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TRANSITION TOWARDS ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN AFRICA

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Abstract. This study examines the state of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) One, which is to eradicate poverty in Africa. This study was inspired by the reality that most African nations suffer from political unrest, tyranny, conflicts, and natural disasters caused by the climate, all of which harm socioeconomic development at both country-specific and regional levels. The study examines the extent of poverty in an African context from a holistic perspective before discussing trends and determining whether poverty has worsened or improved over time. The study also identifies barriers to SDG One implementation in the region. The study aims to investigate the different interventions needed to implement SDG One successfully. Finding answers to the guiding question involved adopting a qualitative desktop study and gathering data by analysing various secondary documents. The study aims to answer the following research questions: what causes poverty in African countries, and what interventions are required to achieve SDG One in the region? The study's framework was based on the human capabilities approach (HCA). The research examines the social, political, economic, and environmental variables that could impede the region's efforts to implement SDG One. The study discusses best practices and suggests interventions to improve the situation.

Keywords: Africa; human capabilities approach; poverty; qualitative study; sustainable development goals (SDGs); SDG One.

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JEL Classifications: O1, O2, O4, O5

Additional disciplines: Public management, African studies, Economics

1. Introduction

Africa is a region of diverse landscapes with some developed, few developing, many underdeveloped countries and even landlocked ones with diverse economic status quo, also "with little human capital, population, and land area", as specified in the report of the World Bank (WB) (2023a:1). This scenario illustrates the diversity of the continent's poverty landscape. Numerous barriers to development exist in the area. The most recent economic update for the region, as further stated by the WB (2023a:1), showed that in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), there was a decline of economic development that dropped to 2.5 per cent in 2023 from 3.6 per cent in 2022. It is recorded that people with a daily income of less than $1.90 per day are residing in SSA nations. Poverty is not desirable, but it does exist because some people are unable to afford the necessities of life, according to the opinions of Oluwatosin and Omolara (2023:7). According to Adesina and Campbell (2023), most of the world's impoverished people reside in SSA countries in terms of income poverty, multidimensional poverty, health poverty, education poverty, unemployment and inadequate employment poverty, and education poverty. It is further necessary to note that 462 million people in the region were still living in extreme

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poverty in 2023, as stated in the report of the WB (2023a). The status of SDG One and its relationship to poverty in the African context are examined in this study.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by United Nations (UN) Member States in 2015, after the non-realisation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs are, therefore, considered the post-MDG goals that were established to advance the development goals with more targets, with an imperative objective of poverty eradication by 2030. Countries have therefore pledged to accelerate growth under the 'Leave No One Behind' initiative to support those initially behind the most. Consequently, many life-altering zeros are the goal of the SDGs, such as zero hunger and zero poverty, as emphasised by Adamec, Holzinger and Franz (2015:8, in Vyas-Doorgapersad 2024:246). The world is strongly encouraged to shift towards a more sustainable path as guided by the SDGs, which require a commitment to address some of the most pressing problems the world is currently facing, emphasises Prasetyo (2020:304, in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022:626; further cited in Vyas-Doorgapersad 2024:246), such as poverty, hence the focus of this study. The article explores SDG One, which is No Poverty. Because poverty has many facets, it can be characterised in several ways. Poverty has traditionally been defined historically in terms of money. It changed from a 19th-century viewpoint of survival depending on an individual's requirements to a mid-20th-century perspective of surviving because of the absence of necessities. In addition to essential amenities and services like sanitation, health care, and education, this also covers subsistence necessities, as emphasised by Ludi and Bird (2007, in Makhubu & Vyas-Doorgapersad 2022:150). Between the middle and end of the 20th century, income and other social factors were included in the definition and understanding of poverty. In terms of money, persons who earn less than $1 per day are considered impoverished, highlights Ludi and Bird (2007:1, in Makhubu & Vyas-Doorgapersad 2022:150). As further elaborated by Ludi and Bird (2007:1, in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020:3), in social terms people who live in a situation that prevents them from reaching their full potential are generally regarded as impoverished. Lötter (2007, cited in Vyas-Doorgapersad 2020, 2021; Makhubu & Vyas-Doorgapersad 2022:150) states that in everyday language, the term ‘poor’ only refers to humans. It is an evaluation tool that societies and institutions use to establish minimum requirements for those facets of lifestyle that can be obtained economically.

