

THE PLIGHT OF THE UNDERPRIVILEGED IN OUR SOCIETY, NIGERIA

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**A PROJECT WRITTEN IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FINE AND APPLIED ARTS,
FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN
CITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF FINE AND APPLIED ART**

(B.A FINE AND APPLIED ART)

DECLARATION

I, Paul Ighodaho Ehizele with the Matriculation Number ENV2204890, hereby declare that this project was carried out by me in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Faculty of Environmental science, University of Benin, in partial fulfillment of the requirement of B. A in the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, I Further declare that this work was not submitted for the award of any other degree in the above named institution or any other institution.

Signature

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by PAUL IGHODAHO EHIZELE with Matriculation Number, ENV2204890, of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Benin.

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Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to Almighty God and my family members.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere gratitude goes to The Almighty God for his immeasurable support and provision for the success of this project.

My deepest gratitude also goes to my Supervisors, Dr. El-Dragg Okwoju and Prof. E. Imonikebe for their continuous guidance and expertise during the course of this project. Their valuable insights and feedback have been instrumental in shaping the direction of this research. I am also grateful to the Head of Department of Fine and Applied Art, Dr. Daniel .N. Osariyekemwen and the course adviser, Dr. Paul Aikhionbare.

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ABSTRACT

This research examines “*The Plight of The Underprivileged in Nigerian Society*” through the lens of visual art, particularly painting, as a tool for social commentary and transformation. The study explores how Nigerian artists use painting to expose the harsh realities of poverty, inequality, unemployment, and neglect that affect the less privileged. It highlights the expressive power of colors, composition, and symbolism in portraying human suffering, resilience, and hope.

By analyzing selected artworks that depict hunger, urban hardship, and emotional despair, the research emphasizes the role of visual artists as both social historians and advocates for justice. Through their creative expressions, artists bring attention to issues often ignored by policymakers and the public. The study concludes that painting serves not only as a means of aesthetic expression but also as a visual protest and a call to empathy, urging society to recognize and address the conditions of the marginalized.

Furthermore, the research recommends greater institutional and governmental support for socially conscious art in Nigeria. Encouraging such creative engagement will strengthen national awareness, promote compassion, and contribute to building a more equitable society where art becomes a bridge between social reality and collective responsibility.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In our society today in Nigeria, the underprivileged are those lacking access to essential needs; such as education, healthcare, decent housing, food, social protection, and economic opportunity. Though Nigeria ranks as one of Africa's largest economy, vast disparities persist; about 40% of the population (83-112 million people) live below Nigeria's national poverty line, and a strikingly higher proportion in rural areas (approximately 52%) compared to urban centers (approximately 18%).

This underprivileged demographic includes rural agricultural workers, informal sector laborers earning low wages, youths facing unemployment, and populations in conflict affected or marginalized areas. The underprivileged face numerous interconnected challenges that limit their opportunities and well-being; most of the victims are particularly the children which are vulnerable with long-term consequences such as poverty, lack of access to quality education, health care, food, insecurity and inadequate shelter.

Some of the causes of this complex but neglected issue are; rural urban disparities and inequality, labor market weakness and informality, food insecurity and mal-nutrition, mental health and social exclusion, bad governance and many more.

Poverty in Nigeria is rooted in governance failures, elite entrenchment, and weak federal structures. Beyond income, many Nigerians suffer from poor education, health and infrastructure access.

Conclusively, the plight of the underprivileged in our society in Nigeria intertwines historical structural analysis, the lived experience of marginalized populations, quantitative poverty metrics, and the valuation of social policies.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Poverty in Nigeria remains a deeply rooted and multi-dimensional challenge, driven by stark rural-urban disparities, food insecurity, weak governance, and a fragile labor market. Northern states such as Sokoto, Jigawa, Zamfara, and Taraba experience some of the highest poverty headcount rates exceeding 70% in sharp contrast to far lower rates in southwestern states like Lagos and Oyo. Rural dwellers, especially smallholder farmers who rely solely on agriculture, are particularly vulnerable, with rural poverty levels reaching over 50%. This economic hardship is closely linked to chronic food insecurity and malnutrition, which continue to affect millions. UNICEF reports that nearly 31 million Nigerians face food insecurity, with children in conflict-hit and northern regions suffering the worst at least 652 children in Katsina State alone died from malnutrition between January and June 2025.

