
Ethical Implications of Intellectual Poverty

Peter Oludele Eebo

INTRODUCTION

There was a case of a young man who studied Anatomy and was very good at pig production, he has the technical know-how, but the pig farmers around were using him as a slave. He compounds pig feeds, and the customers still get the feeds on credit. He was seriously wallowing in poverty, but he has what can make him rich. That was why he was advised to open up a consultancy office, where the clients can come for consultation on animal care and feed purchase, this was what brought liberation for him from the grip of poverty, he was not poor but suffering from intellectual poverty. Poverty is a complex phenomenon that generally refers to the inadequacy of resources and the deprivation of choices that would enable people to enjoy decent living conditions⁵⁰⁹,. Yunus on the other hand, defines it as the denial of human rights related to the fulfillment of basic human needs this paper agree with Yunu's opinion that many supposed to live well but they were deprived of their right. Egba sees the signs of Poverty to be be hunger, lack of shelter, being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Ogunleye submitted that losing a child to illness as a result of unclean water, powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom⁵¹⁰. According to the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), poverty is recognized as multidimensional, with complex, interactive, and causal relationships between the

⁵⁰⁹ Msolomba, T.A. I. *Beyond a Dollar; The Poverty Graduation Challenge for South Africa*, <https://doi.org>. (2023)

⁵¹⁰ Ogunleye O. *Towards Sustainable Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria*, <https://doi.org>.(2010).

dimensions. According to SIDA, the poor often lack access to finance and income-earning opportunities. The issue of poverty has been a major concern at both the national and international levels, particularly in developing countries, poverty can be described as a condition in which a society barely survives at a subsistence level, coupled with limited access to the necessities of life, such as clothing, food, and appropriate accommodation.

This work will examine the concept of intellectual poverty, the causes of intellectual poverty, the strategies of overcoming the intellectual poverty and the ethical implication of intellectual poverty on the contemporary youth, especial after graduation from school or acquire a specific skill.

OVERVIEW OF INTELLECTUAL POVERTY

Intellectual poverty can be described as the deficiency in critical thinking, knowledge, and educational resources, often resulting in a limited ability to analyze information, solving complex problems, and developing innovations. It represents a "poverty of the mind" that can exist independently of material wealth. Intellectual poverty can be as a result of inadequate education, poor access to information, or cultural tendencies that favors memorization over critical analysis. It is not merely a lack of formal education but a broader lack of cognitive tools, IQ, expertise, and skills possessed by an individual or group as a whole. It is "lack of reason" in thought processes; this condition is a major barrier to progress, often causing societies to prioritize superficial matters over substantive knowledge. It is often perpetuated by failing educational pursuit which lead to "culture of dependency" where individuals rely on others to think for them, which is limiting the capacity for creativity and problem-solving⁵¹¹

⁵¹¹ Samuel Viavonu, *Poverty of the Mind and Crisis of Consciousness*, Bella Naija,(2024)

Poverty is a recurring concept which is common to many Africans countries

This contagious problem flows from leadership to an individual with parochial thinking of equal blocking others chances, and class mobilization⁵¹².

The leadership of third-world countries does not want to elevate their people's intellect because they want to maintain the existing gap; these countries remain far from prosperity. Apprehensive of backlash, the ruling elites stifle independent thought, and the mental development of people in most developing countries cannot advance or achieve prosperity because of these harsh realities. The only way to ensure a brighter future for developing countries is through the intellectual growth of their inhabitants. To shift the balance of success and glory in favor of the less developed states, developing countries need to eliminate the blight of cognitive deprivation. Without it, developing countries will suffer the consequences of instability, economic decline, and hindered human development

Rosca and Bendel are of the opinion that the situation that lead to Intellectual poverty is not because they are poor but because they cannot reason⁵¹³. Serenti has it that poverty denotes

⁵¹² Medard Rugyendo, *Christian Teaching, Learning and Assumptions about Wealth and Poverty in Biblical Perspective and Some Critical Reflection*, Journal of Popular Education in Africa, Kabale University of Uganda, Online Material (2024).

⁵¹³ Rosca, E and Bendul J. *Sustainable Business Model for the Pyramid; The Role of Customer Participation and Cross-sector Collaboration*, European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, (2016).

people's exclusion from socially adequate living standards and it encompasses a range of deprivations⁵¹⁴.

The dimension of poverty covers different aspects of human capabilities: economic (income, livelihoods, decent work), human (health, education), political (empowerment, rights, voice), socio-cultural (status, dignity) and protective (insecurity, risk, vulnerability)⁵¹⁵

A poverty-alleviation approach that recognizes people with low incomes and provides the basics of life to help them out may not apply to these categories of people because no person can supply intellectual property. In the same way, a larger number of the so-called poor possess significant intellectual property. that is while it is difficult for them

to participate in global knowledge networks because of their illiteracy and poverty level.