This study uses a qualitative research approach that emphasises “the socially constructed nature of reality” (Bauwens, Kennes & Bauwens 2013:1, in Jansen 2024:18) and recognises the situational constraints that influence their research. A practical method of investigation is qualitative research (Repko 2008:202, in Jansen 2024:18). In qualitative research, the researcher's actions and decisions dictate the research design or strategy. A qualitative researcher develops the research project based on the chosen strategy (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport 2002:272, in Jansen 2024:18). The data is collected through literature review, that is the process of “searching and evaluating the available literature in a researcher's chosen subject or topic area”, according to Neuman (2000:445, in Maile 2022:13). A literature review describes, summarises, and critically evaluates these works regarding the research problem at hand. It entails studying and analysing books, academic papers, and other scholarly sources of information related to a specific issue, field of study, or theory (Maile 2022:13). The data was analysed through conceptual analysis. In addition to highlighting connections between concepts or constructs in a given field, a conceptual analysis is essential for guaranteeing that problematic concepts are precisely defined (Nyikadzino 2020:28). Enhancing the understanding of how concepts are or can be used for communicating ideas about a given field of interest is the goal of using conceptual analysis as a method of inquiry, as indicated by Furner (2004:233, in Nyikadzino 2020:28).

The study considers the human capabilities approach (HCA) as a theoretical framework for this study. According to the HCA approach, in the opinions of Ramber and Mosweunyane (2017:291, in Makhubo 2020:51), capabilities are chances for people to flourish or find happiness by pursuing meaningful things. This approach recognises the socioeconomic positioning of current and aspiring entrepreneurs, their unique beings, and what they can do with their personal, material, and social resources, rather than concentrating on the assets that these entrepreneurs possess and assuming that all entrepreneurs are equally positioned about these resources (refer to

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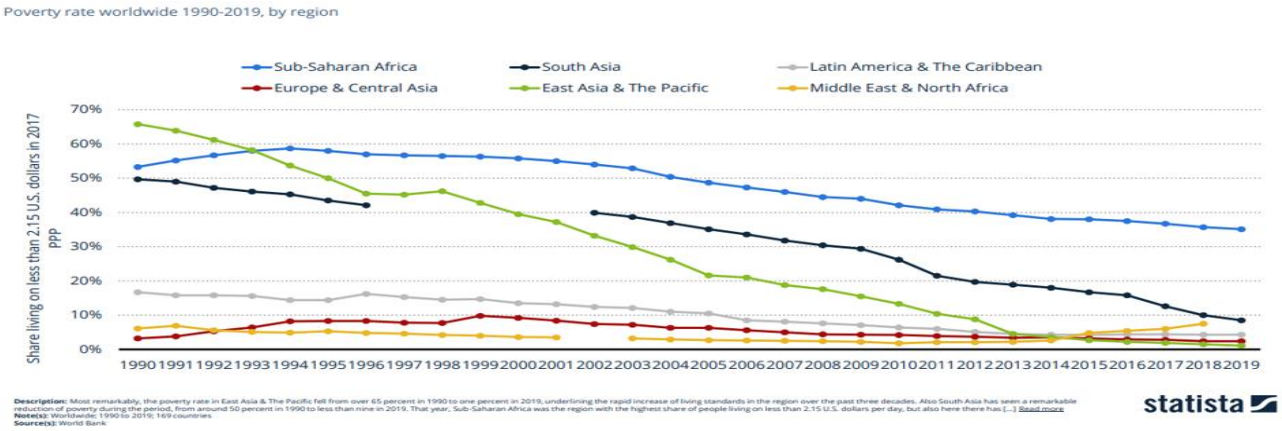
Ramber & Mosweunyane 2017:291, in Makhubo 2020:51). The approach acknowledges the significance of various material capabilities such as financial, social, and economic in achieving the well-being of individuals and communities, as well as people's capacity to convert resources into desired outcomes (Ramber & Mosweunyane 2017:291, in Makhubu 2020:51).

