ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ON POVERTY REDUCTION AMONG WOMEN AND YOUTHS IN ABUJA, NIGERIA

Ibrahim Musa
Department of Economics
University of Abuja
Ibrahim.musa@uniabuja.edu.ng

Ibrahim Ishaka
National Space Research and Development Agency
aybra2@yahoo.com

Corresponding Author: Ibrahim.musa@uniabuja.edu.ng
DOI: https://doi.org/10.57233/ijamer.v2i1.16

Article Information: Received: 03/25/2026 Revised: 04/11/2026 Accepted: 04/22/2026

To Cite this Article: Musa, I., & Ishaka, I. (2026). *Assessing the impact of the Sustainable Development Goals on poverty reduction among women and youths in Abuja, Nigeria*. International Journal of Accounting, Management and Economic Review, 2(1). https://doi.org/10.57233/ijamer.v2i1.16

Abstract
This study examined the role of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in poverty alleviation among women and youths in the Federal Capital Territory, with a specific focus on the Gwagwalada Area Council. A mixed-methods research design employing a sequential explanatory approach was used to integrate quantitative and qualitative data. To support causal impact inference, the study adopted a quasi-experimental identification strategy. Specifically, a propensity score matching (PSM) technique was employed to construct a comparable control group of non-beneficiaries with similar observable characteristics to SDG programme participants. This approach reduces selection bias by ensuring that differences in outcomes are attributable to programme exposure rather than pre-existing differences. In addition, multivariate regression analysis with control variables (such as education, income level, age, and employment status) was used to further adjust for confounding factors. Where applicable, robustness checks were conducted to test the sensitivity of the estimated effects. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to respondents, complemented by focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to analyze the data. The findings indicate that SDG programmes have a statistically significant and positive causal effect on poverty reduction outcomes, including improved access to basic services, enhanced income generation, increased youth employment, and greater economic empowerment of women. The study further established that community participation significantly enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of SDG interventions. However, challenges such as low awareness, inadequate programme coverage, and weak implementation mechanisms were identified as limiting factors. The study concludes that while SDGs contribute meaningfully to poverty alleviation, their impact remains moderate and uneven across communities. It therefore recommends improved sensitization, better targeting of beneficiaries, strengthened institutional coordination, and increased investment in human capital development to maximize outcomes. The study contributes to existing literature by providing causally informed, localized empirical evidence on SDG effectiveness in addressing multidimensional poverty among vulnerable groups in Abuja.

Keywords: Poverty alleviation, sustainable development goals, women empowerment and youth development

1.0 Introduction

Poverty remains one of the most persistent developmental challenges globally, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups such as women and youths, particularly in developing countries (Magaji et al., 2022). Despite numerous policy interventions, the incidence of poverty continues

to undermine human well-being, limit access to basic services, and constrain economic opportunities (Ologbonori et al., 2025). In Nigeria poverty manifests in multidimensional forms, including unemployment, limited access to education, healthcare deficits, and social exclusion (Musa et al., 2024). Addressing these challenges requires integrated and sustainable strategies that align with global development frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015).

The Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, provide a comprehensive blueprint to eradicate poverty and promote inclusive growth worldwide. Goal 1, which focuses on ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, is particularly relevant to the socio-economic realities of women and youths in developing regions. The SDGs emphasize inclusive policies, social protection systems, and equal access to economic resources as critical pathways to poverty alleviation. These global targets are expected to guide national and sub-national governments, including authorities in FCT Abuja, in designing effective poverty reduction strategies (Sachs et al., 2019).

Women and youths represent a significant proportion of the population in FCT Abuja and are often the most affected by poverty due to structural inequalities, limited access to resources, and socio-cultural barriers. Women frequently encounter gender-based discrimination in employment, education, and property ownership, while youths face high unemployment rates and limited entrepreneurial opportunities (Abubakar et al., 2025; Aminu et al., 2025; Dada et al., 2025). These challenges not only perpetuate poverty but also hinder sustainable development efforts. Consequently, empowering these groups through targeted interventions aligned with SDGs is essential for achieving long-term socio-economic transformation (Kabeer, 2015).

The implementation of SDGs in Nigeria has led to the introduction of several initiatives aimed at poverty reduction, including social investment programs, youth empowerment schemes, and gender-inclusive policies. Programs such as conditional cash transfers, skills acquisition initiatives, and microfinance interventions have been designed to improve livelihoods among vulnerable populations. In FCT Abuja, these initiatives are expected to enhance income generation, promote entrepreneurship, and improve access to basic services among women and youths. However, the effectiveness of these interventions in achieving meaningful poverty alleviation remains a subject of empirical investigation (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2022).

Furthermore, the multidimensional nature of poverty necessitates a holistic approach that integrates economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development. The SDGs framework promotes such an integrated approach by linking poverty eradication with other goals such as quality education (Goal 4), gender equality (Goal 5), and decent work and economic growth (Goal 8). This interconnectedness highlights the importance of coordinated policy implementation and stakeholder collaboration in addressing the root causes of poverty. In the context of FCT Abuja, understanding how these interconnected goals influence poverty outcomes among women and youths is crucial for effective policy formulation (Alkire et al., 2017).