Compounding these challenges is a political system plagued by elite misgovernance, systemic corruption, and institutional weakness problems sustained by flawed federalism and decades of misrule. These governance failures hinder effective poverty alleviation and resource distribution, leaving the most vulnerable populations behind. Furthermore, the labor market remains severely underdeveloped, with youth unemployment surpassing 50% and a large proportion of the population trapped in informal, low-productivity, or underpaid jobs. Altogether, these interlinked issues perpetuate a cycle of poverty and inequality for millions of Nigerians, especially the underprivileged.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How can visual art be used to represent the daily struggles faced by underprivileged communities in Nigeria?
2. In what ways can Nigerian artists raise awareness about social inequality and poverty through their artwork?
3. What extent does the representation (or lack thereof) of underprivileged people in

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to bring to awareness through visual art the underprivileged in our society and how they survive through the hardship and also to instigate change and emotions to help this predicament.

Objectives

1. To use visual art as powerful tool to highlight, interpret, and raise awareness about the struggles faced by the underprivileged in Nigeria.
2. To explore how visual art can communicate social issues, such as poverty, homelessness, child labor, and lack of access to education and healthcare.
3. To experiment with painting techniques, materials, and symbolisms that reflect the harsh realities of emotional depth of the underprivileged experience.
4. To evaluate audience response and impact, analyzing how visual storytelling can influence public perception and inspire social change.

1.5 Significance of the Study

With the rampant underprivileged in Nigeria the researcher makes use of visual art to serve as a powerful tool for raising awareness and promoting social change. By using visual art to depict the struggles and challenges faced by the underprivileged, the researcher hopes to create emotional connections with viewers and inspire them to take action to address social inequality and injustice. This Art piece has the ability to evoke empathy, spark conversations, and challenge societal norms, making it an effective platform for shining a light on the issues faced by marginalized communities. Through visual art, we can amplify the voices of the underprivileged and advocate for a more just and equitable society.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation

Scope of study: This study focuses on the plight of the underprivileged in our society in Nigeria through visual art encompasses a wide range of possibilities. The researcher uses visual art to document the harsh realities faced by the underprivileged, raising awareness of their plight and challenging viewers to confront their own biases and prejudices.

They can use their creativity to imagine alternative futures and inspire hope for a more just and equitable society for all.

1.7 Definition of Terms

- **Marginalisation:** refers to the process by which certain individuals or groups are pushed to the edge of society, limiting their access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making power. These groups are often excluded from full participation in social, economic, political, and cultural life due to factors like race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status (Oxford dictionary, Cambridge dictionary, UNESCO 2009).

- **Misrule:** refers to poor, corrupt, or unjust governance, typically by those in power. It implies a failure to govern properly, often leading to instability, injustice, and suffering for the population.(Oxford dictionary, Cambridge dictionary, Merriam-Webster dictionary).
- **Bias:** Biases are systematic deviations from objective standards, often due to preconceived notions, experiences, preferences, or social influences. In both social and scientific contexts, biases can distort decision-making, judgment, or interpretation.(Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is a review of related studies on the topic “THE PLIGHT OF THE UNDERPRIVILEGED IN OUR SOCIETY NIGERIA”. The chapter is arranged under the following headings;

- Related studies about “The Plight underprivileged in Nigeria”
- Related Artists, concepts and works
- Techniques in painting
- Colour Theory
- Composition in Painting

2.1 Related studies about “The Plight of the Underprivileged in Nigeria”

- Urbanization and Housing for Low-Income Earners

A review by Aduwo et al. (2016) explores how rapid urbanization in Nigeria adversely affects housing access for low-income residents. It identifies slum proliferation and top-down social housing policies as central issues needing participatory and self-help approaches.

- Poverty-Alleviation Programmes Review

Awojobi (2019) systematically assesses Nigeria's government interventions, finding limited impact on household income, quality of life, and access to services—largely due to corruption, mismanagement, and elite capture.