2. SDG One in African Context

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2023:237) reported that there are 1.1 billion people in the world who are considered poor. Galal (2024c:1) added that in 2024, around 429 million people in Africa lived in extreme poverty. This uneven distribution of wealth and/or poverty can be considered as 'statistical inequality' based on various factors, the most significant being individual countries' economic status quo. This statement is confirmed by the report of Outreach International (2024), highlighting that one of the key factors contributing to poverty in Africa is economic instability. High rates of unemployment, income inequality, and economic policies that sometimes fail to prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable citizens of an African nation all play a role. For instance, in SSA, youth unemployment rates are staggeringly high. This makes it difficult for young people to secure a stable livelihood. Income inequality adds to the issue, with a highly uneven distribution of wealth leaving many struggling to meet even their basic household needs. The explanation is supported by the statistics in Graph 1, released by Statista (2024), showing the uneven statistical inequality of poverty. The report of Statista (2024) also highlights the research findings of Dyvik (2023), emphasising that during 2019, the SSA was the region with the highest share of people living on less than 2.15 US dollars per day.



Graph 1. Share of people living on less than 2.15 US Dollars worldwide from 1990 to 2019 by region
Source: provided by Statista 2024:5.

Statistics aligns with the fact that countries and regions have very different poverty rates. In 2019, 7 out of 10 people in various countries were living in unacceptable levels of poverty as the income levels were limited to USD 1.90 per day. These countries with extreme poverty levels include Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Madagascar, and South Sudan. Some African countries were in dire need of money and financial support; less than 1 in 100 people faced poverty crises. These countries were Mauritius and Seychelles (refer to Jobarteh 2024: 8). The same year, 2019, the following SSA countries were considered poor. These countries include Equatorial Guinea, with 83.2% poor people; South Sudan, with 79.4% poor people; Burundi with 76.7% poor people; and Central Africa Republic, with 73.9% poor people living with daily earnings of only USD 1.90 per day (refer to Jobarteh (2024: 8). It is estimated that 62% of people living in extreme poverty lived in SSA in

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2022 (Christensen 2023: np). SSA accommodates 13 of the 15 nations exhibiting the highest rise of individuals living in extreme poverty, as stated by Christensen (2023: 3). The DRC, Madagascar, and Nigeria have seen the most significant increases in SSA, as further noted by Schoch and Lakner (2020: 1).

Over the previous three decades, the percentage of people in SSA living in unacceptable levels of poverty decreased from 53% in 1990 to 35% in 2022. Still, this is the world region with the slowest decline, declares Christensen (2023: 3). Since 1992, Africa's population has increased more quickly than that of any other region, which has led to an increase in the number of people living in poverty from 275 million in 1990 to 426 million in 2022. Consequently, SSA is home to more than 62% of the world's population living in extreme poverty (i.e., earning less than $2.15 per day), as further opined and highlighted by Christensen (2023: np). The trend shows that there is a mix of economic status in SSA countries, as in some countries, the people have improved financial status, while other countries are still struggling with poverty challenges. This is substantiated in the trend statement below.

Between 1990 and 2022, 74% of Guinea's population was lifted out of extreme poverty, while other nations in the region had to deal with issues like political unrest and conflict that made it difficult to reduce poverty. For instance, between 1990 and 2022, the number of people living in extreme poverty in Zimbabwe rose by 29%, as researched by Christensen (2023: np). Rises in the number of people experiencing extreme poverty were most acute in the DRC, Madagascar, Yemen, and Nigeria, according to the analysis done by Schoch and Lakner (2020:2).

Despite overall economic expansion, the number of people experiencing extreme levels of poverty has steadily increased in many African economies due to rise in population, and the unequal economic distribution of financial benefits and gains, a trend further assessed by Ochi (2023: 1374). This trend is supported by Christensen (2023:np), confirming that according to estimates, the number of people living in extreme poverty increased by 7.5 million in Nigeria in 2022 compared to 2019. The DRC saw a rise of 6.0 million people experiencing poverty. The level of poverty in Africa in 2024 is reflected in Graph 2.

