

Massive Governance, Miserable Populace: Cost of Governance As Economic Growth Decelerator In Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at massive governance, miserable populace: cost of governance as economic growth decelerator in Nigeria. This study used surveys to collect a total of 310 respondent. Looking back, we see how cost of governance become a negative impact on Nigeria's economic growth; We see that revenue from many sectors is used to finance massive governance which slows down the growth of Nigeria, massive governance weakens the Nigerian economy and slows down the growth of Nigeria economy. The heavy debt service economy has become the basis of Nigeria's economic growth, leading to excessive and ineffective spending of Nigerian funds by the political class. The study concluded that Nigerians will experience sustainable economic growth that will lead to development if she promotes and accepts a part-time unicameral legislature which will reduce the size of the political class and the salary structure, her economy will continue to slow down, thereby causing population poverty and course diseases in the country. The study also makes some recommendations to Nigerians and policy makers. Implication of this research is that by adopting a part-time unicameral legislature to minimize governance costs.

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1. Introduction

It is imperative, for Nigeria's economic development, to reduce the costs associated with maintaining and servicing the political class, including elected officials and their aides. Nigeria's economic development is heavily influenced by effective media representation and public relations efforts (Ameyaw-Brobbe, 2024). Nigeria's economic development is faced with the challenge of rising public debt (Ezenekwe et al., 2024). Politics should not be perceived as a career or business venture. The intertwining of politics and business ventures among the political elite can led to significant conflicts (Makgala & Botlhomilwe, 2017). Nigeria's economic development is influenced by the dynamics of business elite networks (Cárdenas, 2020). Inequity in public roles can undermine economic stability (Pogge, 2024).

However, it is concerning that many Nigerians, particularly those who identify as politicians, now view politics as a career. The involvement of Nigerian politicians in political corruption can be marked, one of which is biased law enforcement, and causes low civilian trust in political institutions (Davis & Turnbull, 2024; Oluseye, 2024). Political corruption undermines the governance framework and transparency of government programs (Bakre et al., 2024). Voters are worried about the growing political corruption caused by identity politics and money politics (Agboga, 2024). Another cause of political corruption is the shift in the loyalty of parliamentarians (Agboga, 2023). The nature of political corruption is an obstacle to the progress of the country (Ojo, 2024).

In 2013, the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) highlighted the high costs of governance in Nigeria, with the National Assembly spending over N1 trillion primarily on "reimbursements" rather than development projects. Despite suggestions like hiring part-time legislators to cut costs, lawmakers resisted. Part-time legislatures are more likely to use sunset laws as a mechanism to ensure that executive preferences do not dominate the country's government (Baugus et al., 2021). Former officials and clergy emphasized the need to redirect funds from governance to economic development. The excessive political expenditure, with over 70% of the budget going to recurrent expenses, hampers growth and increases external debt, which rose from \$29 billion in 2000 to 87.38 trillion naira in 2023. Policymakers need to address these issues to prevent further economic decline. Implementing the right economic policies can help prevent economic downturns by enabling rapid adaptation to changing conditions, which supports a dynamic and adaptable recovery process (Yu & Ye, 2024). The high government spending in Nigeria is the reason for the large number of Nigerian politicians abandoning prestigious careers for politics and seek lifelong political involvement.

In examining the motivations behind Nigerian politicians' transition from esteemed professional careers to enduring roles in politics, it is pertinent to explore the broader economic implications of political expenditures. Positive government intervention in cost management can improve the efficiency of government governance (Li & Li, 2024). Tracking the legislative process increases governance costs and fiscal instability (Poncian, 2023). The dynamics of governance costs in government are influenced by regulatory adaptation and intervention (Kourula et al., 2019). In 2013, the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) cast a spotlight on Nigeria's governance costs, reporting that the National Assembly allocated more than N1 trillion primarily to "reimbursements" rather than to development initiatives.

Despite proposals to reduce expenses through the appointment of part-time legislators, such suggestions met with substantial resistance from the lawmakers themselves. Notably, former government officials and members of the clergy have advocated for a reallocation of financial resources towards economic development, rather than maintaining high governance expenses. The prevalent allocation of over 70% of the national budget to recurrent costs significantly constrains economic growth and has contributed to an escalating external debt, which surged from \$29 billion in 2000 to 87.38 trillion naira by 2023. This trend underscores an urgent need for policymakers to address these fiscal challenges to avert further economic deterioration.