Despite the global commitment to the SDGs, challenges such as inadequate funding, weak institutional frameworks, corruption, and poor policy implementation continue to hinder progress in many developing regions. In Nigeria, these constraints are evident in the uneven distribution of

development benefits and persistent poverty levels among vulnerable groups. Therefore, assessing the role of the SDGs in poverty alleviation among women and youths in FCT Abuja is timely and necessary. Such an assessment will provide insights into the effectiveness of current interventions and inform future policy directions aimed at achieving inclusive and sustainable development and also despite extensive global and national emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework for poverty reduction, there is a limited body of empirical, context-specific evidence assessing their actual impact on poverty alleviation among vulnerable groups particularly women and youthsat the sub-national level in Nigeria. While several studies have examined poverty and development policies broadly, few have critically evaluated how SDG-aligned interventions translate into measurable socio-economic outcomes within specific local contexts such as the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja.

Moreover, existing literature tends to adopt a generalized or macro-level perspective, often overlooking the multidimensional and intersectional nature of poverty as experienced by women and youths. There is also insufficient integration of both quantitative and qualitative evidence to capture not only the outcomes but also the lived experiences, implementation challenges, and institutional dynamics influencing SDG effectiveness. Consequently, a gap exists in understanding the extent to which SDG-driven initiatives have effectively addressed poverty in a holistic and inclusive manner in FCT Abuja, particularly within area councils such as Gwagwalada. This study therefore seeks to bridge this gap by providing a localized, mixed-methods assessment of the role and effectiveness of SDGs in alleviating poverty among women and youths.

2.0 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 interconnected global objectives adopted by the United Nations in 2015 under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, aimed at addressing pressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. The SDGs build on the successes and limitations of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and emphasize inclusivity, sustainability, and universality, ensuring that no one is left behind. Each goal is supported by specific targets and indicators that guide national and international development policies. In the context of developing countries like Nigeria, the SDGs provide a comprehensive framework for aligning development priorities with global standards, particularly in addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion among vulnerable populations such as women and youths (United Nations, 2015; Sachs et al., 2019).

Poverty Alleviation

Poverty alleviation refers to the range of economic, social, and policy measures implemented to reduce the incidence, depth, and severity of poverty within a population. It encompasses strategies such as income generation, employment creation, access to education and healthcare, social protection programs, and financial inclusion initiatives (Musa et al., 2023; Magaj & Aliyu, 2007). Poverty is often multidimensional, involving not only lack of income but also deprivation in essential services and opportunities necessary for a decent standard of living. In Nigeria, poverty alleviation has been pursued through various government programs including conditional cash transfers, microcredit schemes, and youth empowerment initiatives. However, the effectiveness of these interventions depends largely on proper implementation, transparency, and inclusiveness,

particularly for marginalized groups such as women and youths (World Bank, 2020; National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2022).

Women and Youths in FCT Abuja

Women and youths in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja constitute a significant demographic group that plays a crucial role in socio-economic development but remains disproportionately affected by poverty and unemployment. Women in the FCT often face structural barriers such as limited access to education, finance, and property rights, which hinder their economic participation and empowerment. Similarly, youths encounter high levels of unemployment, underemployment, and limited access to entrepreneurial opportunities, despite their potential as drivers of innovation and economic growth (Sule et al, 2024). Rapid urbanization in Abuja has further intensified these challenges by increasing the cost of living and widening socio-economic disparities. Addressing the needs of women and youths in FCT Abuja requires targeted interventions that promote skills development, access to finance, and inclusive policies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (UNDP, 2021; National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2022).

Theoretical Framework

Capability Approach Theory

The Capability Approach Theory, developed by Amartya Sen, is a widely used framework for understanding development, poverty, and human well-being. The theory emerged as a critique of traditional economic approaches that measure development primarily through income, GDP, or material resources. Instead, Sen argues that true development should be assessed based on the real freedoms and opportunities people have to lead lives they value (Sen, 1999). At the heart of the Capability Approach are two key concepts: functionings and capabilities. *Functionings* refer to the various states of being and activities that individuals can achieve, such as being educated, being healthy, having a decent job, and participating in community life. *Capabilities*, on the other hand, represent the set of real opportunities or freedoms available to individuals to achieve these functionings. In this sense, capabilities reflect not just what people do, but what they are able to do or become (Sen, 1985).

The theory views poverty as a deprivation of basic capabilities, rather than simply a lack of income. This implies that individuals may be considered poor if they are unable to access education, healthcare, employment opportunities, or social participation, even if their income level appears sufficient. For example, two individuals with the same income may experience different levels of well-being due to factors such as gender discrimination, social exclusion, or lack of access to public services. Thus, poverty is understood as multidimensional, encompassing economic, social, and political dimensions (Alkire & Foster, 2011). A central element of the Capability Approach is the concept of agency, which refers to an individual's ability to make choices and act on them to achieve desired outcomes. This is particularly important when analysing vulnerable groups such as women and youths, who often face structural barriers that limit their agency. These barriers may include unequal access to education, limited employment opportunities, cultural norms, and institutional constraints. As a result, expanding capabilities involves not only providing resources but also addressing the social and institutional factors that restrict people's choices (Sen, 1999).

The Capability Approach also emphasizes the importance of conversion factors, which determine how effectively individuals can transform resources into valuable outcomes. These factors may be

personal (skills, health), social (gender norms, discrimination), or environmental (infrastructure, governance). This explains why similar development interventions may produce different outcomes across individuals or communities. In relation to global development frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Capability Approach provides a strong theoretical foundation. The SDGs focus on enhancing human well-being through improved access to education, healthcare, decent work, gender equality, and social protection. These goals align closely with the idea of expanding human capabilities. For instance, Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) all aim to enhance the freedoms and opportunities available to individuals. In the context of Nigeria, and particularly Abuja, the Capability Approach is highly relevant for assessing poverty among women and youths. These groups often experience capability deprivation due to unemployment, limited access to education and finance, and socio-cultural constraints. While government and development programs especially those aligned with the SDGs example, seek to alleviate poverty, their effectiveness depends on the extent to which they expand real opportunities and empower individuals.