- Microcredit & Poverty Reduction

A review of microfinance programs shows that microcredit has helped petty traders raise income, though challenges remain in policy design and accessibility.

- Persistence of Poverty Amid Policies

Adebajo et al. (2024) critique Nigeria's poverty policies, arguing elitist biases, poor coordination, and resource misallocation have hindered meaningful poverty reduction.

- Education and Poverty

Chioke (2022) and Adeniji (2025) study the negative influence of poverty on educational outcomes in Enugu and Ogun/Oyo States. Poverty affects attendance, academic performance, and access to educational resources.

- Specific Populations

Studies on the plight of the elderly and flood victims highlight vulnerabilities. Elderly Nigerians suffer from governance failures in pension and healthcare delivery, while flood-displaced communities face livelihood crises with inadequate policy response.

2.2 Related Artworks & Artistic Projects

- Obiora Udechukwu

His early Nigerian works including *Refugees* (1977) and *Tycoon and Stevedores* (1979) evoke scenes of mass displacement and inequality. Rich color and abstract human figures reflect despair, poverty, and exclusion.

- Olu Amoda

Using discarded metal items, Amoda creates sculptures that comment on socio-political issues particularly economic inequality and neglect of impoverished urban communities.

- Dilomprizulike (“Thejunkmanfromafrika”)

Transforms discarded clothing and city detritus into installations exploring urban poverty and disenfranchisement. His “Junkyard Museum of Awkward Things” is a visceral representation of marginalized lives in urban Nigeria.

- Wilfred Ukpong

Through multimedia including film and sculpture, Ukpong's Blazing Century engages marginalised Niger Delta communities—offering an alternative, transformative visual language and critique of environmental and social crises.

- Children’s Art Gallery (TCAG), Lagos

Founded in 2022, TCAG showcases artwork by children from low-income backgrounds. This gallery not only raises awareness about underprivilege, but also channels proceeds toward healthcare and schooling empowering families affected by poverty .

2.3 Techniques in painting

Painting as an art form encompasses a variety of techniques developed and refined over centuries. These techniques help artists achieve desired textures, lighting effects, and emotional resonance. Below are some of the most significant painting techniques, with references to authoritative art books for deeper reading.

- **Glazing:**

Glazing is the application of thin, transparent layers of oil or acrylic paint over a dried opaque layer. This technique creates depth, luminosity, and subtle color shifts. Widely used by

Renaissance artists such as Jan van Eyck and Leonardo da Vinci. In the book “The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques” New York: Viking, 1991. Mayer discusses how glazing was used to enhance light effects and build depth in oil painting.

- **Impasto:**

Impasto involves applying paint thickly so that brush or palette knife marks are visible. It creates texture and a three-dimensional quality on the canvas. Popularized by Baroque painters like Rembrandt and later by Van Gogh in the Post-Impressionist era. Gair, Angela. *The Artist's Handbook: A Step-by-Step Guide to Drawing, Watercolor & Oil Painting*. London: Hermes House, 1999. Gair explains how impasto adds emotion and tactile energy to a painting.

- **Scumbling:**

Scumbling is the technique of applying a thin, opaque layer of lighter color over a dry, darker under painting to create a softer or hazy effect. Common in oil and pastel works to create atmospheric effects. Thompson, Daniel V. *The Practice of Tempera Painting*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936. Thompson explores the technique in the context of tempera and oil painting traditions.

- **Wet-on-Wet (Alla Prima):**

Alla prima is Italian for "at once." This method involves applying wet paint onto wet paint without waiting for earlier layers to dry. Used by Impressionists such as Claude Monet for its spontaneity and freshness. Galton, Jeremy. *Encyclopedia of Oil Painting Techniques*. London: Quarto Publishing, 2001. Galton details how this technique fosters immediacy and liveliness in a painting.

- **Dry Brush:**

The dry brush technique involves using a brush with minimal paint to create scratchy, textured lines, revealing the surface underneath. Often used in watercolor and acrylic to simulate textures like grass, hair, or fabric. In the book “How to Paint with a Dry Brush” by Walter Foster Publishing, 1988. Foster outlines methods to control tone and texture with this technique.

