedom, equality, and dignity for all. Their universal and inalienable nature underscores the commitment to protecting these rights globally, irrespective of circumstances or context (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2023).

2.4. Depressing Economy

A depressing economy refers to a sustained period of economic decline, often characterized by high unemployment, low consumer spending, and reduced industrial output. During such times, businesses struggle or close down, leading to job losses and a decline in consumer confidence, which exacerbates the economic slowdown (International Monetary Fund, 2022). Unemployment rates rise

significantly, as seen in Nigeria, where unemployment reached 33.3% in 2021 (World Bank, 2021). This decline in economic activity results in a drop in consumer demand, which further depresses businesses, contributing to the economy's stagnation.

In addition to rising unemployment, a depressing economy is marked by increasing poverty levels, reduced investment, and inflation. High inflation erodes purchasing power, making it difficult for individuals to afford basic goods and services (African Development Bank, 2021). Countries often experience a weakening of their national currency, which discourages foreign investment and stifles recovery efforts (International Finance Corporation, 2022). The economic hardships of a depressed economy disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, increasing poverty and making it more challenging for communities to meet basic needs (United Nations, 2021). These factors combine to create a cycle of economic contraction, limiting opportunities for growth and development.

3. Chronic Poverty and the GCE

The relationship between chronic poverty and the exploitation of the girl child is deeply intertwined, as poverty creates conditions that heighten the vulnerability of young girls to various forms of abuse and exploitation. Chronic poverty, characterized by persistent deprivation over an extended period, often leads to limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, forcing families to prioritize survival over long-term development. In such contexts, girls are frequently subjected to child labor, early marriage, and trafficking as coping mechanisms for their families' financial struggles (Hulme & Shepherd, 2003). These practices not only violate their rights but also perpetuate cycles of poverty by denying girls the education and skills needed to break free from poverty.

Additionally, chronic poverty increases girls' susceptibility to sexual exploitation and gender-based violence. Economic hardship compels some families to view daughters as economic burdens, leading to their commodification through forced marriage, domestic servitude, or sexual exploitation. This exploitation is further exacerbated in impoverished communities where systemic barriers and patriarchal norms limit girls' agency and access to protective measures (UNICEF, 2021). The relationship between chronic poverty and girl child exploitation highlights the urgent need for interventions that address the root causes of poverty while empowering girls through education, legal protection, and economic opportunities.

The relationship between chronic poverty and girl child exploitation reveals a cycle of deprivation and vulnerability. Poverty often limits access to education, forcing families to prioritize immediate survival over long-term development. Girls are frequently withdrawn from school to engage in unpaid domestic labor, child labor, or early marriages, practices driven by economic pressures and societal norms (UNESCO, 2022; UNICEF, 2021). Poverty-stricken families may also see daughters as economic burdens, exposing them to exploitative labor markets or trafficking, where promises of financial security turn into exploitation. Additionally, gender-based violence and systemic barriers to justice in impoverished regions leave girls without protection or recourse, compounding their vulnerability to exploitation (UN Women, 2022; Human Rights Watch, 2022).

Chronic poverty also has intergenerational impacts, as girls subjected to exploitation are often trapped in cycles of poverty and abuse, unable to access opportunities to improve their lives or those of their children (Bird, 2007). Structural inequalities in impoverished regions, such as inadequate legal protections and limited healthcare access, further exacerbate the risks of exploitation. Exploited girls are frequently at risk of early pregnancies, untreated illnesses, and psychological trauma, outcomes that perpetuate systemic inequality and poverty (WHO, 2021; Plan International, 2021). Addressing the link between chronic poverty and girl child exploitation requires comprehensive interventions that prioritize education, enforce legal protections, and tackle the structural inequalities that underpin these issues.

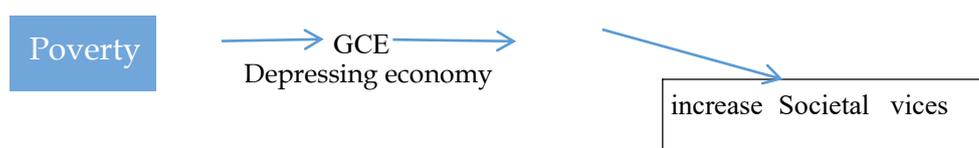


Figure 3. Relationship Arrow

Source: Authors presentation 2024

Chronic poverty in Nigeria has a significant impact on girl child exploitation, manifesting through various forms such as child labor, early marriage, trafficking, and gender-based violence. The country faces one of the highest rates of out-of-school children globally, with over 10.5 million children not attending school, 60% of whom are girls (UNICEF, 2022). Poverty-stricken families often prioritize boys' education while girls are withdrawn to engage in labor or forced into early marriages as a survival strategy. In northern Nigeria, for instance, 43% of girls are married before the age of 18, exposing them to health risks, early pregnancies, and

lifelong economic disempowerment (UNFPA, 2021). Additionally, poverty amplifies the risks of trafficking, as girls are lured into exploitative situations with promises of education or financial security. Regions affected by conflict, such as Borno and Yobe, have seen a surge in child trafficking and forced marriages, especially within displaced populations (UNODC, 2021).