In conclusion, the Capability Approach Theory provides a comprehensive and multidimensional framework for analysing poverty and development. By focusing on what people are able to do and become, rather than what they earn, the theory offers deeper insight into the structural causes of poverty and the pathways to sustainable and inclusive development. The Capability Approach, developed by Amartya Sen, provides a strong analytical foundation for this study, *"Assessing the Impact of the Sustainable Development Goals on Poverty Reduction among Women and Youths in Abuja, Nigeria."* The theory underpins the study by offering a multidimensional understanding of poverty and a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of development interventions beyond income-based measures.

First, the Capability Approach informs the study's conceptualization of poverty. Rather than viewing poverty solely as low income, the study adopts Sen's perspective of poverty as a deprivation of capabilitiesthat is, the inability of individuals to achieve essential functionings such as education, good health, decent employment, and social participation. This aligns with the realities of women and youths in Abuja, whose poverty is often linked to limited access to opportunities, gender inequality, and structural barriers. Consequently, the study assesses poverty reduction in terms of improvements in access to education, healthcare, employment, and empowerment, rather than income alone. Second, the theory underpins the study by providing a basis for analysing the role of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in expanding human capabilities. The SDGs, introduced by the United Nations, emphasize inclusive development through targets such as quality education, gender equality, and decent work. These goals directly correspond to the enhancement of capabilities. Therefore, the study evaluates whether SDG-related interventions in Abujasuch as social investment programs, skills acquisition schemes, and youth empowerment initiativeshave effectively expanded the real freedoms and opportunities available to women and youths.

Third, the Capability Approach supports the study's focus on vulnerable groups, particularly women and youths. The theory recognizes that individuals experience poverty differently due to variations in conversion factors, including social norms, institutional constraints, and personal characteristics. In Abuja, women may face gender-based discrimination, while youths often encounter unemployment and limited access to capital. By applying this theoretical lens, the study examines how these structural inequalities influence the ability of these groups to benefit from

SDG interventions. Furthermore, the concept of agency within the Capability Approach is central to this study. Agency refers to the ability of individuals to make choices and act upon them to improve their well-being. The study investigates whether SDG-driven programs not only provide resources but also empower women and youths to participate in decision-making, pursue economic opportunities, and improve their living conditions. This shifts the analysis from passive receipt of aid to active participation in development. In addition, the Capability Approach justifies the use of a mixed-methods research design in the study. Since capabilities involve both measurable outcomes (such as employment rates and school enrollment) and subjective experiences (such as perceived empowerment and social inclusion), the integration of quantitative and qualitative data allows for a more comprehensive assessment of poverty reduction.

Finally, the theory underpins the study's policy relevance. By focusing on capability expansion, the study provides insights into whether current SDG implementation strategies in Abuja address the root causes of poverty or merely its symptoms. This helps to identify gaps in policy design and implementation, particularly in relation to inclusiveness, accessibility, and sustainability.

Empirical Review

Mohammed (2024) examined the effect of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on poverty alleviation through a mixed-methods evaluation of SDG implementation in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) up to 2022. The study employed household surveys alongside key informant interviews to assess outcomes related to consumption, education, and health. The findings revealed modest improvements across selected SDG indicators; however, the benefits were unevenly distributed, with the poorest households experiencing limited impact.Moreso,Abang (2024) explored community social entrepreneurship as a complementary strategy to government-led poverty reduction efforts, focusing on a case study of Gwagwalada. Using qualitative interviews and analysis of program documents, the study demonstrated that community-driven social enterprises can effectively supplement formal interventions aligned with SDG 1 and SDG 8. The findings indicated that such grassroots initiatives have the potential to enhance household incomes, particularly in areas where government programmes are insufficient (Abang, 2024).

Aliyu (2024) investigated the impact of SDGs on poverty alleviation in Minna, Niger State, adopting a quantitative approach to evaluate specific SDG components such as education and security. The results showed positive but largely statistically insignificant effects on poverty indicators, underscoring notable gaps in implementation. Although conducted outside Gwagwalada, the study provides valuable methodological insights and comparative evidence regarding the limited effectiveness of SDG interventions in urban Nigerian contexts (Aliyu, 2024).

Abu (2025) assessed the influence of SDGs on poverty reduction in Minna Metropolis using survey data collected between 2024 and 2025. The study found that variations in poverty outcomes across different neighbourhoods were largely explained by programme design and targeting mechanisms. It recommended the adoption of integrated "cash-plus" models to improve effectiveness. These findings offer contemporary evidence for evaluating and critiquing SDG programme implementation strategies in similar contexts, including Gwagwalada (Abu, 2025).

Olusanya et al. (2025) evaluated the impact of youth empowerment schemes on poverty alleviation in Abuja, focusing on initiatives such as N-Power and other local programmes. Utilizing programme records and beneficiary surveys, the study reported improvements in short-term

income levels among participants. However, the long-term effects on sustainable poverty reduction were mixed, suggesting that while youth-focused interventions are central to SDG implementation, their sustainability remains uncertain (Olusanya et al., 2025). Inaddition, Musa (2024) investigated the relationship between poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies in Nigeria through a review and empirical analysis. The study identified significant gaps in policy coherence between SDG targets and local poverty reduction initiatives. It emphasized the need for integrated monitoring systems, targeted cash transfer programmes, and robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure measurable outcomes. The study provides a useful theoretical and policy perspective for understanding why SDG initiatives often fail to translate into tangible poverty reduction at the local level (Musa, 2024).