Poverty is a crippling form of social exclusion in the growing knowledge of economy, as it adversely affects their advancement at multiple levels. In addressing intellectual poverty, provision should be made for the poor to access global knowledge networks as rightful participants and suppliers of intellectual property that can lead to liberation from poverty and alleviate the effect of poverty as a result of their increased social inclusion, not only through economic benefits, but also through the intellectual improvement and well-being as a result of their increased self-esteem and dignity. Using concepts from social network theory. A poverty-alleviation approach is developed to integrate the intellectual property of the poor into global knowledge networks through trust-based partnerships

⁵¹⁴ Serrenti M. *Decentralization and Poverty Alleviation in Zambia; Achievable Goal or Deceptive Promise?* <https://core.ac.uk>, (2014)

⁵¹⁵ Lar Ravnborg and Helle Munk, *Conceptualizations of Poverty*, Danish Institute for International Studies, Engberg Publications, (2010)

among the poor, non-governmental organizations, and multinational corporations.

CAUSES OF INTELLECTUAL POVERTY

Corruption: The concept of "Corruption" is contested both theoretically and politically and is inherently complex and ambiguous. It occurs at the individual, family, community, or national levels. It is described as "an amoeba, which is shapeless but ineradicable that spreads everywhere because it represents the best of intentions that create the platform for right and rub the elites and grass roots of their right. Momoh sees corruption as any act by a person or group that deprives other people or groups of the collective good of an association, organization, community, society, or a country. The position of this paper about corruption is that the influential people of the community uses their influence to rub the less privileged masses of their fundamental right to make wealth. The World Bank recognizes the harmful effects of corruption, It argues that the practice of corruption "Weakens public service delivery, misdirects public resources, and holds the growth that is necessary to pull people out of poverty"⁵¹⁶.

Corrupted governments always sustain themselves by rewarding supporters and perpetuating patronage networks. Global leaders laid out a roadmap for achieving sustainable development by promoting peace and political stability, At United Nations Millenium summit, by investing significantly in education, healthcare, and infrastructure to enhance human well-being. Sumarto and others recognized the symptom of poor governance and as a major obstacle to poverty reduction efforts⁵¹⁷. which cause a reduction in the quality of goods and

⁵¹⁶ Shah,S.A.H and Khalid, M. *Incompatibility of Laws and Natural Resources, A Case Study of Land Revenue Laws and Their Implications on Federal Areas of Pakistan*, <https://doi.org>, (2007).

⁵¹⁷ Sumarto, S, Susyahadi, A and Arifianto A. *Governance and Poverty Reduction; Evidence from Newly Decentralized Indonesia*, <https://core.ac.uk>, (2003).

services available to the public. Public sector corruption is the abuse of public power for private benefit, preferential access to public goods and services, gratuitous insurance of public procurement and contracts, illegal hiring in the public sector, bribery or graft, and the abuse of official information, leading to the inconsistent application of rules and the forfeiture of public trust.

Corruption has adverse consequences, both direct and indirect, especially for poor countries. Chun sees the higher economic growth rate associated with a higher rate of poverty reduction⁵¹⁸. corruption slows the rate of poverty reduction, undermines economic

growth, and undermines the general welfare of the country's community. It can thus be expected that corrupt governments are interested in private gain rather than in supporting the development of their people and countries, which is intellectual poverty, because they don't believe they can make it except by embezzling the public fund.

Effects of Self-pity in intellectual poverty

Intellectual poverty is a serious problem that stimulate self pity, Which can be developed from lack of mental growth, curiosity, objective thinking, and productive application of knowledge. It narrows perspective, prevents learning from challenges, and halts the emotional growth required for cognitive advancement.

Narrowing of Focus (Self-Absorption): Self-pity causes individuals to focus exclusively on their own pain, misery, or unfair treatment, making them less able to see or understand the broader world, different perspectives, or the needs of

⁵¹⁸ Chun, N. *Middle Class Size in the Past, Present and Future; A Description of Trends in Asia*, <https://doi.org>.(2012).

others⁵¹⁹. This narcissism limits intellectual curiosity and empathy, restricting the mind to a small, repetitive loop of personal grievance.

Distortion of Reality: Self-pity separates the individual from reality, as John Gardner argues that Instead of analyzing a situation objectively to solve problems, a person stuck in self-pity distorts facts to justify their victimhood, thereby impeding critical thinking and intellectual honesty.

Anti-Motivational and Cognitive Stagnation: The passive energy that drains emotion and leads to procrastination, apathy, and the abandonment of intellectual effort is self pity. It prevents people from learning from mistakes by encouraging them to blame external forces rather than engage in the self-reflection needed to gain wisdom.

Entrenchment of Victimhood ("Poor-Me" Syndrome): The "Poor-Me" syndrome involves exaggerating or falsifying personal problems to gain sympathy or avoid responsibility. This fosters a "persecution complex" that discourages taking responsibility for personal growth, leading to intellectual stagnation and a failure to develop skills to manage adversity

Intellectual "Mediocrity": Self-pity is often associated with a life of mediocrity, characterized by an inability to accept responsibility or take action, which prevents the development of one's potential. It restricts the intellectual capacity to imagine and work towards a better future.