Systemic barriers further exacerbate these challenges, as weak enforcement of protective laws, like the Child Rights Act, leaves many girls without access to justice or essential services (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Gender-based violence is widespread, with 30% of girls aged 15-19 reporting experiences of abuse (NBS, 2020). Health risks are equally pronounced, with Nigeria recording one of the highest maternal mortality rates globally at 576 deaths per 100,000 live births due to early pregnancies and inadequate healthcare access (World Bank, 2022). Despite these challenges, interventions such as UNICEF's Girls' Education Project (GEP), which supports education for girls in northern Nigeria, have shown positive outcomes by reducing child marriage and increasing school retention. Addressing girl child exploitation in Nigeria requires comprehensive efforts that tackle the root causes of poverty, improve legal protections, and empower girls through education and economic opportunities.

4. Chronic Poverty and Human Right of the Girl Child

Chronic poverty in Nigeria is deeply connected to the violation of fundamental human rights, as it severely limits access to basic services such as education, healthcare, and adequate living conditions. In particular, poverty often deprives children, especially girls, of their right to education. Nigeria has one of the largest populations of out-of-school children globally, with more than 10.5 million children, of which 60% are girls (UNICEF, 2022). Families living in poverty often struggle to afford school fees or transportation, leading to children being withdrawn from school to work or marry early, thus depriving them of their right to education. This situation violates not only the right to education under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) but also the right to personal development. In many rural areas, especially in regions like Borno and Yobe, lack of access to proper prenatal and postnatal care due to poverty leads to preventable deaths. This is a clear violation of the right to health as recognized under international human rights law, specifically the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The inadequate healthcare infrastructure in poverty-stricken regions fails

to meet the needs of mothers and children, further exacerbating the human rights crisis.

The absence of basic sanitation and clean water is another violation of human rights tied to chronic poverty in Nigeria. Around 60 million Nigerians lack access to safe drinking water, and millions more live without adequate sanitation facilities (WHO, 2021). These conditions violate the right to water and sanitation, a fundamental human right outlined in international agreements like the ICESCR (Article 11). Poor access to clean water and sanitation contributes to the spread of preventable diseases, leading to higher mortality rates, especially among children. This further entrenches the cycle of poverty and reinforces the systemic inequalities that underpin human rights violations in the country.



Child labour remains a persistent issue exacerbated by poverty. The international Labour Organization (ILO, 2020) estimates that over 15 million children in Nigeria are engaged in child labour, often in hazardous and exploitation conditions. Many of these children, particularly girls, are forced into domestic servitude or labour in the informal economy due to financial hardship. This only violates the right to protection from exploitation but also the right to a childhood free from work and the right to education. The situation worsens in rural and impoverished communities, where families see children as economic assets, which results in an environment where exploitation is normalized.

Figure 4. Poverty and the girl child rights connectors

Source: Authors' conceptualization and presentation 2024 (cappafrica.org, vanguardngr.com)

In addition to education, healthcare, and sanitation, land rights violations are another significant issue linked to poverty in Nigeria. Many poor communities, especially those in the Niger Delta, face displacement due to environmental degradation caused by oil extraction. Oil spills and gas flaring have made large areas uninhabitable, leaving many people without access to land or livelihoods. This situation violates the right to land and the right to a healthy environment, both of which are fundamental human rights protected by international law (Amnesty International, 2020). The failure to address these environmental and land rights issues further exacerbates the poverty cycle, making it difficult for communities to recover and thrive.

4.1. The Way Out: Poverty Reduction

Tackling the effects of chronic poverty on girl child exploitation and human rights within a depressed economy requires a combination of immediate interventions and long-term systemic reforms. One crucial approach is enhancing girls' access to education, which is both a fundamental human right and a key factor in breaking the poverty cycle. Programs like UNICEF's Girls' Education Project in northern Nigeria have shown success by offering scholarships, improving school infrastructure, and providing community support to ensure girls remain in school (UNICEF, 2021). These initiatives have helped reduce child marriages and increased literacy, both of which are vital in empowering girls and protecting them from exploitation.