This shift raises several questions: What were their occupations before assuming political roles? Why do they abandon prestigious careers to enter politics? Why do they seek lifelong political involvement and resist returning to their previous positions after their terms end? These are critical questions that Nigerians must contemplate to understand the broader implications of such trends. In 2013, the Nigerian NGO Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC), with support from the UK's Public Administration Reform Project, organized a conference on 'The Cost of Governance in Nigeria.' Keynote speaker Obi Ezekwesiri highlighted that from 2005 to 2013, Nigeria spent over N1 trillion (approximately \$6.2 billion) on the National Assembly, with 82 percent of the budget allocated to "reimbursements" rather than developmental projects. A recent British report indicated that Nigerian legislators are among the highest-paid in the world. Ezekwesiri suggested hiring part-time legislators to reduce costs, arguing that such a move would decrease dependency on public

funds and curb corruption. Despite some resistance from lawmakers, her insights offer a pathway to more sustainable governance.

In 2016, former Anambra State Governor Peter Obi and Bishop Adebayo Akinde of the Anglican Diocese of Lagos State emphasized the need to cut governance costs and redirect funds toward societal economic development. Akinde pointed out that Nigeria's governance costs are exorbitantly high compared to productivity, with an overextended political class consuming vast resources. This includes the President, Vice President, 109 senators, 360 representatives, 45 ministers, and numerous assistants and advisers at various governmental levels. The excessive expenditure on maintaining these officials undermines the country's financial stability. Former Governor of Abia State, Alex Otti, noted that in 2021, over 70% of the budget was spent on recurrent expenditure, leaving less than 30% for capital projects. This imbalance hampers the country's growth potential. For instance, the high number of delegates Nigeria sent to the COP28 meeting in Dubai in December 2023, funded partially by the government, exemplifies wasteful spending that could have been allocated to more pressing needs. The continuous rise in Nigeria's external debt, from \$29 billion in 2000 to 87.38 trillion naira (\$113.42 billion) in 2023, primarily to service political costs, exacerbates economic decline. Policymakers must address these issues to prevent further economic deterioration.

2.1.1 Massive Governance

This is a system of government by which large number of people control and operate an organization, society, territory and the mechanisms by which it and its population are held accountable. Such governments often have significant influence over economic and social policies, impacting various aspects of citizens' lives (Chan et al., 2022). Massive Governance ensuring that no single entity has control over the entire system, and that the collective interests of the population are represented and protected. The system is characterized by a broad institutional framework that allows for large-scale governance and policy implementation, often involving complex interactions from different governance entities (Kim & Morin, 2021). In a massive governance system, decision-making is often distributed among a large group of people, either directly or through elected representatives; Power is decentralized, reducing the risk of authoritarianism and promoting accountability; The system is designed to be transparent, with open communication channels and accessible information; Participation is encouraged, with various mechanisms in place to facilitate citizen engagement and feedback; Accountability is ensured through regular evaluations, assessments, and checks on power.

2.1.2 Miserable Populace

These are proportion of a county's population that is poor, ill-fated and living below the standard of living when compared to other countries especially when she has all the required resources that can make it citizen live a well comfortable and happy life. This phenomenon is often referred to as the "paradox of poverty," where a country's vast natural resources, economic potential, and development opportunities are not translating into improved living standards for its citizens, resulting in a significant proportion of the population struggling to access basic necessities like food, clean water, shelter, healthcare, and education. The paradox of poverty refers to the situation where economic growth and development coexist with persistent poverty, highlighting the failure of wealth distribution mechanisms to alleviate poverty despite overall economic progress (Huang & Zuo, 2023). This paradox of poverty can be attributed to various factors, including corruption and poor governance, lack of effective economic policies and planning, limited investment in human capital and social services, dependence on a single industry or commodity, environmental degradation and resource depletion, social and cultural barriers to economic mobility. The paradox of poverty describes the phenomenon where economic growth and increased wealth in a society do not lead to a reduction in poverty levels, often due to unequal distribution of resources and opportunities (Yang & Wu, 2024).