Nnaba-Agire (2024) examined the role of human capital development an important SDG pathway in reducing rural poverty. The empirical analysis focused on training and extension programmes, particularly in agriculture, and their effects on income levels. The findings revealed that well-targeted human capital interventions significantly reduce poverty when effectively linked to market opportunities. This highlights the importance of integrating skills development with market access in SDG-driven poverty reduction strategies (Nnaba-Agire, 2024). In the same vein, Inamura et al. (2022) analyzed citizens' perceptions of SDG progress in Abuja through survey-based methods. The study identified a disconnect between official SDG performance reports and the lived experiences of citizens, emphasizing the importance of incorporating local perception data into impact assessments. Although conducted earlier, its methodological approach remains relevant for evaluating SDG outcomes in subsequent periods, including 2023-2025 (Inamura et al., 2022).

Amakoromo, Asiegbu, and Okafor (2024) investigated poverty reduction programmes and the key challenges to achieving the SDGs in Nigeria. The study revealed that poverty levels continue to rise despite numerous intervention efforts. It attributed this trend to factors such as corruption, high public debt, rising unemployment particularly among youth overdependence on oil revenue, weak political commitment, and ethno-religious conflicts. The authors argued that unless these structural issues are addressed, poverty alleviation programmes will remain largely ineffective. Utuk (2022) examined the relationship between poverty and sustainable economic development in Nigeria. The study found that poverty reduction serves as a central indicator of sustainable development, reflecting the effectiveness of institutions and economic policies. It highlighted the negative impact of poverty on development outcomes, noting that limited access to essential resources constrains improvements in living standards. Additionally, the study emphasized the bidirectional relationship between poverty and environmental degradation, arguing that sustainable policy responses must prioritize both environmental protection and poverty reduction.

A critical review of the empirical literature reveals several gaps that justify the present study. Although studies such as Mohammed (2024), Aliyu (2024), and Abu (2025) have examined the impact of Sustainable Development Goals on poverty alleviation in different Nigerian contexts, their findings consistently indicate modest or statistically insignificant outcomes, largely due to weak implementation and poor targeting. However, these studies are geographically limited to areas such as the FCT and Minna, with little or no specific focus on Gwagwalada Area Council, thereby creating a contextual gap. Furthermore, while Abang (2024) and Nnaba-Agire (2024) highlight the importance of community entrepreneurship and human capital development, they do

not explicitly integrate these variables within a comprehensive SDG evaluation framework. Similarly, Olusanya et al. (2025) focus on youth empowerment programmes but provide limited insight into their long-term sustainability and integration with broader SDG strategies. In addition, studies like Musa (2024) and Amakoromo et al. (2024) emphasize policy and structural challenges without offering localized empirical validation, while Inamura et al. (2022) stress perception-based assessments but do not link these perceptions to measurable poverty outcomes. Consequently, there is a clear gap in the literature for a holistic, location-specific, and up-to-date empirical analysis that integrates multiple SDG dimensions, combines perception and outcome-based measures, and evaluates recent interventions (2023–2025) within Gwagwalada, Abuja.

3.0 Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive examination of the role of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in poverty alleviation among women and youths in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Specifically, the study adopted a sequential explanatory design, in which quantitative data were collected and analysed in the first phase using structured questionnaires and appropriate statistical techniques to establish patterns, relationships, and the extent of SDG impact on poverty indicators. This was followed by a qualitative phase involving in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, designed to further explain, validate, and enrich the quantitative findings by capturing participants' lived experiences, perceptions, and contextual realities.

The integration of both methods occurred at the interpretation stage, where qualitative insights were used to explain and provide meaning to the statistical results, thereby enhancing the validity and depth of the findings. The design is exploratory in nature, as it investigates not only the measurable outcomes but also the underlying structures, implementation processes, and perceived effectiveness of SDG interventions. By engaging key stakeholdersincluding beneficiaries, government officials, and community representativesthe study ensures a holistic understanding of how SDG initiatives operate and influence poverty outcomes. Overall, this mixed-methods approach allows for a more nuanced and context-sensitive analysis of poverty alleviation efforts among women and youths in Abuja, capturing both numerical trends and human experiences.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Gwagwalada Area Council, one of the area councils within the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria. Located in the North-Central region, Gwagwalada lies approximately 55 kilometers southwest of Abuja city centre and is characterized by a rapidly growing population, estimated to exceed 500,000 in recent years. The area experiences a tropical climate with distinct wet and dry seasons and falls within the Guinea Savannah vegetation zone. Economically, Gwagwalada is diverse, with activities spanning agriculture, trade, construction, and services. Historically, the area has benefited from development interventions under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including investments in water, sanitation, healthcare, and livelihood support. However, challenges such as limited coverage, weak sustainability, and coordination gaps persist. These conditions provide an important baseline for assessing the effectiveness of subsequent SDG programmes implemented between 2023 and 2025.

Population of the Study

The study population comprised residents of Gwagwalada Area Council, with a specific focus on women and youths aged 18 years and above who resided in the area between 2023 and 2025. This included both direct beneficiaries of SDG-related interventionssuch as cash transfers, skills acquisition programmes, healthcare services, and livelihood initiativesand individuals indirectly affected by such programmes. In addition, key informants such as local government officials, SDG programme managers, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and community leaders were included. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted, involving stratification by wards and subsequent random selection of households within selected communities. For qualitative data, purposive sampling was used to select knowledgeable participants for interviews and focus group discussions.