Lack of creativity:

Lack of creativity is a root cause of intellectual poverty, limiting an individual's or society's ability to innovate, solve problems, and adapt to new challenges, leading to economic and mental

⁵¹⁹ International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science on Special Issues in Sociology, www.rsisinternational.org, (2025).

stagnation. Intellectual poverty in this context is defined not just by a lack of resources, but by a "poor state of mind" that restricts the generation of new ideas, reliance on existing outdated methods, and a failure to "think outside the box".

Failure to Address Local Challenges: Intellectual creativity is meant to solve personal challenges, any individual who fail to use the creativity to solve daily problems, remain reliant on external solutions or succumbs to chronic poverty. This lack of "innovative application" of ideas keeps communities from transforming their circumstances.

Stifled Economic Development: Production of any material to satisfy the societal need requires the use of Intellectual reasoning. When there is a lack of creative skills to produce locally designed products, create jobs, and foster self-reliance. The inability to produce new, valuable ideas ("disruptive products") prevents businesses from scaling beyond local markets, leading to economic dependence⁵²⁰

Cultural and Educational Rigidity: Education is good, but if the educational systems is prioritized against the exploration (sometimes described as "factory schooling") such system suppress creativity, creating an uninspired workforce incapable of critical thinking.

Risk Aversion and Fear: A lack of creative thinking is often rooted in fear a "security hunting" mentality that avoids risk, which in turn inhibits the ability to innovate or experiment with new methods.

Poor Mental Mapping: A poor mind is often one educated to doubt its own capacity for innovation, placing value on following established, inefficient patterns rather than generating new

⁵²⁰ Elizabeth L. Hinson Hasty, *The Problem of Wealth: A Christian Response to a Culture of Affluence*, New York Orbis Book Publication, New York, (2023).

knowledge, which perpetuates a cycle of intellectual and material poverty.

Conversely, scarcity can sometimes force creativity, but if the capacity for creative thinking is low, individuals are more likely to stay stuck in poverty, unable to imagine a different future.

White collar job syndrome:

White-collar jobs are good but they are a strong catalyst for "intellectual poverty" a state of stagnant mental growth, reduced creativity, and financial dependency by creating a "comfortable cage" that discourages risk-taking, skill diversification, and entrepreneurial thinking. While these jobs often offer stability, they can trap employees in a cycle of high consumption, stress, and routine.

Stagnation of Potential: The pursuit of secure white-collar jobs often leads individuals to abandon creative and entrepreneurial pursuits, wasting inherent talents and "latent potentials".

Illusion of Safety: Many white-collar workers rely on a steady salary, which can lead to a false sense of security that discourages the development of alternative income streams or new skills, leaving them vulnerable to sudden layoffs.

Monotony and Reduced Critical Thinking: White-collar jobs require decision-making, it can become repetitive, reducing opportunities for high-level creative thought. The work is often described as a "cushy job" that can feel monotonous.

Mental Routine: The nature of office work may lead to intellectual laziness, where workers operate on autopilot rather than innovating.

Lifestyle Creep: White-collar jobs often trick workers into "shinier consumption," where increased salaries lead to higher expenses (nicer cars, better apartments) rather than true wealth creation.

Lack of Financial Independence: High consumption levels mean many white-collar workers live paycheck-to-paycheck, creating a situation where they are financially dependent on a job they might dislike.

Burnout and Mental Fatigue: There is no work that is not stressful, but White-collar jobs are more stressful and do not give room for other thing after work, competitive environments, and tight deadlines, which lead to burnout and reduce mental energy needed for intellectual pursuits outside of work.

Loss of Freedom: The need to maintain a "shirt and tie" standard can, in some cases, result in high-stress, low-paying jobs that offer little in the way of personal or intellectual fulfillment⁵²¹.

"Certificate" Mentality: The degree mentality has subdued creativity, the society has shifted their focus from psychomotor to cognitive that is why all the mind set is on obtaining degrees for white-collar work. That is why many youths pursue "certificates" rather than practical skills, leading to a "waste of education" and a lack of practical, value-creating abilities.

Neglect of Entrepreneurship: The fixation on white-collar jobs means that fewer people are engaged in Entrepreneurship or skill-based pursuits (like technology, photography, or trade) that can lead to greater intellectual and financial freedom. "intellectual poverty" of the white-collar worker often stems from a lack of, or fear of pursuing, opportunities to innovate, create, and diversify skills outside of a structured, and often stagnant, corporate environment.

Conservative saving mentality:

⁵²¹ United Nation, *Rethink Poverty*, Department of Economy and Social Affair, United Nation Publication, New York. (2010)

A conservative saving mentality prioritizes the accumulation of cash or low-risk assets over consumption or investment and can contribute to intellectual poverty, the lack of curiosity, critical thinking, and intellectual risk-taking, rather than just financial poverty.

The analysis of saving mentalities shows that what they can save is more important than what they can invest, that is why the conservative saving mentality will always lead to intellectual poverty.

Risk Aversion Inhibits Learning: Life is risk, but the conservative mentality will always avoid risk, extending beyond finance into intellectual endeavors. The fear of failure or loss can restrict a person from pursuing new learning opportunities, unfamiliar ideas, or intellectual challenges, limiting intellectual growth.