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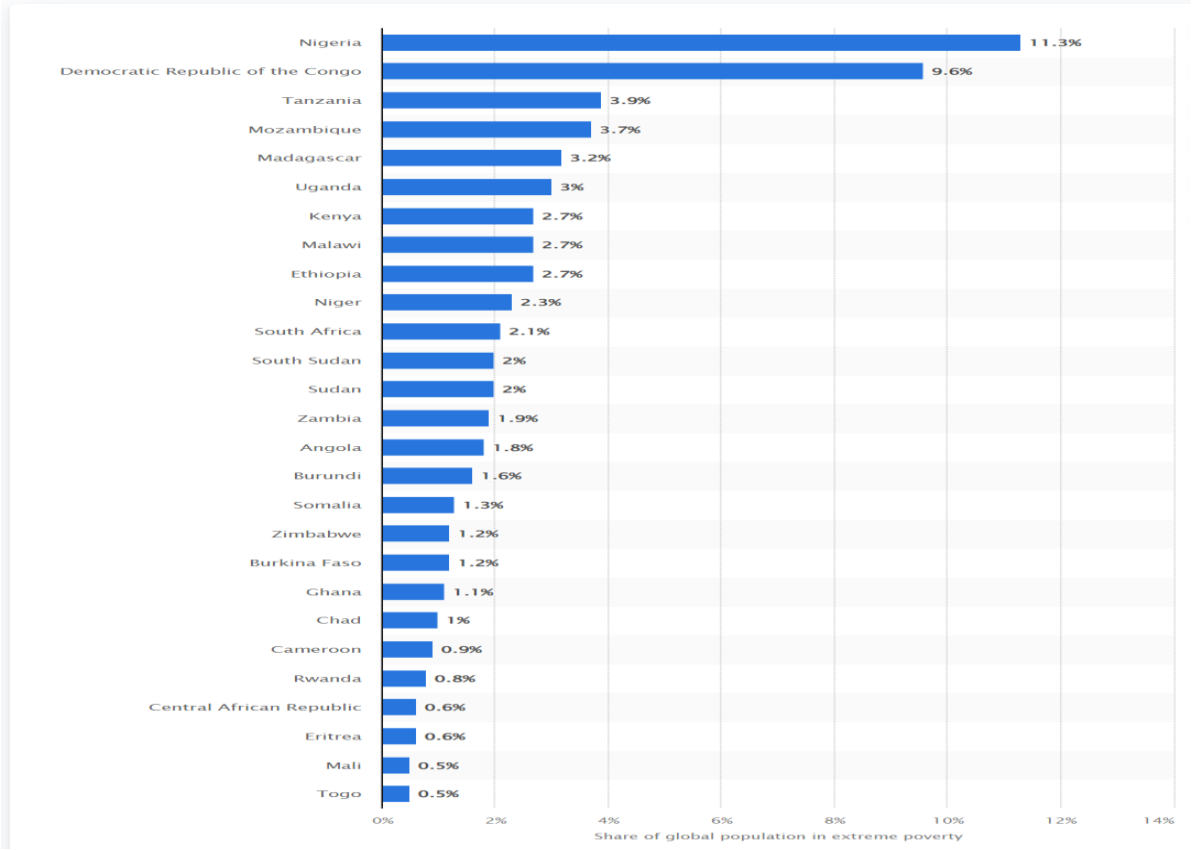

Graph 2. African countries with the highest share of global population living below the extreme poverty line in 2024
Source: provided by Statista (2024:6)

Poverty in Africa is a complex and wide-ranging issue that impacts millions of lives every day. Political instability, uneven distribution of natural and government resources, and climate change all contribute to this multidimensional problem. The people who are most affected are often those in rural and remote areas (Outreach International 2024:2). This statement that Africa has a high rate of extreme poverty in its rural areas is substantiated as follows: in 2023, 46% of the continent's rural population was living on less than USD 1.90 per day. However, only 9% of urban residents are affected by extreme poverty, as stated in the works of Galal (2024b: np). Nigeria was home to about 12% of the world's population living in extreme poverty in 2023, with the poverty line being set at USD 1.90 per day, further confirmed by Galal (2024a: np). Furthermore, Gallal (2024a: np) added that the DRC was home to about 10% of the world's population living in extreme poverty. Tanzania, Madagascar, and Mozambique were three other African countries with sizable, impoverished populations (Galal 2024a: np). On the other hand, it is explored in the works of Ochi (2023:1380), who highlighted that there are only five countries in the entire continental mass where less than 5% of the population lives in extreme poverty. Especially in North Africa: Algeria with 0.50%, Morocco with 1.00%, Egypt with 1.30%, Tunisia with 2.00%, and Gabon with 3.40%. Ochi (2023: 1380) further emphasises that most countries have levels well over 25%. It is further researched by Ochi (2023:1380) that the two poorest countries on the planet are the DRC and Madagascar, with extreme poverty rates of 77.1% and 77.6%, respectively, followed by Burundi 71.70%, Malawi 71.40%, Guinea-Bissau 67.10%, Central African Republic (66.30%), Mozambique (62.90%), Lesotho (59.60%), Zambia (57.5%), Rwanda (56%), Nigeria (53.50%), and Sierra Leone (52.20%).