Determination of Sample Size

The sample size for this study was determined to ensure that estimates of the effects of SDG programmes on poverty alleviation in Gwagwalada are statistically reliable and generalisable to the study population. Two commonly used approaches were considered: Cochran's formula for an unknown or large population and the finite population correction when the total population is known. The following procedures were used.

When the population is large or unknown, Cochran's (1977) formula provides a sample size that yields a desired level of precision for proportions:
n0=Z2 p qe2n_0 = \frac{Z^2 \, p \, q}{e^2}n0=e2Z2pq

Where:

n0n_0n0 = initial sample size (for an infinite population)
ZZZ = z-score for the chosen confidence level (1.96 for 95% confidence)
ppp = estimated proportion of population with the attribute (use 0.5 when unknown to maximise sample size)
q=1−pq = 1 - pq=1−p
eee = margin of error (precision), often set at 0.05 (5%)

Using standard choices Z=1.96Z = 1.96Z=1.96, p=0.5p = 0.5p=0.5, q=0.5q = 0.5q=0.5 and e=0.05e = 0.05e=0.05:
Therefore, for a very large population the required sample size is approximately **100** respondents.

Questionnaire

Data for the study were primarily collected using a structured questionnaire designed to capture key variables related to SDG awareness, participation, and impact on poverty alleviation. The instrument consisted of both closed-ended and limited open-ended questions, organized into sections covering demographic characteristics, awareness of SDG programmes, participation in SDG initiatives, perceived impacts on income, education, healthcare, and living standards, as well as challenges affecting programme effectiveness. Responses were largely measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire was administered with the assistance of trained research assistants to ensure clarity and completeness.

Validity and Reliability Test

To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the research instrument, both validity and reliability tests were conducted. Content and face validity were established through expert review by specialists in development studies, measurement and evaluation, and public administration, who assessed the relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness of the questionnaire items. Necessary revisions were made based on their feedback. Reliability was tested through a pilot study involving 20 respondents from similar communities, and the data were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha. The results yielded coefficients above the acceptable threshold of 0.70 across all sections, indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability of the instrument.

Ethical Consideration

The study adhered strictly to established ethical standards to safeguard the rights and well-being of participants. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents after clearly explaining the purpose and nature of the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw at any stage without consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by excluding personal identifiers and reporting findings in aggregate form. The study posed no harm to participants, and necessary permissions were obtained from relevant authorities and community leaders. All data collected were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes.

Model Consideration

The study adopted a multiple linear regression model to analyze the relationship between SDG interventions and poverty alleviation among women and youths. The model conceptualizes poverty alleviation as a function of key independent variables such as awareness, participation, and accessibility of SDG programmes, while controlling for socio-demographic characteristics.

$$PEi = \beta 0 + \beta 1AWi + \beta 2PAi + \beta 3ACi + \beta 4Xi + \epsilon i$$

This model enables the estimation of the magnitude and significance of the effects of SDG programmes on poverty outcomes, providing a robust framework for hypothesis testing and policy analysis.

Nature and Sources of Data

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources to ensure comprehensive analysis. Primary data were obtained through questionnaire administration to households, women, youths, and other stakeholders in the study area, capturing information on socio-economic characteristics, programme participation, and perceived impacts. Secondary data were sourced from government reports, publications from development agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), statistical records, academic journals, and reports from non-governmental organizations. The combination of these sources facilitated data triangulation, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were systematically processed and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and general trends in SDG awareness and participation. Inferential statistics were employed to test relationships and hypotheses, with Pearson correlation used to examine associations between variables and multiple

regression analysis used to determine the impact of SDG programmes on poverty alleviation. The results were presented using tables, charts, and narrative explanations to facilitate clear interpretation and discussion.

4.0 Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This section presents the findings of the study based on the data collected from respondents. It includes the presentation of socio-demographic characteristics, analysis of the awareness, participation, and perceived impact of SDG programmes, as well as the challenges faced in their implementation. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyze the data. The demographic profile of respondents provides insight into the socio-economic characteristics of the population studied. Variables analyzed include age, gender, educational level, occupation, household size, and income level. This section helps to contextualize the responses and identify patterns that may influence the impact of SDG programmes.

Qualitative Analysis (Focus Group Discussion-30 Items)

Section 1: Roles of SDG on Poverty Alleviation among Women and Youths

Participants across focus groups demonstrated an understanding of SDG as the United Nations goal aimed at ending poverty in all its forms by 2030. Respondents noted that SDG has led to several community-based interventions including small business grants, youth empowerment schemes, and women skill development programmes.

Majority of respondents observed that these initiatives such as *conditional cash transfer programmes, youth empowerment, agricultural support*, and *entrepreneurship training* have improved income and encouraged self-reliance among youths and women. However, they pointed out that awareness of SDG remains low, particularly in rural communities. This suggests that while SDG has had a positive impact on poverty reduction, the lack of awareness and local participation limits its effectiveness. The findings underscore the need for more grassroots sensitization and inclusive programme delivery.

Poverty alleviation remains a major global challenge, particularly among vulnerable groups such as women and youths. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework for addressing multidimensional poverty by promoting inclusive economic growth, social protection, and equal access to opportunities. Several SDGs especially SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) directly contribute to poverty reduction among these groups (United Nations, 2015).