Fixation on "Known" Information: Information is power, it is needed to maintain security and preserving the standard. In intellectual terms. This manifests as a reluctance to question the authority, even when they are potentially outdated, leading to intellectual rigidity and a lack of innovation.

Opportunity Cost of Resources: Priority is very important in the management of resources. Many underinvest the tangible assets, because of their wrong priority.

Neglect of Strategic Investment: The conservative saving mentality can be self-defeating in the long run. By ignoring the need to invest in oneself (intellectually) to save money, a person may end up in a high-stress, low-learning environment that prevents them from engaging with new ideas.

Lack of Long-Term Foresight: A hyper-focus on immediate security can prevent the long-term thinking required to "invest" in intellectual capacity-building, which rarely provides an

immediate return on investment but is essential for long-term competence⁵²².

Saving is essential for financial stability, but rigid conservative approach to it can foster an environment where intellectual risks are not taken, intellectual curiosity is stunted, and personal growth is neglected.

The concept of poverty are;

Income intellectual poverty has two variations;

Absolute intellectual poverty: This measures the number of people with inadequate income to obtain basic necessities of life and do not think of multiplying the little income they have; rather, they incur debt before they have access to more money; such a person will never graduate from a debtor.

Relative intellectual poverty: This concept relates to the inequalities of income distribution, people are defined as poor even if they have an adequate income for survival, as long as their income cannot allow them to obtain goods and services to meet the societal standard of life. This is found among salary earners, they are rest assured that something come in on a monthly basis, but the demand is greater than the income, the mentality of looking for miscellaneous income will not be there for them because they believe they are better than those selling things, of which they will still be buying those things on credit from those that are selling. Their mentality will be that the case is universal: because they cannot use their intelligence to generate more income with their conventional income, they will always remain borrowers.

Human intellectual poverty: This is based on the theory that poverty involves more than just a lack of income. It means

⁵²² Joseph E. Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean Paul Fitoussi, *Multidimensional of Poverty*, Sarkozy Initiated, Stiglitz Publication, (2009).

denying choices and opportunities for an acceptable life, rather than measuring poverty by income, it examines the basic dimensions of deprivation, such as early death, malnutrition, illiteracy, access to health care, and safe water. Humanly speaking, there are many rich and poor in society. Intellectually, they believe in keeping money rather than spending it; what gives them joy is seeing the pool of money in their account. It is difficult for them to eat good food with their money; they prefer to manage like others so that people will not see them as rich. Most of them are seriously industrious but die like a lazy man. Poverty is a continuation of the process of self-emptying and self-forgetfulness which began with his agreement to en-flesh the word of his Father's promise to Israel. Christ's decision never to grasp after the things of the world reflects surely his conformity to his Father's will; but this is a conformity arising out of confidence and faith so profound, so compelling, that Christ can resist the temptation to establish and confirm his identity in anything but his Father's love. He knows himself as his Father's Son, as the loved One of God; in this knowledge, he finds not only his strength to work, but also his freedom to forego the satisfaction of accumulating the products made available as a result of his labour⁵²³.

STRATEGIES OF OVERCOMING INTELLECTUAL POVERTY

Overcoming intellectual poverty requires access to education, knowledge, critical thinking skills, and intellectual resources, requiring a deliberate shift in mindset, continuous learning, and the active application of knowledge. It involves moving from a state of passive limitation to an active, growth-oriented mindset. The assignment of overcoming intellectual poverty is entrusted on the religion leaders, the educators and the societal leaders to orientate people on how to overcome this challenge

⁵²³ Vincent J. Genovesi, *Christian Poverty, Sign of Faith and Redemptive Force*, American Theological Library, Atlanta, (2016).

and how they can be relevant in the community with their acquire skills.

Embrace a Growth Mindset: Replace "I cannot" with "I can learn how". Believe that intelligence and skills can be developed through dedication and hard work.

Shift from Scarcity to Abundance: Stop focusing on limitations (poverty mindset) and start recognizing opportunities (abundance mindset). This involves overcoming self-doubt and fear of failure.

Take Personal Responsibility: Stop blaming circumstances, parents, or the economy. Accept that your intellectual and financial destiny is in your own hands.

Cultivate Curiosity: Actively seek knowledge, ask questions, and challenge the authority rather than accepting things as they are.

Prioritize Continuous Learning: People should View education as a lifelong process, not just formal schooling, Develop Critical Thinking: Individual Should learn to analyze information rather than accepting it unquestioningly. Intellectual poverty is often maintained by a lack of ability to evaluate information.

Acquire Financial Literacy: Individual should understand the principles of money management, including budgeting, saving, and investing, to break the link between ignorance and lack

Utilize Technology: Use the internet to access free educational resources, platforms, and tools that enhance skills and knowledge.

Turn Information into Action: Knowledge is only power if it is applied. Move from passive consumption to productive action.

Develop Specific Skills: Focus on mastering one or more skills that are highly valued like, STEM, digital skills, trade skills).

Set Clear Goals: Define specific, measurable goals to guide your learning and work.

Consistency and Discipline: Maintain the discipline to work on your development daily. Small, consistent efforts build long-term success.