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Many factors influencing the current state of poverty must be considered to determine whether it has increased or decreased. The causes of the rise in poverty vary from either caused by humans (political instability, inappropriate macroeconomic policies) or natural disasters (environmental issues). For instance, one of the biggest threats facing African nations is climate change, which may significantly affect food security, livelihoods, and poverty.

Poverty in Africa is also caused by corruption and poor governance, poor land utilisation and land tenure system, civil wars and unending political conflicts, poor infrastructure, diseases and poor health facilities, the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies, among others (Addae-Korankye 2014:150). According to the WB (1990), and the UN (1995), as cited in Addae-Korankye (2014:150), poverty has various manifestations, which include the lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood, hunger, malnutrition, ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other essential services, increased morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness, inadequate, unsafe and degraded environment, social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by a lack of participation in civil, social, and cultural decision-making (WB 2001, in Addae-Korankye 2014:150). Many problems, such as inadequate institutional development, rapid population growth, high-income inequality in some areas, and poor governance, could make poverty in African and SSA countries a persistent problem, highlighted by scholars such as Sembene (2015: 5) and Saidi, Labidi and Ochi (2023:3). The dynamics of rapid population expansion and joblessness have contributed to the escalation of extreme poverty in Africa, reports Jobarteh (2023: 4). As added by Ochi (2023: 1378), particularly those in the north and south, like Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Botswana, Namibia, Eswatini, and South Africa, have comparatively high levels of prosperity. These nations' gross domestic product (GDP) (PPP) per person ranges from $10,000 to $19,999. The additional causes of poverty in African countries are well explained by Barrigah (2023), who stresses that one factor that may explain poverty's continued presence in Africa is poverty traps**.** Poverty traps refer to a set of self-reinforcing mechanisms that cause countries to start and remain poor over time. These traps create a vicious cycle of low income, poor health, inadequate education, and limited access to resources, which make it difficult for individuals and communities to escape poverty. Poverty traps can arise from various factors, including market failures, social norms, and policy failures.

Climate change has caused severe floods and prolonged droughts, which have resulted in crop failures on the African continent in recent decades (Orimoloye, Belle, Orimoloye, Olusola & Ololade 2022: 2). Africa experiences frequent famines and hunger crises as a result. East Africa and the Sahel region are particularly affected. Following historic flooding that destroyed homesteads and agricultural land, Cyclone Idai in 2019 threatened livelihoods in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, as reported by Spiegel, Kachena & Gudhlanga (2022: 333). The challenges, such as environmental degradation, social conflicts, wars, and political instability, have also negatively impacted the economic status of some SSA nations. Experiences in the DRC, Somalia, and Mozambique, among other nations, serve as examples, as stated in the reports of the WB (2023b:1). Twenty-one countries in the region were classified as either at high risk of experiencing external debt distress or already experiencing it as of June 2023 (WB 2023b: 1), indicating that the region is still grappling with high debt distress risks. Several nations, such as Ghana, Zambia, and Chad, have started debt restructuring initiatives to rebuild fiscal space and achieve sustainability, as per the official documents of the WB (2023b: 1). Additionally, as highlighted by the WB (2023b: 1), that the poly-crisis—climate-related problems, the COVID-19 pandemic, and escalating conflicts—has accelerated this debt surge, making a lot of people poorer.

Based on the statistics and explanations discussed above, the trends of poverty in the African context are summarised below:

- Africa stands out as the most-affected region in the world in terms of loss of income of poor households: the 2021 poverty headcount rate (at $1.90 purchasing power parity (PPP)/day) is estimated to have increased by three percentage points because of the pandemic (compared to pre-COVID-19 estimates of

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poverty levels in 2021), as per the reports of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (2021:1).

- Although 478 million people in Africa lived in extreme poverty in 2019, 490 million people [were] expected to do so in 2021, above the 1.90 PPP$/day poverty line—a 37 million increase overestimates made before the pandemic, as obtained from the documents of the UNCTAD (2021: 1).
- Similar trends were seen in the poverty gap, which decreased during the same period from 17.4% to 4.1% (WB in Musakwa 2024: 4; Sumner, Ortiz-Juarez & Hoy 2021: 9). When monetary measures of poverty are applied, the trend in poverty has been declining. On the other hand, other aspects of poverty, such as energy and equality, need to be clarified (Sumner et al. 2021: 4).