2.1.3 Cost of Governance

Costs of governance is spending money to run the government. Cost of governance is equated to the total administrative expenditure, which is part of the total expenditure of the Nigerian Government. The cost of governance in Nigeria is characterized by high recurrent expenditures, which include salaries, allowances, and other administrative costs. This leaves limited resources for capital projects that are essential for socio-economic development (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2020). Costs governance also associated with government activities. These are the costs incurred by the government in carrying out this project. Costs of governance are divided into two parts: recurring debt management and capital management costs. Cost of governance is also viewed as the government budget allocated to capital and current expenditure to maintain the administrative structure of the government, which looms large in Africa. The high cost of governance in Africa diverts essential resources from development projects, exacerbated by recurrent expenditure, corruption, and fiscal indiscipline (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2020).

2.1.4 Economic Growth and Economic Growth Decelerator

Economic growth refers to the increase in the production of goods and services in an economy over a period of time, typically measured by the percentage change in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It is a key indicator of a country's economic performance and is often used to evaluate the effectiveness of economic policies. Economic growth decelerator is anything that affects or reduces the production of goods and services in an economy over time. It can also be viewed as anything that reduces, interrupts, or slows down the production of goods and services in a country during a specific period under study. An economic slowdown in a developing country often results from a combination of factors such as high inflation, rising unemployment, and structural inefficiencies, which can lead to reduced economic growth and development (Amin et al., 2023; Sharma, 2020).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Pigou's public interest theory (1938). The concept of public interest serves as a legitimizing principle for the planning profession, providing a foundational and ethical norm for planners (Machakaire & Mokhele, 2024). From a public perspective, government consists of individuals whose desire is to serve the public by doing the "right" thing. Public interest can be understood as the welfare or well-being of the general public, often used as a guiding principle in policy-making and governance to ensure that decisions benefit society as a whole (Kellokumpu & Sirviö, 2022). In this context, the state becomes an instrument that will or should improve health. In fulfilling its mission, the organization does not expect any unintended and unexpected results from the activities of the government. The 'cost of governing' has significantly increased for some mainstream political parties, particularly in contexts of financial uncertainty, multiple crises, and growing constraints exerted by global forces (Scantamburlo et al., 2024). The cost of governing can be substantial, encompassing financial, administrative, and political expenses that governments incur to implement policies, maintain public services, and ensure regulatory compliance (Bolton, 2023). Therefore, people in government are helpful and should be able to answer many questions such as what does it cost to govern, what are the products and methods of spending available, can it be done with current spending, what can be done to get Output on a low budget? In this regard, under Article 16 (1) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, states are required to (a) use national resources to promote national development (b) have financial security to ensure human health, freedom and happiness of all citizens. (c) To provide shelter, food and other goods to all citizens. It follows from these principles that governance is necessary to ensure justice and equality in society and that public opinion should reflect this.

The literature converges on the notion that the cost of governance is a significant economic growth decelerator in Nigeria, with various studies highlighting the negative impact of excessive spending by the presidency, national assembly, and judiciary on economic development.

Presidential spending and federal spending have a positive relationship with unemployment rates and a negative effect on per capita productivity. Federal spending can influence the unemployment rate by affecting aggregate demand and labor market dynamics (Givens, 2019). Administrative costs are not associated with economic growth. Effective governance can mitigate the negative effects of high administrative costs on economic growth (Erum et al., 2024). Consumption management financing, investment, and expenditure have a negative impact on economic growth. government investment can positively influence economic growth by enhancing infrastructure and productivity, other forms of government spending (Hao et al., 2020). These studies collectively underscore the need for a paradigm shift in governance, emphasizing the importance of reducing funds allocated to the presidency and congress while increasing allocations for decision-making to support economic development. This paper aims to explore the high cost of governance as an impediment to economic growth in Nigeria and proposes solutions to mitigate this challenge. This study contributes to the existing literature on the cost of governance and its impact on economic growth in Nigeria in several ways, first that, this research focuses on the massive governance and miserable populace, which is a unique perspective on the cost of governance in Nigeria. By examining the relationship between these two concepts, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of governance costs on economic growth. Second, that this study is grounded in Pigou's public interest theory, which provides a theoretical framework for understanding the role of government in promoting public welfare. By applying this theory to the context of Nigeria, this research provides new insights into the relationship between governance and economic growth.