- **Grisaille:**

Grisaille is a monochromatic painting technique, typically in shades of gray, used either as a finished work or an under painting. This technique is used by Old Masters to establish form and value before applying color. Reed, Sue. Basic Drawing Techniques. Watson-Guption, 1999. Though focused on drawing, Reed discusses grisaille's function as a foundational step in classical painting.

- **Sfumato:**

Sfumato involves the subtle blending of colors and tones to create soft transitions and eliminate harsh outlines. Made famous by Leonardo da Vinci (e.g., the Mona Lisa). Clark, Kenneth. Leonardo da Vinci. Penguin Books, 1988. Clark analyzes da Vinci's use of sfumato to create lifelike, almost ethereal effects.

- **Under painting:**

Under painting is the preliminary layer of paint that serves as a base for subsequent layers, often monochromatic. This technique is used to establish composition and tonal values. Parramon, José M. Color Theory. Barron's Educational Series, 1991. Discusses the strategic use of under painting to plan color harmony.

- **Chiaroscuro:**

Chiaroscuro refers to the strong contrast between light and dark to model three-dimensional forms. Extensively used by Caravaggio and Rembrandt to dramatize figures. Gombrich, E.H. The Story of Art. Phaidon Press, 1995. Gombrich explains chiaroscuro's evolution and importance in Western painting

- **Pointillism:**

A technique in which small, distinct dots of color are applied in patterns to form an image. Developed by Georges Seurat and Paul Signac during the Neo-Impressionist movement. Rewald, John. Post-Impressionism; from Van Gogh to Gauguin. Museum of Modern Art, 1956. Explains how scientific theories of color and optics influenced pointillism.

2.4 Color Theory:

Color theory in painting is a foundational system of principles used to understand how colors interact, how they can be mixed, and how they affect mood and composition. It is both a science and an art, shaping how painters use color to convey meaning, depth, emotion, and harmony.

- **The Color Wheel:**

The color wheel is the most essential tool in color theory. Originally developed by Sir Isaac Newton in the 17th century, the color wheel is a circular diagram that organizes hues logically. Categories:

Primary Colors: Red, Blue, Yellow; cannot be made by mixing other colors.

Secondary Colors: Orange, Green, Violet; made by mixing two primary colors.

Tertiary Colors: Red-orange, yellow-green, etc. – made by mixing a primary and a secondary color.

Itten, Johannes. *The Elements of Color*. Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1970. Itten's color wheel and theories remain fundamental to understanding relationships between hues and their emotional effects.

- **Color Harmony:**

Color harmony refers to pleasing arrangements of colors that create visual interest and balance. Common Harmony Schemes:

Complementary (opposites on the wheel): Red & Green – creates high contrast.

Analogous (adjacent hues): Blue, Blue-Green, Green – creates harmony and unity.

Triadic (three evenly spaced hues): Red, Yellow, Blue – vibrant and balanced.

Betty Edwards, *Color: A Course in Mastering the Art of Mixing Colors*. Penguin, 2004. Edwards explains how to apply harmony and balance practically in painting, especially for beginners.

- **Warm and Cool Colors (temperature):**

Warm colors (reds, oranges, yellows): evoke warmth, energy, and excitement. Cool colors (blues, greens, purples): suggest calmness, distance, and serenity. Artists often use warm colors to bring objects forward and cool colors to push them into the background, helping to create depth. Gair, Angela; *Color Mixing Bible*. Watson-Guptill, 2002. This guide explores temperature and the psychological effects of warm vs. cool palettes.

- **Color Value and Tone:**

Value refers to how light or dark a color is. Tone refers to the softness or dullness of a color (achieved by adding gray or its complement). Mastery of value is crucial in creating

form, volume, and depth. Jose M. Parramon, *The Big Book of Oil Painting*. Watson-Guptill, 1991. Parramon explains how tonal value is often more important than hue when building strong compositions.

- **Saturation and Intensity:**

Saturation (or chroma) is the purity or brightness of a color.

High saturation = vivid colors.

Low saturation = muted, grayish tones.