The percentage of children in SSA living in extreme poverty fell from 45% to 40% between 2013 and 2022 (Hague, Quarles van Ufford & Muchabaiwa 2023: 1). The authors (Hague et al., 2023) do point out that Africa is home to 70% of the world's impoverished children.

3. Challenges and Interventions to Achieve SDG One in the African context

Domestic factors, such as the prevalence of poverty in Africa, are the more decisive factors preventing SDG One. These comprise corruption, incompetence, mismanagement, nepotism, and poor leadership, as opined by Mosley (2004: xiv). This is substantiated by the fact that post-colonial Africa is dictatorial and kleptocratic, and corruption is rampant on the continent. It also lacks a development agenda and impoverishes the populace, as opinionated by Fwatshak (2017: 21). Furthermore, a lack of innovative measures and inadequate industrial and agricultural policies may also contribute to poverty and reflect poor leadership on the continent (refer to Fwatshak 2017: 27). These natures of challenges are discussed in selected African countries as part of the study. For example, the economic development in South Africa is negatively affected due to a lack of energy production, resulting in advanced levels of load-shedding. This involves the operations of businesses and forces them to close. An additional challenge is poor road infrastructure, which negatively impacts transport services, further affecting the logistics of companies and their profit base. Nigeria is facing challenges to economic growth due to problems in the oil industry (refer to the reports of the WB 2023b:1). Furthermore, the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa, as well as certain Sahel countries, are experiencing growth hindrances due to conflicts and military coups in countries like Sudan, Niger, and Gabon, confirms the reports of the WB (2023b:1). Saidi, Labidi, and Ochi (2023: 6) contend that political instability, incompetent governments, and corruption may worsen income levels by creating market inefficiencies and increasing the incidence of poverty through rising income inequality.

African nations have undertaken measures to enhance the situation and address the obstacles related to the unfulfilled goals of SDG One. The most crucial actions for raising Africans' living standards include the implementation of appropriate macroeconomic policies, based on country-specific socioeconomic and political environments; ensuring macroeconomic stability for sustained socioeconomic development; enhancing interventions for agricultural productivity, strategise inter-continental export-import for distribution of available resources, hence enhancing collaborative trade; creating education, training, development and employment opportunities; encouraging entrepreneurial and self-business platforms; investing in social development programmes, to state a few.

There is seemingly a rise in income inequality, complemented by continuous economic insecurities and variations over the past few decades, and poor governance practices in African countries, nonetheless have grown economically much faster than other regions of the world without seeing a significant decrease in poverty, as opined by Kouadio and Gakpa (2022: 41). This may be due to the implementation of pro-poor growth strategies that seek to lower the rates of poverty among marginalised populations by generating jobs, as cited by scholars, such as Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020:4) and Asiamah (2021:3). Growing the economy is essential to lowering

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poverty. Poor women and men are more likely to have safe access to resources like land, money, and human potential in a competitive market economy. Cohesion, mobility, protection, redistribution, and gender equality are all facilitated by social policies, as further cited by Vyas-Doorgapersad (2020:10). Improving the ability of impoverished women and men is the goal of empowerment. Empowerment and pro-poor outcomes may be fostered by political devolution and increased participation by impoverished women and men in local or regional government, adds Kamruzzaman (2020:37). African nations are concentrating on implementing agricultural development initiatives to end poverty. The justification for this is that "agriculture contributes to poverty alleviation at rural, urban, and national level in four ways: by improving farm income, creating jobs, lowering food prices, and raising real wages", as explained by Machete (2004:3). The democratic government should also make significant advancements and changes in the field of social assistance. Racial disparities in the previous social protection system must be eliminated, and several new guarantees and benefits must be implemented (Van der Byl 2019:13). However, the status quo shows that poverty also impacts people's everyday lives whereby poor people struggle to get enough food, that leads to food insecurity. It is imperative to mention that the COVID-19 pandemic also had a negative impact, as many businesses shut down, companies closed, and people lost jobs. This resulted in a shift towards more poverty due to a lack of jobs, employment, and/or salary reductions.