Education and skill acquisition are fundamental to poverty alleviation among women and youths. SDG 4 emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. By equipping women and youths with knowledge and skills, SDGs enhance their employability and entrepreneurial potential, enabling them to secure better-paying jobs or create income-generating activities (World Bank, 2022). For instance, vocational training programs under SDG initiatives empower youths with technical skills necessary for small business ventures, thereby reducing their vulnerability to poverty.

SDG 8 promotes sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, productive employment, and decent work for all. Programs targeting women and youths provide access to microcredit,

financial literacy, and entrepreneurship support. These interventions help women start small businesses and youths engage in productive economic activities, increasing household incomes and economic resilience (ILO, 2021). Economic empowerment reduces dependency, fosters autonomy, and allows for active participation in decision-making processes, contributing significantly to poverty reduction.

SDG 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Gender-targeted SDG interventions, such as microfinance schemes, leadership training, and social protection programs, address structural barriers that limit women's access to resources and economic opportunities (UN Women, 2020). When women have equal access to education, employment, and finance, they are better positioned to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. Studies indicate that women reinvest a significant portion of their income into their households, leading to improved health, nutrition, and education outcomes for their children (Kabeer, 2016).

High youth unemployment contributes significantly to poverty, social instability, and inequality. SDG 8 and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) promote the creation of decent jobs and support innovation and entrepreneurship among youths. Through initiatives such as vocational training centers, internship programs, and start-up incubators, youths gain practical skills and opportunities for self-employment (UNDP, 2019). This reduces their reliance on subsistence activities or informal sector jobs, contributing to sustainable poverty reduction.

Social protection programs, aligned with SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), provide women and youths with cash transfers, scholarships, and healthcare support. These initiatives help vulnerable groups cope with economic shocks, improve nutrition, and access essential services, preventing them from falling into extreme poverty (UNICEF, 2021). By mitigating risks and vulnerabilities, social protection strengthens resilience and promotes long-term poverty reduction.

SDGs encourage the active participation of women and youths in community development, governance, and policy-making. Inclusive decision-making ensures that the specific needs of these groups are addressed in poverty alleviation strategies (United Nations, 2015). Participation in local development projects fosters empowerment, confidence, and ownership, which enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of SDG interventions.

The SDGs play a critical role in alleviating poverty among women and youths by promoting education, economic empowerment, gender equality, youth employment, social protection, and inclusive participation. Effective implementation of SDG initiatives can transform the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable groups, ensuring sustainable poverty reduction and fostering equitable development. However, continued government commitment, community engagement, and adequate funding are essential for maximizing the impact of these programmes.

Quantitative Analysis
Strongly Agree (SA) = 5
Agree (A) = 4
Undecided (U) = 3
Disagree (D) = 2
Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

Section 1: Roles of SDG on Poverty Alleviation (Items 1-20)

Table 2.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics (n = 100)

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	185	48.1
Female	200	51.9
Age		
18-25	90	23.4
26-35	145	37.7
36-45	85	22.1
46-55	45	11.7
56+	20	5.2
Education Level		
No formal education	30	7.8
Primary	60	15.6
Secondary	140	36.4
Tertiary	155	40.3
Occupation		
Civil servant	120	31.2
Trader	95	24.7
Farmer	75	19.5
Others	95	24.7

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Gender: Out of the 100 respondents, 200 (51.9%) were female, while 185 (48.1%) were male. This shows a slightly higher representation of women in the study, suggesting that the perspectives of both genders are fairly balanced, with women being marginally more represented. This is significant given that SDG programmes often target women and youths for poverty reduction and empowerment.

Age: The age distribution indicates that the majority of respondents (145 or 37.7%) fall within the 26-35 years age bracket. The next largest group is 18-25 years (23.4%), followed by 36-45 years (22.1%), 46-55 years (11.7%), and 56+ years (5.2%). This implies that most participants are youths and young adults, who are the primary target group for SDG interventions, especially in technical skills training, employment, and entrepreneurship programmes.

Education Level

Tertiary education: 155 respondents (40.3%)
Secondary education: 140 respondents (36.4%)
Primary education: 60 respondents (15.6%)
No formal education: 30 respondents (7.8%)

The majority of respondents have secondary and tertiary education (76.7%), indicating that most participants are literate and can effectively comprehend and engage with SDG programmes. A smaller proportion with low or no formal education highlights the need for awareness campaigns and inclusive programmes that reach all community segments.

Occupation

Civil servants: 120 (31.2%)
Traders: 95 (24.7%)
Farmers: 75 (19.5%)
Others: 95 (24.7%)

Civil servants form the largest occupational group, followed by traders and farmers. This suggests a mix of formal and informal sector participants, which is important for understanding the reach and impact of SDG initiatives across different economic activities. The presence of a significant number of traders and farmers indicates that SDG programmes in Gwagwalada are likely influencing both formal employment and informal livelihood strategies. The socio-demographic profile reveals that the respondents are predominantly young, educated, and economically active, making them key beneficiaries of SDG programmes aimed at poverty alleviation, skill acquisition, and community development. The balanced gender representation ensures that perspectives from both men and women are included, while the occupational mix indicates that SDG interventions have relevance across both formal and informal economic sectors. This demographic analysis provides a strong foundation for interpreting the subsequent findings on the roles, impacts, and effectiveness of SDG programmes in Gwagwalada Area Council.