However, the starting point is to address poverty. GCE and the human rights violation will be curtailed significantly. When the girl child basic needs are well provided about 50% of the girl child will be less prone to yielding to sensuality. More resources and attention should be channeled towards reduction of poverty in Nigeria by the government and international body. This is depicted in fig 2.4. Funding SMEs is a significant tool in controlling poverty in Nigeria.

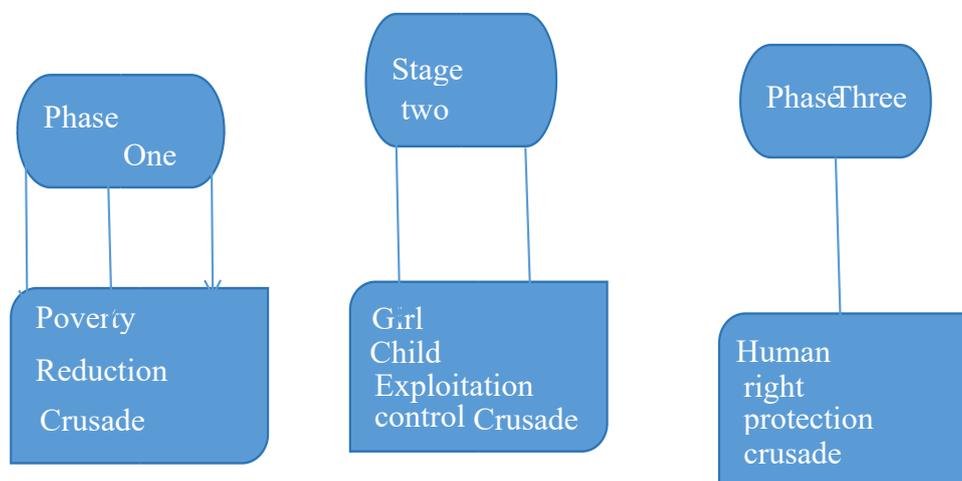


Figure 5. Road-map to GCE

Source: Author's conceptualization 2024

Additionally, enforcing laws that protect girls from child labor, early marriage, and trafficking is another essential solution. Strengthening the Child Rights Act and ensuring its effective implementation can significantly reduce the exploitation of girls, particularly in economically disadvantaged regions. For example, the Nigerian government could intensify efforts to combat trafficking by enhancing law enforcement and improving support services for at-risk children (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021). Furthermore, providing economic support to families through programs like conditional cash transfers or microfinance opportunities can alleviate the financial pressures that often lead families to exploit their children for survival (World Bank, 2022). These initiatives provide a safety net, reducing the likelihood of families resorting to practices like child labor or early marriage.

Healthcare interventions are also essential in safeguarding girls' rights in poor communities. Offering comprehensive health services, including maternal and reproductive care, can prevent the health risks associated with early pregnancies and maternal deaths. Programs like the United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) reproductive health initiatives in Nigeria aim to improve access to maternal care, which in turn helps decrease child marriages and related health complications (UNFPA, 2021). Expanding access to clean water and sanitation, as outlined by the World Health Organization (2021), is another important measure to reduce health risks, particularly for girls living in poverty.

In the long term, fostering economic growth and creating job opportunities, particularly for women and girls, is critical in addressing chronic poverty. Sustainable solutions to poverty must focus on generating livelihoods through education, skills development, and access to financial resources. According to the International Labour Organization (2020), promoting gender equality in the workplace and offering women the chance to become economically independent can significantly reduce the exploitation of girls. Governments and NGOs should implement policies that support women's entrepreneurship and provide financial education, which can help lift families out of poverty and diminish the economic need for child labor and early marriages.

4.2. Poverty Reduction Crusade 2025 (Stage One): RESTFARMS AND ASSOCIATES

Restfarms and Associates is an SME registered with the Nigerian Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in late 2024 and with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) in 2024. Its potential start-up date is April 2025 following the availability of funds. Its first phase is targeted at pulling out 100 young graduates and non-graduates, with 60% female, out of poverty every year, through agriculture, accommodation, feeding, mentoring, stipends, and education. We hope to significantly curtail poverty by 2050 in Nigeria through collaboration and the multiplier effect. This is directly in congruence with the vision of this conference. The business hopes to have its online presence in the first quarter of 2025. The CEO is available at osaslucky321@gmail.com.