All the stated challenges allowed people, communities, and governments to explore interventions as a means of possible and practical solutions. Some of them are discussed in this section. Successful interventions in Botswana included the provision of social services for everyday survival, capacity building and skill development, and sustainable income generation projects and employment creation initiatives, as stated in the documents of the UN (2017: 21). Following the 2008 global food price crisis, many African nations, including Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, and Tanzania, implemented agricultural subsidies to control prices and guarantee food security, as highlighted by scholars, such as Materne, Mariana, Sunae, Yasaman, Guendalina, and Valentina (2011: 9) and Sembene (2015: 9). Many governments responded to the crisis-induced social unrest by reducing value-added taxes and suspending customs duties on a variety of food commodities. In addition, several nations have also turned to fuel and/or electricity tariff subsidies as a means of lowering the cost of energy, states Bjoern, Sebastian, Daehaeng, Lukas, Gaelle, Naoya, Majdi, Chiara, Khamza, Elizabeth, Fabiana, Celine, Pritha and Dominique (2022: 18). One of the most common forms of in-kind transfer worldwide, especially in SSA, is school feeding programmes. Numerous internal and external stakeholders, such as the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Bank (WB), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and certain United Nations (UN) agencies, encourage the use of these resources in this region, according to Sembene (2017: 6). Pro-poor programmes implemented in SSA include public works and employment guarantee schemes. By offering social protection or generating employment, most public works initiatives established in the area seek to end persistent poverty and unemployment, as further added by Sembene (2017: 7). South Africa's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), which was launched in 2004, is a cutting-edge job creation initiative meant to promote social inclusion and economic empowerment, is frequently mentioned among public works programmes carried out in Africa, refer to the reports of the Statistics South Africa (STATSA) (2023: 30). The urgent need to rescue Central Africans from especially severe forms of deprivation and shield them from shocks can be met in part using safety nets. Just 1% of Central Africans currently reside in a household that receives cash transfers from the government. In comparison, 14.3% do so in a household that receives food assistance (WB 2023b:1). Policies aimed at developing human capital—investing in health, education, water, sanitation, and hygiene—can contribute to long-lasting poverty reduction. Financial poverty might be decreased by investing in basic infrastructure and human capital. Unfortunately, many Central Africans live unreasonably far from schools, particularly in rural and isolated areas; this is linked to higher rates of poverty and lower school enrollment (WB 2023b: 1). Furthermore, note that Africa is using mobile money and technological advancements have allowed financial services to be accessible to millions of impoverished people at a comparatively low cost (Parlasca, Johnen & Qaim 2021: 2). For instance, mobile phone banking was first introduced in Kenya in 2007 by Safaricom's M-Pesa (short for "money" in Swahili), and it has had a significant impact ever since (Parlasca et al. 2021: 2). In 2016, M-Pesa was used by 7 out of 10 adults in Kenya, generating 9 million daily transactions that supported the incomes of 130,000 agents

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(Parlasca et al. 2021: 3). Similar programmes that provide a variety of services, such as transfers, savings accounts, loans, and health coverage, are in place all over Africa. These programmes increase financial inclusion and give African families more financial stability (Parlasca et al., 2021: 3). Additionally, to access capital for investments and commodity markets to sell their produce at fair prices, African farmers are becoming more and more interested in becoming members of agricultural cooperatives. To reduce the risk of famine, they also demonstrate awareness of and adapt to the risks associated with climate change, including rising droughts and increasingly unpredictable rainfall. To this end, they grow shorter-season crop varieties (such as smaller grains) from improved seed varieties that are resistant to drought (African Development Bank (AfDB) 2016: 59).

In addition to lowering transportation costs, good roads also enhance the accessibility of agricultural inputs, make it easier to transport agricultural products to markets, and boost the profitability of companies that produce revenue, as stated by Page and Pande (2018 in Ayoo 2022: 8). In addition to raising living standards, supplying electricity to underdeveloped regions encourages the growth of small businesses that process agricultural products and add value, all while generating much-needed employment (AfDB 2016: 28). Having access to clean, safe drinking water for domestic use and consumption is essential for lowering the prevalence of costly, debilitating water-borne illnesses. It also frees up time spent fetching water, which can be used for other productive endeavours, highlights Ayoo (2022: 7).