Table 3.
Roles of SDG on Poverty Alleviation (n = 100)

Item	Mean	Interpretation
SDG plays a vital role in eradicating poverty among women and youths	4.28	Strongly Agree
SDG programmes have improved access to basic needs	4.15	Agree
SDG initiatives have reduced youth unemployment	3.97	Agree
SDG has empowered women economically	4.06	Agree
Community participation enhances SDG success	4.21	Strongly Agree
SDG promotes equality between men and women	4.12	Agree
SDG contributes to social inclusion	4.08	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

SDG plays a vital role in eradicating poverty among women and youths (Mean=4.28, Strongly Agree): espondents strongly agree that SDGs are crucial in reducing poverty among women and youths. This indicates a high community perception that SDG initiatives are directly addressing the economic and social challenges faced by these groups. SDG programmes have improved access to basic needs (Mean = 4.15, Agree): Participants agree that SDG programmes have enhanced access to essentials such as food, shelter, healthcare, and education. While the mean shows a positive impact, there may still be gaps in coverage or effectiveness in some areas.

SDG initiatives have reduced youth unemployment (Mean=3.97, Agree): Respondents agree that SDG efforts have contributed to decreasing youth unemployment. This reflects the effectiveness of vocational training, skill acquisition, and employment support initiatives, although there is room for further improvement. SDG has empowered women economically (Mean=4.06, Agree): SDG programmes are perceived as enhancing women's economic empowerment, likely through entrepreneurship support, microcredit schemes, and access to vocational training. This is a key outcome since women's empowerment is central to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Community participation enhances SDG success (Mean = 4.21, Strongly Agree): The high mean indicates that respondents recognize the importance of involving community members in SDG projects. Active participation increases the relevance, sustainability, and impact of programmes, reinforcing the need for inclusive approaches. SDG promotes equality between men and women (Mean=4.12, Agree): Participants agree that SDG initiatives support gender equality in economic opportunities, decision-making, and access to resources. This underscores the role of SDGs in addressing social inequalities that contribute to poverty.

SDG contributes to social inclusion (Mean=4.08, Agree): espondents perceive that SDGs foster social inclusion by targeting vulnerable and marginalized groups. This ensures that benefits of development reach those most in need, enhancing overall community welfare. The data shows that respondents positively perceive the role of SDGs in poverty alleviation among women and youths. The highest-rated items, such as the vital role of SDGs (4.28) and community participation (4.21), highlight that both the programmes themselves and the involvement of the community are crucial for success. Other items, with means above 4.0, indicate general agreement that SDGs contribute to basic needs, gender equality, social inclusion, and empowerment, although slight variations suggest areas where effectiveness could be further strengthened.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that Sustainable Development Goals programmes play a significant role in poverty alleviation among women and youths in Federal Capital Territory, particularly within Gwagwalada Area Council. Both qualitative and quantitative results indicate that respondents generally perceive SDG interventions as impactful in improving livelihoods. The high mean score (4.28) for the statement that SDGs play a vital role in eradicating poverty suggests a strong consensus among participants that these programmes contribute meaningfully to reducing economic hardship. This aligns with qualitative insights from focus group discussions, where participants acknowledged the presence of initiatives such as conditional cash transfers, skill acquisition programmes, and small business support schemes, all of which have enhanced income generation and self-reliance among beneficiaries.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that SDG programmes have improved access to basic needs and social services, including education, healthcare, and sanitation. With a mean score of 4.15, respondents agreed that these interventions have enhanced their standard of living, reflecting the multidimensional nature of poverty alleviation. In addition, SDG initiatives were found to contribute to employment creation and economic empowerment, particularly among youths and women. The reduction in youth unemployment (mean=3.97) and increased economic empowerment of women (mean=4.06) suggest that programmes aligned with skills development, entrepreneurship, and financial inclusion are yielding positive outcomes. These results support the argument that targeted interventions under SDG frameworks can improve both income levels and broader socio-economic conditions.

Another important finding is the critical role of community participation in enhancing the effectiveness of SDG programmes. The high mean score (4.21) for community involvement indicates that inclusive and participatory approaches are essential for achieving sustainable outcomes. Respondents emphasized that when local communities are actively engaged in programme design and implementation, the interventions are more relevant, accepted, and impactful. Additionally, the study found that SDGs promote gender equality (mean=4.12) and

social inclusion (mean=4.08), highlighting their role in addressing structural inequalities that disproportionately affect women and marginalized groups. This reinforces the idea that poverty alleviation is not only about income but also about equitable access to opportunities and resources.

Despite these positive outcomes, the findings also point to notable challenges that limit the full realization of SDG objectives. Key issues identified include low awareness of SDG programmes, especially in rural communities, inadequate coverage, and implementation gaps. While respondents acknowledged the benefits of SDG interventions, they also indicated that not all segments of the population are equally reached. This suggests that the effectiveness of SDG programmes is constrained by factors such as insufficient sensitization, weak institutional coordination, and limited inclusiveness. Therefore, while SDGs have made measurable contributions to poverty alleviation in Gwagwalada, their overall impact remains moderate and uneven, indicating the need for improved programme design, wider outreach, and stronger policy implementation to achieve more sustainable and inclusive outcomes.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that Sustainable Development Goals have made a meaningful contribution to poverty alleviation among women and youths in Federal Capital Territory, particularly in Gwagwalada Area Council. Evidence from both qualitative and quantitative analyses shows that SDG-driven interventionssuch as skills acquisition programmes, youth empowerment initiatives, and social support schemeshave improved income levels, enhanced access to basic services, and promoted economic inclusion. The findings also highlight that SDGs contribute to gender equality and social inclusion, thereby addressing structural barriers that perpetuate poverty among vulnerable groups. However, despite these positive outcomes, the study reveals that the overall impact of SDG programmes remains uneven due to challenges such as low awareness, inadequate coverage, and weak implementation mechanisms, particularly in underserved communities.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that policymakers and development stakeholders strengthen awareness campaigns and grassroots sensitization to ensure wider participation in SDG programmes. There is also a need to improve programme targeting and expand coverage to reach the most vulnerable populations, especially in rural and peri-urban areas. Government and implementing agencies should enhance coordination, monitoring, and evaluation frameworks to ensure effective delivery and sustainability of interventions. Additionally, greater investment in education, vocational training, and access to finance should be prioritized to empower women and youths economically. Finally, encouraging community participation and partnerships with non-governmental organizations will further enhance the effectiveness and inclusiveness of SDG initiatives, thereby promoting sustainable poverty reduction in the study area.