Figure 6. Poverty Reduction Crusade projection

Source: Author's presentation 2024

Agriculture: Restfarms and associate is basically registered to carry out food and cash crop production and exportation in Nigeria with the registered office in Abuja. In the first phase, 100 hundred skilled and unskilled personnel will be engaged in the farm. The farm will basically be producing Ginger, corn, cassava, yam, poultry, cat fish, and livestock. The farm is targeted to operate in six states in Nigeria. This

will not only reduce poverty, but increase food production and GDP of the nation. Restfarms aimed at providing accommodation for all its staff. This is to ensure mentoring and reorientation of the youth with the goal of raising youth of high integrity and moral standards. Three meals every day is intended to be provided to the staff with medicals and monthly stipends of N25,000 (about \$17 @ N1500 exchange rate) for unskilled and N50,000 (about \$34 @ N1500 exchange rate) for skilled. The education will be performed by the associate to be registered as an NGO in first quarter on 2025 with the proposed name "The Girl Child Rescue Foundation". The focus is to sponsor 100 girl child every while providing daily feeding. Restfarms currently seeks international and national fundings either as grant or a subsidiary of your company. Nigerians will be ever grateful for your involvement in this poverty reduction crusade 2025.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in addressing chronic poverty and reducing the exploitation of girl children, especially in a depressed economy. SMEs create job opportunities, which can serve as an alternative to practices like child labor and early marriage. By promoting gender-inclusive entrepreneurship, SMEs empower women and girls with skills, economic independence, and the ability to make decisions within their communities. Collaborating with foreign partnerships can amplify the effectiveness of these SMEs by providing funding, expertise, and access to international markets, thus enabling the growth of local businesses and job creation. Foreign collaborations can provide financial support for women-led SMEs, increasing their impact and reducing the financial pressure on families that leads to child exploitation (USAID, 2021). Such partnerships can help prevent the exploitation of girls by offering an alternative source of income and improving overall community welfare.

Foreign partnerships can also foster the transfer of skills and technology to SMEs, improving their productivity and sustainability. Programs such as USAID's Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative have successfully partnered with Nigerian SMEs to boost women's participation in the economy through skills training in areas like digital literacy and financial management. These initiatives enhance the potential of women and girls to secure employment in emerging industries, which, in turn, can reduce the likelihood of exploitation. Additionally, foreign investors can support SMEs by integrating them into global supply chains, allowing them to market goods produced by women and girls. Fair Trade partnerships with SMEs are a great example, where international companies source products from local SMEs that employ women, ensuring fair wages and reducing the reliance on exploitative labor practices (Fair Trade International, 2021). These

foreign partnerships create a market for goods produced by SMEs, enhancing social and economic mobility and protecting girls from exploitation.

Moreover, SMEs partnered with foreign companies can implement corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives that directly benefit girls' education and welfare. Foreign companies can direct part of their profits toward funding community programs that combat child marriage, promote education, and provide essential healthcare services. Unilever's partnership with local SMEs in developing countries has provided an example of how such partnerships can empower women and improve the livelihoods of communities, thereby protecting children's rights (Unilever, 2022). These CSR initiatives can also focus on child protection services, further safeguarding girls from exploitation and improving their access to opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable in a depressed economy.

In addition, collaboration between SMEs and foreign investors can increase access to microfinance, helping families avoid the economic hardships that drive them to exploit their children. Microcredit programs can provide families with small loans to start businesses, reducing their dependence on exploitative practices like child labor. For example, Grameen Bank's microfinance initiative in Nigeria, in collaboration with international NGOs, has helped lift families out of poverty and ensured that children can remain in school rather than working (Grameen Bank, 2021). Such microfinance programs help reduce poverty, provide sustainable sources of income, and protect girls from being exploited for economic survival.

4.3. Theories on Poverty Reduction, GCE and Human Rights

To explore the effect of chronic poverty on girl child exploitation and human rights within a depressed economy, various theoretical frameworks provide valuable insights into the interplay between economic hardship, social vulnerability, and human rights violations. One critical framework is the Capability Approach, proposed by economist Amartya Sen. This theory argues that poverty goes beyond the lack of income and encompasses the inability to access essential capabilities like education, health, and social participation (Sen, 1999). In impoverished economies, these deprivations are intensified, leading to the exploitation of vulnerable populations, particularly girls. Chronic poverty limits the ability of families to offer necessary resources, making girls more prone to exploitation, child labor, early marriages, and violations of their rights. The Capability Approach suggests that enhancing girls' capabilities and providing more opportunities can break the cycle of poverty and exploitation.