Lack of financial constraints can be eliminated and small businesses, who frequently cannot obtain credit from formal financial institutions, can receive much-needed credit through microfinance institutions, suggests Olugbenga and Mashigo (2017: 85). Microcredit can thus play a significant role in boosting the economy, generating employment in the unorganised sector, raising household incomes, and lowering poverty, supported by Thai Ha (2021: 2). Cash transfer programmes are crucial to the much-needed social protection in developing countries that face increased social and economic risks because of structural changes brought about by globalisation, continues Ayoo (2022: 9). According to Ayoo's research (2022: 6), a few examples of initiatives that various countries have adopted to reduce poverty are Senegal's poverty reduction strategy, Ghana's poverty reduction strategy, Ethiopia's sustainable development and poverty reduction programme, Kenya's economic recovery strategy for wealth and employment creation, and Uganda's poverty eradication action plan. A significant initiative is also being carried out to lower poverty in Kenya, encouraging agricultural output. Most Kenyans live in rural areas and rely on agriculture for their livelihoods, which supports this focus, as per the information provided by Onyalo (2019: 5). Kenya has implemented targeted poverty reduction measures in the agricultural sector, such as offering subsidised seeds and fertilisers, promoting the growth of high-value crops, expanding, and renovating irrigation projects, and offering subsidised credit to ease capital constraints, as further researched by Ayoo (2022: 10). Kenya has implemented targeted poverty reduction measures in the agricultural sector, such as offering subsidised seeds and fertilisers, promoting the growth of high-value crops, expanding, and renovating irrigation projects, and offering subsidised credit to ease capital constraints (Ayoo 2022: 10). The government has also given top priority to rural road construction, marketing system strengthening and simplification, and poor people's access to markets to boost employment and economic opportunities, states Ayoo (2022: 10). It is also indicated by the AfDB (2016:17) that to boost domestic agricultural output and boost the nation's foreign exchange earnings, significant efforts are also being made to increase agricultural exports.

Moreover, most low-income households could use various unofficial financial tools rather than living paycheck to paycheck. People may group, for instance, in unofficial self-help organisations like burial insurance societies, savings clubs, and rotating savings schemes, which are also referred to as money clubs and rounds in some parts of Africa, as stressed by Matuku and Kaseke (2014: 510) to deal with financial challenges on a short-term basis.

4. Conclusions

Poverty, globally, is a concerning phenomenon based on varied factors such as low socioeconomic conditions, politically unstable landscapes, environmentally vulnerable infrastructure, war, and conflict, to name a few. The situation in Africa is more dire due to political dictatorships, unstable politics, civil wars, droughts, floods, poor macroeconomic policies, inadequate global networking of funds, etc., which amounted to multifaceted challenges, resulting in poverty. Additional challenges at an intra-region level are inadequate education, constrained employment possibilities, lack of training and development opportunities, and extended families with limited household earnings that negatively impact people's living standards. These issues are complemented by political corruption, administrative bureaucracy, and inappropriate civic education to fight for economic rights. A few African countries' economic and political instability also resulted in global restrictions on trade, funding, and financial aid, causing economic decline. The article, therefore, deduced that various factors, such as environmental degradation, climate change with unpredictable weather patterns, political instability, dictatorships, and poor economic policies, may hamper the effective realisation of SDG One in the region. The article explored some interventions in African countries to reduce the extent of poverty. The lessons can be learnt from each other to apply best practices based on the socio-economic-political context of individual countries. Although adverse circumstances impacting the economy that COVID-19 created were unavoidable, the post-COVID interventions can be sustained as incremental measures. The article summarised that African countries need to come together and explore poverty reduction measures affecting the GDP of countries and then find consensus-based interventions to offer economic development to the region. Political office-bearers of African countries need to enhance the African spirit by calling for a unified approach to poverty reduction. Policymakers need to create think tanks and continuously brainstorm incremental policies to improve economy-driven interventions. The study contributes towards extending knowledge related to SDG One/poverty (focus) in the African context (locus). The study hopes that policymakers and relevant government authorities of African countries advance a strategic dialogue with a need to utilise the natural resources available in the region, open the export-import trade options, and enhance business coalitions at an intra-continental level. A collectivist approach may assist African countries in reducing the extent of poverty through mutually beneficial trade policies at the inter-government level and effective macroeconomic policies at the intra-government level.

The study has its limitations. Due to the topic's comprehensiveness and broadness, it was impossible to conduct interviews with relevant authorities at the regional level. Future studies will also consider the desktop analysis exploring county-specific poverty reduction interventions and their impact on realising SDG One. The longitudinal studies and comparative research findings will add value to economics and public management.

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