References

Abang, A. (2024). Community social entrepreneurship as a complement to government poverty reduction: A case study of Gwagwalada. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship and Development Studies, 12*(1), 45-62.

Abu, M. (2025). Assessing the influence of Sustainable Development Goals on poverty reduction in Minna metropolis. *International Journal of Innovative Finance and Economic Research, 13*(2), 88-104.

Abubakar, H., Magaji, S., & Musa, I. (2025). Impact of government policies and financial support programs on the success of women-owned small and medium enterprises in Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development, 16*(5), 68-81.

Aliyu, S. (2024). Impact of Sustainable Development Goals on poverty alleviation in Minna, Niger State: A comparative analysis. *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies, 66*(1), 102–118.

Alkire, S., & Foster, J. (2011). Counting and multidimensional poverty measurement. *Journal of Public Economics, 95*(7-8), 476-487.

Alkire, S., Kanagaratnam, U., & Suppa, N. (2017). *The global multidimensional poverty index (MPI): 2017 revision*. Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative.

Amakoromo, E., Asiegbu, I., & Okafor, C. (2024). Poverty reduction programs and challenges of achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria. *African Journal of Public Policy and Development, 9*(3), 55-73.

Aminu, A. T., Magaji, S., & Ismail, Y. (2025). Women's roles in agricultural decision-making: A case study of federal ministries and women farmers' groups in FCT. *International Journal of Innovative Food, Nutrition & Sustainable Agriculture, 13*(4), 48–65. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17566458

Becker, G. S. (1993). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education* (3rd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Dada, A. B., Magaji, S., & Ismail, Y. (2025). Exploring the effectiveness of capacity building programme in promoting gender equality in agriculture: A case study of FCT Abuja. *International Journal of Innovative Psychology & Social Development, 13*(4), 181-196. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17566456

Inamura, T., Okoye, K., & Bello, A. (2022). Citizens' perceptions of Sustainable Development Goals progress in Abuja, Nigeria. *Sustainable Development Perspectives, 14*(2), 120-136.

Kabeer, N. (2015). Gender, poverty, and inequality: A brief history of feminist contributions in the field of international development. *Gender & Development, 23*(2), 189-205. https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2015.1062300

Magaji, S., & Aliyu, C. U. (2007). Micro-credit and women empowerment in Bauchi State: The role of community banking. *Issues in Economics, 2*, 162–172.

Magaji, S., Musa, I., Abdulmalik, O. Y., & Eke, C. I. (2022). Poverty and its intractability: Causes and consequences. *Inclusive Society and Sustainability Studies, 2*(2), 48-58.

Mohammed, Y. (2024). Effect of Sustainable Development Goals on poverty alleviation in the Federal Capital Territory: A mixed-methods evaluation. *Journal of Development Policy and Practice, 9*(1), 33-51.

Musa, I. (2024). Exploring the connection between poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa, 26*(1), 77-95.

Musa, I., Ismail, Y., & Magaji, S. (2024). Exploring the connection between poverty reduction and well-being in Nigeria. *MRS Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Studies, 1*(1), 19-32.

Musa, I., Magaji, S., & Salisu, A. (2023). Relationship between financial inclusion and economic growth: Evidence from ARDL modelling. *Focus on Research in Contemporary Economics, 3*(2), 395-413.

National Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Poverty and inequality report in Nigeria*.

Nnaba-Agire, C. (2024). Human capital development and rural poverty reduction in Nigeria: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Agricultural Economics and Extension, 18*(2), 140-156.

Ologbonori, S. T., Magaji, S., & Musa, I. (2025). Assessing the critical needs driving rural development in Nigeria: Implications for sustainable national development. *MRS Journal of Accounting and Business Management, 2*(7), 1-10.

Olusanya, O., Adewale, T., & Ibrahim, M. (2025). Impact of youth empowerment schemes on poverty alleviation in Abuja, Nigeria. *Journal of Youth Development and Policy Studies, 11*(1), 60-78.

Sachs, J. D., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., & Fuller, G. (2019). *Sustainable development report 2019*. Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

Schultz, T. W. (1961). Investment in human capital. *The American Economic Review, 51*(1), 1-17.

Sen, A. (1985). *Commodities and capabilities*. North-Holland.

Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford University Press.

Sule, M., Ibrahim, M., & Abdullah, A. I. (2024). Impact of small and medium enterprises on women's empowerment in Nigeria. *British Journal of Management and Marketing Studies, 7*(2), 83–98.

United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*.

United Nations Development Programme. (2021). *Human development report 2020: The next frontier-Human development and the Anthropocene*.

Utuk, E. (2022). Poverty and sustainable economic development in Nigeria: An empirical review. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development, 13*(4), 25-39.

World Bank. (2020). *Poverty and shared prosperity 2020: Reversals of fortune*.