Artists manipulate saturation to guide the viewer's eye and evoke emotion. Deborah Forman, *Color Lab for Mixed-Media Artists*. Quarry Books, 2013. Discusses how to adjust and use saturation to create mood and visual pathways in painting.

- **Color Mixing Techniques:**

Painters use additive and subtractive color mixing, though painting primarily uses the subtractive model, where pigments absorb light.

Basic color mixing strategies:

Tint = color + white

Shade = color + black

Tone = color + gray or complement

The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques Viking, 1991. Provides in-depth insight into the chemistry and methods of mixing pigments.

2.5 Composition in painting

refers to the arrangement and organization of visual elements—such as line, shape, color, value, and space—within the boundaries of the artwork. It's the structure that holds a painting together and guides the viewer's eye through the work. A well-composed painting not only captures attention but also communicates meaning, emotion, and movement.

The Elements of Composition

The core elements used to build a composition include:

Line – Directs the viewer's eye and defines shapes.

Shape – The outline of objects within the painting.

Color – Used to create mood, contrast, or balance.

Value – Light and dark to create depth and form.

Texture – Adds realism or expression.

Space – Positive (occupied) and negative (empty) areas; also includes depth (illusion of three dimensions).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methods by which this research will be carried out are listed systematically below:

- Design of the study
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Instrument for Data Collection
- Description of the Materials
- Procedure (Studio Production Process)
- Method of Visual Analysis

3.1 Design of the study

According to Egonwa (2012), the experimental or exploratory design method involves processes of testing and problem-solving, encouraging both experimentation and risk-taking key components of the creative process. On the other hand, the practical design method, also known as the Creative or Expressive/Productive design, emphasizes the direct creation of artworks through hands-on engagement. These two approaches were chosen for this study because they support its central aims: to examine the application of color and composition in contemporary painting and to produce a practical piece that reflects the artist's grasp on these visual elements.

3.2 Population of the Study

A random selection of citizens relevant to this work was used as the population of this study.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used in the selection of the subject is the simple random sampling technique.

3.4 Instrument for Data Collection

Information for this research was gathered from various sources, including academic articles, official records, journals, news reports, and digital tools such as the internet, online publications, cameras, and electronic news platforms.

3.5 Description of Materials

The following materials are used in the painting process:

- I. **Stretcher frame:** This is a wooden structure, typically rectangular in shape. In this context, it is positioned vertically and serves as a support for stretching the baft fabric (canvas), which is either primed afterward or already pre-primed before being mounted.
- II. **Canvas:** This is a durable, plain-woven fabric made from cotton or linen, commonly used by artists as a surface for painting. It is usually stretched over a wooden frame, either permanently or temporarily, depending on the artist's intention and the purpose of the artwork.
- III. **Staple Gun and staple pins:** This is a lightweight metal tool, similar to a standard office stapler, operated manually by pressing the trigger firmly to attach the canvas to the stretcher.
- IV. **Primer:** This is a blend of paint and adhesive, typically white glue. It is applied to the canvas to seal the tiny gaps formed during the stretching of the canvas, creating a smooth surface that allows the paint to adhere properly during painting.

- V. **Paintbrush:** This is a bundle of bristle-like fibers used to apply paint onto the canvas. They come in different sizes, shapes, and materials, depending on the artist's technique, choice of paint, and specific needs.
- VI. **Oil paint/color:** Oil color is a type of paint made by mixing finely ground pigments with a drying oil, common linseed oil. This combination creates a thick, smooth medium that dries slowly, allowing artists to blend colors and build layers with rich texture and depth. Oil colors are prized for their vibrant hues, durability, and ability to produce both translucent glazes and opaque strokes, making them a popular choice in traditional and contemporary painting.
- VII. **Palette Knife and Painting Knife:** These are blunt-edged tools always flat and almost looking like spoon with a tip. It is used for scooping and mixing paints on the palette; while it may also be used for painting on the canvas too.
- VIII. **Palette:** this is a thick, flat surface on which paints are arranged and mixed. A palette is usually made of wood, plastic, ceramics or other hard, inert, non-porous material which may vary in shapes and sizes.
- IX. **Rag:** this is a piece of old cloth, purposefully used for cleaning paint brushes, palette and painting knives.
- X. **Container:** is a metal or plastic cylindrical container always in the shape of a cup. It is used to hold supply of solvent like water, kerosene, linseed oil and so on.
- XI. **Linseed oil:** Linseed oil is a natural drying oil extracted from flax seeds, commonly used as a binder in oil painting. When mixed with pigments, it helps create oil paints by providing a smooth, workable consistency. Linseed oil also improves the paint's flexibility, gloss, and drying time, allowing artists to achieve rich textures and layered effects in their artwork.