Seek Mentorship: Connect with people who have a 'rich' mindset those who are more successful or knowledgeable than you.

Curate Your Circle: Surround yourself with positive, driven individuals. Avoid influences that reinforce limitation or laziness.

Practice Generosity: Giving time or resources, even when limited, helps shift the mindset from lack to abundance⁵²⁴.

Mind you, "Until you deal with the poverty of the mind, physical poverty will keep following."

Poverty is often intellectualized in one of these fundamental ways:

Poverty is the violation of elementary absolute standards of social justice. Social justice emphasizes core principles of non-discrimination and equality, including equal entitlement to fulfillment through exercise of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. These principles necessarily give rise to a set of socio-economic priorities that direct policy focus to issues of vulnerability, discrimination, and segregated development. East and Asiabinab were of the opinion that social justice requires that everyone should have a minimal standard of living, and that people living in poverty should receive

⁵²⁴ Hellen Rhee, *Wealth and Poverty in Early Christian*, Fortress Press Minneapolis USA, (2017)

assistance when they lack the means to live lives that affirm their human worth and dignity⁵²⁵.

Poverty is found at center of the stage and that is why hostility is dominating⁵²⁶.

Olubayo and Aderonmu were of the opinion that the eradication of poverty is a moral and ethical imperative, rooted in the principles of rational thinking.⁵²⁷ Asianab and Teng submitted that for man to live life free from poverty and hunger such a person must understand the fundamental human rights and fundamental freedoms as it is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 25 (1) of the Declaration states that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services". This right is further reaffirmed in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights⁵²⁸, These human rights instruments acknowledge that human rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human⁵²⁹. Extreme poverty has also been recognized as a violation of human rights, even of the right to life itself⁵³⁰.

⁵²⁵ East C.J. *An investigation of the lived reality of the Disjuncture Between Policy and Practice in the Implementation of South Africa's Disability Grant*, <https://core.ac.uk>, (2012).

⁵²⁶ Asianab, P.A and Teng-Zeng F.K, *Influence of Conditional Cash Transfer on Household Economic Outcomes; Perspective of Lively-hood Empowerment against Poverty Beneficiaries in Balsa North District of Ghana*, <https://core.ac.uk>, (2020).

⁵²⁷ Olubayo Fatiregun M. and Aderonmu K. *Poverty Eradication and Sustainable of Healthful Living in Nigeria*,<https://doi.org>. (2011).

⁵²⁸ Asianab and Teng, 2020

⁵²⁹ Hartogh, D. *Is Human Dignity the Ground of Human right?* Cambridge University Press Book,<https://doi.org>. (2014).

⁵³⁰United Nation 2006.

Multi-dimensional condition of poverty: Poverty has various manifestations, according to Olubaya, that it starting from lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing, unsafe environments, and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by a lack of participation in decision making⁵³¹. In civil, social and cultural life Rationally there is no poor man neither is there a rich man, richness and poverty lies in the reasoning, if a man sees himself as rich, no matter the level of income every one that sees him will see a seemingly rich man and will be comporting himself as rich every he goes, because he has already developed riches mentality, in the same way the poverty, because it is in the mind, everyone that have poverty mindset will find it difficult to live right.

The level of income does not make a man rich or poor; it is the mindset. The multidimensional nature of poverty is found in the state of mind. Olubay affirmed that Poverty is not simply a lack of adequate income. It is a multidimensional phenomenon that extends beyond the economic arena to encompass factors such as the inability to participate in social and political life, poverty is the deprivation of one's ability to live as a free and dignified human being with the full potential to achieve his desired goals in life. To a rational man, poverty is just like a sheet of paper that can be discarded, but to a mediocre, poverty is a heavy load that a person cannot carry until there are helping hands before it can be overcome. From a multidimensional perspective, what matters is a focus on opportunities, such as endowment, access to markets, and the talents available to people. If an individual lacks sufficient endowments or capabilities, such as

⁵³¹Olubayo and Aderonmu, 2011

a basic education, or does not have the opportunity to acquire them, he or she will have limited ability to escape poverty⁵³².

As a relationally shaped condition, where people are poor because of the social relations⁵³³

relations concerning gender, labour, land, and location: Intellectually, many have written themselves off from being rich because of the kind of the work they are doing, the kind of family they find themselves and the nature of their gender. From the family set up, it has been written on some family and have taking it as their fate that there is no how they work, they have to die poor, and have been handed down to the following generation that there is no riches in their family, to worsen the matter, the religion leaders will also complement the fact that the way it has been happening with the predecessors so will it be with the children, no matter how they tried. The same applicable to some works, it is believe that if a man is doing some certain work, he cannot go beyond food every other thing will be impossible, but they do not not take time to check others that are doing the same work or that are living in the place that they made it. That is why it is intellectual poverty, because it has already been written in their mind that no matter how they tried they must be poor. ⁵³⁴

The Functions of Poverty

The popular saying says that, if every citizen is rich, who will be serving others, that is why Gans extracts some of the functions of poverty, intellectually, Gan was coming from the perspective the that poverty is part of human being that was why he said that poverty should persist, only that it 'survives in part because it is useful to a number of groups in society whether

⁵³² Martinez Trevino E.S, Las Person as *Pobres enel Discurso de la Organization de la Naciones unidas Sobre el desarrollo Sostreible*, <https://core.ac.uk>, (2015).