Another valuable theoretical lens is Human Capital Theory, which suggests that investing in education and skill development results in increased productivity and economic growth (Becker, 1993). However, in a depressed economy, girls often face obstacles in accessing education and personal development due to financial constraints and societal expectations. Without access to education, girls are more likely to face exploitation through child labor or early marriage. Human Capital Theory emphasizes that investing in girls' education and development can have long-term benefits, breaking the cycle of poverty and exploitation. This perspective reinforces the idea that education is an essential tool for empowering girls and protecting their human rights.

Additionally, Social Reproduction Theory provides an understanding of how chronic poverty perpetuates the exploitation of girls within the family and societal structures. This theory, advanced by scholars like Martha Chen and Sylvia Walby, explores how social inequalities are passed down through generations due to unequal access to resources, roles, and labor within households (Walby, 2009). In poverty-stricken families, girls are often expected to assume unpaid domestic work or are married off early to alleviate financial burdens. These expectations and gender norms contribute to the continued exploitation of girls, limiting their opportunities for education and the protection of their rights. Social Reproduction Theory argues that breaking these generational cycles requires challenging societal norms and promoting gender equality in both families and the wider society.

Finally, Human Rights Theory provides a critical perspective on how chronic poverty leads to the violation of girls' rights. According to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948), human rights are universal and inalienable, yet in a depressed economy, these rights are often disregarded. Poverty negatively affects access to basic human rights such as education, healthcare, and protection from exploitation. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) stresses that states must eliminate discrimination and ensure that women and girls are not subjected to harmful practices like child marriage and trafficking (United Nations, 1979). In times of economic hardship, these fundamental rights are often neglected, allowing the exploitation of girls to persist.

5. Conclusion, Summary and Recommendations

The relationship between chronic poverty, girl child exploitation, and human rights in a depressed economy is a complex issue that demands urgent and sustained action. Chronic poverty exacerbates the vulnerability of girls, making them susceptible to exploitation, including child labor, early marriages, trafficking, and lack of education. These practices contribute to a cycle of deprivation and inequality, ultimately hindering both social and economic development. Theoretical frameworks such as the Capability Approach, Human Capital Theory, Social Reproduction Theory, and Human Rights Theory underscore the importance of empowering girls through education, economic opportunities, and legal protections as key solutions to these challenges. In economies facing decline, external support via partnerships with foreign organizations, investment in local SMEs, and effective policy enforcement can help break the cycle of poverty and protect girls from exploitation. Addressing these issues is not only a moral necessity but also crucial for long-term sustainable development and the protection of human rights.

Following recommendations can help address the effects of chronic poverty on girl child exploitation and human rights:

Prioritize Girls' Education: Governments and NGOs should focus on improving access to education for girls, particularly in disadvantaged regions. Expanding programs such as scholarships and free education can help overcome the financial barriers that prevent girls from attending school.

Strengthen Legal Protections: It is essential to enforce laws like the Child Rights Act and CEDAW to prevent the exploitation of girls. Governments must ensure that laws protecting girls from harmful practices are effectively implemented and that perpetrators face legal consequences.

Support Girl Child focus NGOs and SMEs: Promoting and supporting girl child focus NGOs and SMEs through foreign partnerships can create jobs and reduce poverty, providing economic alternatives for families. Encouraging girls and women to pursue entrepreneurship can help break the cycle of poverty and exploitation.

Community Involvement: Local communities must be engaged in raising awareness about the importance of girls' education and the negative consequences of child marriage and exploitation. Collaboration between community leaders, local NGOs, and religious figures can help safeguard girls' rights.

Improve Access to Healthcare: Ensuring that girls have access to reproductive health services and maternal care can prevent early pregnancies and early marriage, reducing their risk of exploitation.

Leverage International Partnerships: Collaboration with international organizations and foreign investors can provide the necessary funding, expertise, and resources to address chronic poverty and child exploitation. These partnerships can also facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology to local businesses, improving economic opportunities for girls and women. RestFarms and Associates is openly for foreign partnership. It was registered in 2024 and with a start up date in 2025. It requires funding and grant to provide employment for 100 youth in the first phase. If focus primarily on agriculture. The cardinal goal is poverty reduction through empowerment through mentor-ship. This conference will be more meaningful when poverty reduction policies and actions are initiated during and after the conference. Paul (AD 60) highlighted in his writings to his friends that anyone that sows sparingly will reap same and anyone that give bountifully will reap also bountifully. Furthermore, in (AD 58-AD 60), he added that when you foes are hungry feed them. Some girl child are hungry in Nigeria led a helping hand.

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