3.6 Procedure (Studio Production Process)

This project is carried out under the following stages:

Stage 1: Brainstorming and making sketches of the proposed project

Stage 2: Constructing a stretcher and stretching of the 4ft by 3ft canvas

Stage 3: Painting ground preparation which includes sizing and priming

Stage 4: Transferring my sketch onto my canvas

Stage 5: Started the under painting

Stage 6: Detailing the painting

Stage 7: Adding finishing touches.

3.7 Method of visual Analysis

A critique (discussion) was carried out to evaluate the project which includes:

1. Project Title
2. Medium
3. Size
4. Concept
5. Draughtsmanship
6. Colour
7. Style
8. Technique
9. Relevant details

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This chapter deals with visual analysis and discussion of results. Here art productions are analyzed; photograph of sketch, works and illustrations are created to express the works. Works could be analyzed individually or collectively based on the objective, stages of the study, procedures and features such as; size, style, technique, medium, materials, colour, among others that used for the success of the work

Stage 1: Brainstorming and making sketches of the proposed project

Here the pictorial sketch is made to serve as the guideline to the painting.

Figure 1:

Sketch of Composition by Researcher

Photo credit: Ehizele .I. Paul

Medium: graphite pencil on paper

Artist: Ehizele .I. Paul

Following composition of sketch model, a composition was created for an efficient and neat arrangement of the figure before it was transferred to the canvas. The sketch serves as a tool to fix any potential anatomical mistakes and familiarize the artist with the motion of curves. Additionally, it facilitates the study of forms for the intended painting's execution, making it simpler than simply copying from a photograph.

Stage 2: Constructing a stretcher and stretching of the 4ft by 3ft canvas

Figure 2:

Construction of stretcher by the researcher *photocredit: by Daniel John*

Construction of 4 by 3ft stretcher is been constructed to have the canvas on as surface for the painting.

Stage 3: Painting ground preparation which includes sizing and priming

Figure 3:

Priming of Canvas by Researcher. *photocredit: by Daniel Seun*

A surface that prepares the ground is known as a "painting ground." There were two mechanisms at play: priming and sizing. Sizing is a mixture of top bond glue and water in a 2:1 ratio, or more glue and less water. Its main purpose is to seal the fabric's air pores, making it less absorbent for painting or other work. The priming procedure comes after the sizing procedure. It is an application of emulsion paint and adhesive that has been diluted 2:3 in water. The purpose of priming is to prepare the surface so that it can accept the application of color or any other substance.

Stage 4: Transferring my sketch unto my canvas

In this stage is started putting down the sketch on my canvas and gradually starting the under painting using grey colors as the base.

Stage 5: Started the under painting

Figure 4:

Painting by the Researcher. *photocredit: Ehizele .I. Paul*

Medium: oil on canvas.

Artist: Ehizele .I. Paul

Applying colour to fill the spaces to cover the whole canvas.

Stage 6: Detailing the painting

This is one of the important stages of the project as some detail and highlight are laid on painting to give a good vibrant finishing.

Figure 5:

Painting by the researcher

Photo credit: Ehizele .I. Paul

Stage 7: Adding finishing touches.

Figure 6:

Painting done by the researcher, photocredit: Happiness Oyebadejo

Discussion of the Special Project

A critique was carried out to evaluate the project:

Project Title: “The Plight of the Underprivileged in our society, Nigeria”

Medium: oil on canvas

Size: 4ft by 3ft

Concept and Interpretation: The central message of this painting titled “The Plight of the underprivileged in our society, Nigeria” is the cry of the poor; those suffering from poverty, hunger, and neglect in society. The empty bowls are symbols of lack and desperation, representing the millions of Nigerians struggling daily to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare. This painting expresses the emotional and social tension between abundance and lack, development and neglect, and hope and despair in Nigeria.