⁵³³ Lars and Hellen, 2010

⁵³⁴ United Nation, 2010

the disadvantages outweigh the advantages, it is a question that clearly deserves study'. He points out that alternatives can be found easily enough for some functions. Thus, the process can begin to remove the need for dirty work, and professional efforts can be directed, like those of social workers, to the more affluent, and those of the police to traffic problems and organized crime⁵³⁵.

But he argues that status, mobility, and political functions are more difficult to substitute for in a hierarchical society, and that though inequality of status might be reduced, it cannot be removed. From Collision course it was determined that poverty persists not only because it satisfies a number of functions but also because many of the functional alternatives to poverty would be quite dysfunctional for the more affluent members of society.

One application of the functionalist approach to the phenomenon of poverty allows us to draw general lessons. Gans has reflected at some length on the functions of poverty, taking up Merton's point that items which are functional for some sub-groups in society may be dysfunctional for others.¹ Society, he argues, is so preoccupied outwardly with the 'costs' of poverty that it fails to identify the corresponding benefits, or rather, the groups or values that benefit can never be eradicated⁵³⁶

- Poverty helps to ensure that dirty, dangerous, menial and undignified work gets done.
- The poor subsidize the affluent by saving them money (for example, domestic servants, medical guinea pigs, and the poor paying regressive taxes).
- Poverty creates jobs in a number of professions (like drug peddlers, prostitutes, pawnshops, army, police).

⁵³⁵ Gans, H. *The Positive Functions of Poverty*. America: Online Publication, 1972.

⁵³⁶ Joseph Jean 2009.

- The poor buy shoddy, stale and damaged goods (like. day-old bread, vegetables, second-hand clothes) which prolongs their economic usefulness, and similarly use poorly trained and incompetent professional people, such as doctors and teachers.
- The poor help to uphold the legitimacy of dominant norms by providing examples of deviance (the lazy, spendthrift, dishonest, promiscuous).
- The poor help to provide emotional satisfaction, evoking compassion, pity and charity, so that the affluent may feel righteous.
- The poor offer affluent people vicarious participation in sexual, alcoholic and narcotic behavior.
- Poverty helps to guarantee the status of the rich.
- The poor assist in the upward mobility of the rich. (By being denied educational opportunities or being stereotyped as stupid or unreachable, the poor enable others to obtain the better jobs.)
- The poor add to the social viability of lower class (like fund-raising, running settlements, other philanthropic activities).
- The poor perform cultural functions, like providing labour for Egyptian pyramids, Greek temples and medieval churches.
- The poor provide 'low' culture which is often adopted by the more affluent (such as, jazz, blues, spirituals, country music).
- The poor serve as symbolic constituencies and opponents for several political groups (being seen either as the depressed or as 'welfare chiselers
- 14.The poor can absorb economic and political costs of change and growth in American society (in reconstruction of city centers, industrialization).

- The poor play a relatively small part in the political process and indirectly allow the interests of others to become dominant and distort the system⁵³⁷

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF INTELLECTUAL POVERTY

Intellectual poverty is not the poverty of only the poor but the poverty of those that cannot use their intellect appropriately. There are graduates roaming about the street with professional corticated that just need to start from simple reasoning to be solving others problems and be getting money, but they will be waiting for white collar job, which may make them to be wallowing in poverty. There are steps to take ethically to eradicate poverty but the first ethical step to be taken in eradicating intellectual poverty is,

Intellectual development: Riches do not come from money; they come from intellectual engagement. Many are like those placed in the riches and still languish in poverty because they cannot engage their intellect. The ethical concept of riches is solving someone's problem and get money. Ethically, it shows that that person has money and the person can reason appropriately, from simple reasoning.

An intellect person must get money, therefore develop their intellect and earn money⁵³⁸

Increase income and creativity: Poverty is not only about income but a multidimensional phenomenon that also involves health, housing, education, and participation; therefore, poverty reduction would be more complex. An increase in income will affect some of these areas but not all, creativity of an individual will reduce use and dump syndrome, the salary

⁵³⁷ Joseph and Jean2009

⁵³⁸ Mohammed Anisur Rahman, *Poverty Reduction and Ethics*, Research Fellow, University of Chittagong, online Material,(1976).

is just for maintenance, no matter the amount, but if the worker can be creative, ethically he will have something that he can do, so that when he decide to quit the job that has been taken his time he will expel the energy on what will be useful for him and the family and will no longer be a dependent.

Be focused and be intentional: Many see riches in the fragmentation of works; they engage in different kinds of businesses, but unfortunately, they do not know more about them. They will be spending money on all the businesses at the end of the day; none of the businesses will be able to cover the expenses. Still, if the businessperson is focused and uses all his effort to develop one business, he will not be distracted and will not be wasting income unnecessarily.

Redistribution of resources: Poverty in the domain of ethics is not merely a condition of material scarcity, but a moral issue that raises questions about justice, responsibility, human dignity, and societal obligations, as ethicists in this realm explore poverty as a state that challenges the principles of fairness, the distribution of resources, and the duties of individuals. The resources must be channeled in the right direction so as not to waste the limited resources available, thereby eradicating poverty ethically.

ROLES OF THE CHURCH IN ALLEVIATING INTELLECTUAL POVERTY

Church is an important organization that is saddled with the responsibilities of service to God and service to humanity. undoubtedly there will be both physical poverty and intellectual poverty, but it has become the responsibility of the church to work the way out for the church members so as to overcome the challenge of either of the poverty, the following the suggested steps according to Uche to be taken by the church on the church members if they will overcome the intellectual poverty.

1. Education on way out of poverty: The poor needs to be educated and armed with knowledge that will enable them become productive and self-reliant. Education here means education of the head and the hands. Education of the head refers to cognitive knowledge while that of the hand refers to practical know-how. The quality of education offered in Nigeria today has remained mainly in the cognitive zone. It is more theoretical than practical. There are many graduates today who have the theoretical knowledge but lack the practical knowledge to practice what they have learnt. The church should strive to provide education that will affect the head and the hands.

2. Productive skill acquisition programs: Skill acquisition is the form of training by individuals or group of individuals that can lead to the acquisition of knowledge for self-sustenance. Skill acquisition involves training people in different fields of trade under a legal agreement between the trainer and the trainee. Establishing skill acquisition centers equipped with the requisite manpower and equipment that will enable the trainee to acquire the needed skills for self sustenance and wealth creation is a practical effort which the church can make in relation to poverty reduction. When the poor and unemployed are armed with necessary skills, they will be able to fend for themselves. This will reduce the prevalence of drug abuse and other vices.

3. Provision of soft loan facility: The church needs to setup funds that would cater for the small loans needed to drive small businesses. Materials and equipment such as sewing machine could be provided for those trained in garment making to enable them start-up something. Again, the church could organize the poor and encourage them to form cooperative societies. These societies can apply and secure government grants for agriculture and small businesses. Beneficiaries of this church funds should be monitored to ensure that the funds are not used for things other than what they were intended for.

4.Establishment of Principles of finance management: This could be done through seminars and symposia. The Church can leverage on her ability to reach the lower stratum of the society to identify and mobilize the poor within their area of influence for such programs. They can work in conjunction with their host communities to offer these enlightenment programs aimed at arming the poor with knowledge that are capable of lifting them out of poverty. Poverty alleviation is capital intensive project.

As a non-profit making organization, the church lacks adequate resources to implement far-reaching intervention. The church should, therefore reach out to both government and non-governmental agencies as well as donor agencies to source for the needed fund to execute meaningful poverty reduction interventions⁵³⁹. No doubt, the church was established to care for the total man. Its mission includes spiritual, social and economic emancipation of man. The early church in Acts of the Apostles embodied this concept of mission that speaks to the soul and body of man. Early disciples provided spiritual, social and material nourishment to the disciples such that no one lacked anything. Wealthy members contributed part of their wealth to ensure that all were taken care of

Conclusion

Intellectual poverty has deeply affected the dignified people in the country, whether literate or illiterate. The challenging part is that poverty opens people's eyes to different kinds of corrupt practices, such as taking bribes or embezzling funds. Campbell submitted that lack of resources can lead to a sense of desperation, corruption, and a survival instinct for basic needs of life, which can override ethical principles. Survival instinct

⁵³⁹ Unche, O.C, *The Roles of the Church in Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria*, Department of Religion and Human Relations, Nnamdi Azikwe University Awka, Nigerian Journal of Arts and Humanities.(2022)

blocks proper ethical reasoning. It corrupts people's thinking faculty. This encroachment on man's ethical standards can, in the end, lead to a revolution in the universal perspective on particular ethical ideas or even the general understanding of ethics. This is because individuals would like to fit the self-oriented tendencies into the realm of ethics. People living in poverty may not have access to the same opportunities as their affluent counterparts, providing fertile ground for ethical delimitation that affects ethical choices and intellectual development. The set of people tagged poor are those who spend their limited resources on things that do not add value to them or improve their economic status. Let everybody develop their intelligence, channel limited resources appropriately, be creative, and be focused. The so-called rich will have nobody to molest any longer, because everybody will be able to use his intellect to provide for his immediate needs.

Sources

- Genovesi, Vincent J. *Christian Poverty: Sign of Faith and Redemptive Force*. America: Online, 2016.
- Gans H. *The Positive Functions of Poverty*, American Journal of Sociological Publication, (1972).
- Hasty, Elizabeth L. Hinso. *The Problem of Wealth; A Christian Response to a Culture of Affluence*. New York: Orbis Publications, 2025.
- Joseph E. Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean Paul Fitoussi. *Multidimensional of Poverty*. Online: Stiglitz Publication, 2009.
- Lar Ravnborg and Hellen Munk. *Conceptualizations of Poverty*. Online: Engberg Publication, 2010.
- Nation, United. *Characteristics of Poverty*. United Kingdom: Online Material, 2006.
- . *Rethink Povert*. New York: United Nation Publication, 2010.
- Rahaman, Mohammed Anisur. *Poverty Reduction and Ethics*. Chittagong: Online Material, 1976.
- Medard Rugyendo, *Christian Teaching, Learning and Assumptions about Wealth and Poverty in Biblical Perspective and Some Critical Reflection*. Uganda: Online material, 2024.
- Russell, Fikkert. *From Dependent to Dignity; How to Alleviate Poverty Through Church Centered Microfinance Bank*. America: Zonderan Publication, 2015.
- Science, Social. Special Issues on Poverty*. Online: www.rsisinternational.org, 2010.