It visualizes the idea that the eyes of society or even of God weep at the suffering of the poor, whose cries go unheard. The work serves as a visual protest, urging empathy, awareness, and social reform.

Symbolisms:

The Crying Eyes In The Sky: symbolizes the watchful yet helpless gaze of humanity, mourning the suffering of the people below. The tears reflect both divine sorrow and human empathy, suggesting that the pain of the underprivileged affects all of creation.

The Empty Bowls: Represent hunger, dependence, and pleas for help. They can also symbolize the human need for compassion and justice not just food.

The Figures: The young man in the center, lifting his bowl high, symbolizes hope amid despair, as though appealing to heaven or society for relief.

The Crying Child: emphasizes innocence and helplessness, victims of a system they did not create.

The female figure in a hijab holding her bowl humbly: Represents women and children, the most affected by poverty.

The man in NYSC uniform: might represent the educated but underemployed Nigerian youth, highlighting how even those who serve the nation face hardship.

The Background (Urban Scene): Indicates that poverty exists even amidst development showing how social inequality persists in modern Nigerian cities.

Style: Realistic with symbolic surrealism (especially in the eyes).

Composition: Centralized focus on the figures with upward movement symbolizing appeal and suffering.

Colour Psychology/usage: Warm tones (orange/yellow) Harsh reality, heat, and suffering. Cool tones (blue) Sadness, tears, and divine empathy. Contrast Represents emotional and social disparity.

Technique: The technique used in this painting was alla prima(wet on wet) method and for the finishing I used a complementary color for finishing.

Figure 7:

Title: The Plight of the Underprivileged in our Society, Nigeria

Medium: oil paint

Artist: Paul Ighodaho Ehizele

Size: 4 x 3 ft

Date: October, 2025.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter precisely deals with the summary and conclusion of the study which explores

“The Plight of the Underprivileged in our society, Nigeria.

Summary

This project visually shows how painting can be used as a powerful tool for exposing and interpreting the harsh realities faced by the underprivileged in Nigerian society. Through expressive brushwork, use of colors and symbolic compositions the researcher was able to capture scenes from street life, and giving voice to those who are often unheard.

In this context, painting becomes both an aesthetic and moral instrument revealing imbalance in wealth distribution, the impact of corruption, and the resilience of those living in hardship. Thus this project becomes an active agent for social awareness and transformation in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the plight of the underprivileged in Nigeria extends beyond economic hardship; it embodies a deeper social, moral, and cultural challenge that the researcher tries to explore through painting. To truly address the plight of the underprivileged, Nigeria must not only implement sound economic and social policies but also continue to support and promote visual art as a medium for education, advocacy, and cultural renewal.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations;

1. Promotion of Socially Conscious Art:

Art institutions and galleries in Nigeria should encourage exhibitions and competitions focused on social issues such as poverty, inequality, and human rights. This will inspire more artists to engage in social commentary through their works.

2. Inclusion of Art in Social Development Programs:

Government and non-governmental organizations should collaborate with visual artists in public awareness campaigns. Murals, community art projects, and public paintings can effectively communicate messages of hope, unity, and compassion to local communities.

3. Support for Young Artists:

Grants, scholarships, and workshops should be provided for young Nigerian artists who use painting to address societal challenges. Empowering artists strengthens their ability to advocate for the underprivileged through creative expression.

4. Integration into Education:

Art education at all levels should include projects that explore social and humanitarian themes. This helps nurture empathy and civic responsibility among young learners while recognizing art as a tool for social change.

5. Establishment of Art-Based NGOs and Campaigns:

Artists and cultural organizations can form groups dedicated to using visual art as a means of advocacy for the underprivileged creating awareness through exhibitions, street art, and community engagement.

6. Government Support for Cultural Expression:

The Nigerian government should invest more in the creative industry and promote art programs that focus on national identity, poverty reduction, and cultural development. Art can serve as a bridge between policymakers and the people.

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