- Sridevi Shivarajan and Aravaind Srinivasan. *The Poor as The Suppliers Intellectual Poverty; A Social Network Approach to Sustainable Poverty Alleviation*. USA: University Press, 2015.
- Samuel, Viavonu, *Poverty of the Mind and Crisis of Consciousness*. Nigeria: Bella Publications, 2020.
- Msolomba, T.A. I. *Beyond a Dollar; The Poverty Graduation Challenge for South Africa*, <https://doi.org>. (2023)
- Egba, N.A. and Ngwakwe P.C, *Impact of Poverty on Child Health and Development*, <https://core.ac.uk>, (2015)
- Ogunleye O. *Towards Sustainable Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria*, <https://doi.org>.(2010).
- Rosca, E and Bendul J. *Sustainable Business Model for the Pyramid; The Role of Customer Participation and Cross-sector Collaboration*, European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship, (2016).
- Serrenti M. *Decentralization and Poverty Alleviation in Zambia; Achievable Goal or Deceptive Promise?* <https://core.ac.uk>, (2014)
- Shah,S.A.H and Khalid, M. *Incompatibility of Laws and Natural Resources, A Case Study of Land Revenue Laws and Their Implications on Federal Areas of Pakistan*, <https://doi.org>, (2007).
- International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science on Special Issues in Sociology, www.rsisinternational.org, (2025).
- Sumarto, S, Susyahadi, A and Arifianto A. *Governance and Poverty Reduction; Evidence from Newly Decentralized Indonesia*, <https://core.ac.uk>, (2003).
- Chun, N. *Middle Class Size in the Past, Present and Future; A Description of Trends in Asia*, <https://doi.org>.(2012).
- Elizabeth L. Hinson Hasty, *The Problem of Wealth: A Christian Response to a Culture of Affluence*, New York Orbis Book Publication, New York, (2023).
- United Nation, *Rethink Poverty, Department of Economy and Social Affair*, United Nation Publication, New York. (2010)
- Joseph E. Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean Paul Fitoussi, *Multidimensional of Poverty*, Sarkozy Initiated, Stiglitz Publication, (2009).
- Vincent J. Genovesi, *Christian Poverty, Sign of Faith and Redemptive Force*, American Theological Library, Atlanta, (2016).
- Hellen Rhee, *Wealth and Poverty in Early Christian*, Fortress Press Minneapolis USA, (2017).
- East C.J. *An investigation of the lived reality of the Disjuncture Between Policy and Practice in the Implementation of South Africa's Disability Grant*, <https://core.ac.uk>, (2012).
- Fikkert Russel, *From Dependent to Dignity, How to Alleviate Poverty Through Church Centred Microfinance Bank* Zondervan Publication, (2015).
- Olubayo Fatiregun M. and Aderonmu K. *Poverty Eradication and Sustainable of Healthful Living in Nigeria*,<https://doi.org>. (2011).
- Asinab, P.A and Teng-Zeng F.K, *Influence of Conditional Cash Transfer on Household Economic Outcomes; Perspective of Lively-hood Empowerment*

- against Poverty Beneficiaries in Bulsa North District of Ghana*,
<https://core.ac.uk>, (2020).
- Hartogh, D. *Is Human Dignity the Ground of Human right?* Cambridge University Press Book, <https://doi.org>. (2014).
- United Nation, *Characteristics of poverty*, World Summit for Social Development. (2026).
- Martinez Trevino E.S, *Las Person as Pobres enel Discurso de la Organization de la Naciones unidas Sobre el desarrollo Sostreible*, <https://core.ac.uk>, (2015).
- Lar Ravnborg and Hellen Munk, *Conceptualization of Poverty*, Danish Institute for International Studies, Engberg Publication, (2010).
- Collision Course, *Economic Change, Criminal Justice Reform and Work in America*. nd
- Campbell ,B. *What Constitutes a good Enough life for someone with life Experience of Homeless and Drug or Alcohol Addiction?* <https://doi.org>. nd.
- Unche, O.C, *The Roles of the Church in Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria*, Department of Religion and Human Relations, Nnamdi Azikwe University Awka, *Nigerian Journal of Arts and Humanities*.(2022)
- Vivid, *Effective Self-Improvement Techniques to Transform Your Life* nd
- .Jesse LeBeau, *Essential Questions Every Successful Parent Should Consider* - . <https://www.jesselebeau.com/10-essential-questions-every-successful-parent-should-consider>