2. Methods

This study adopted a research design that uses people in the corridors of power (elected officials and their aides) to examine the massive governance, miserable populace: cost of governance the economic growth decelerator in Nigeria. Primary and secondary data were used in the research. The population of this study includes the entire population of Nigeria. Its total population was estimated at 140,003,542 according to 2006 census, while National bureau of Statistics estimates it to be 221,769,883 by the third quarter of 2023. The research instrument used in this study is a self-administered survey called Mass Governance, Miserable People: The Cost of Governance the Economic Growth Decelerator (M.G.M.P.C.G.E.G.D). It allows the researchers to access important information for the study. Data are presented using descriptive statistics tools such as tables, percentages, and mean. On the other hand, the research questions were analyzed using 5 Linkert mean and standard deviation scales in Social Science Statistical Software (SPSS). The research questions were analyzed on a mean scale of 3.0; A total score below 3.0 indicated that the participant disagreed with the research question, while a total score above 3.0 indicated that the participant agreed with the research questions. Objective detection techniques were used in the study. To be clear, the sample size of 200 will be distributed to experts in various fields such as Economists, Political Economists, Political Scientists, Political Analysts and Human Resource Managers in the state, while the remaining 200 will be distributed to the political class (electoral and her aides). Purposive sampling was chosen for use in this study because it provides a nonprobability sample selected based on characteristics present in specific populations and across study practices. It can also help researchers identify common misconceptions within each group.

3. Results

The data analysis was based on the research objectives. Primary and secondary data were reviewed. In the main analyses, participants were identified based on specific demographic characteristics. Age, gender, marital status, profession/political position and all other demographic variables are calculated using percentages. We use the mean and standard deviation for descriptive statistics in secondary analysis.

Table 1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	248	62.0
Female	152	38.0
Total	400	100
Marital Status		
Single	114	28.5
Married	286	71.5
Total	400	100
Age Range		
26-35 years	70	17.5
36-45 years	121	30.25
46 years and above	209	52.25
Total	400	100
Highest Educational Qualification		
HND/BSC	267	66.75
MSC/PHD	133	33.25
Total	400	100
Profession/Political Position		
Economist	40	10
Political Analyst	40	10
Political Scientist	40	10
LGA Chairman and Ward Councilors	40	10
Aides	40	10
State and National Assembly Member	40	10
Commissioners and Ministers	40	10
Other Profession	40	10
Human Resource Personnel	40	10
Political Economist	40	10
Total	400	100

Source: Authors Compilation, 2024

Table 1 shows a synopsis of the demographics and their profession/political position. Among the four hundred respondents, an excessive percent is married, accounting for 71.5% of the total. The gender breakdown become observed to be 152 females (38% of the total) and 248 males (62% of the total). In phrases of age, the maximum respondents had been 46yrs and up, with 209 (52.25%), at the same time as the youngest had been 26yrs-35yrs which accounted to 70 (17.5%). Similarly, whilst requested approximately their educational background, people with a BSC/HND had the

maximum respondents, at the same time as people with MSC/PhD had the fewest and finally, the professions/political positions selected had been all decided on equally.

Data Analysis

In order to decide the diploma of relevance for the studies issue, the information for this observe is provided and tested under the use of simple percent, mean, standard deviation and SPSS software.

Table 2. Respondents’ Perceptions on how cost of governance is the economic growth decelerator in Nigeria

Profession/Political position	Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Retrieved	Questionnaire Not Retrieved	Percentage of Retrievals
Economist	40	35	5	8.75
Accountant	40	31	9	7.75
Political Scientist	40	33	7	8.25
LGA Chairmen and Ward Councilors Aides	40	29	11	7.25
State and National Assembly Member	40	38	2	9.5
Commissioners and Ministers	40	27	13	6.75
Other Profession	40	30	10	7.5
Human Resource Personnel	40	24	16	6.0
Political Analyst	40	26	14	6.5
TOTAL	400	310	90	77.5

Source: Authors Computation, 2024.

The survey was sent by the all the authors to professionals and politicians in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers states based on their state background and population to ensure easy access to the respondents. The co-authors received equal surveys and distributed it equally among 10 different professionals and politicians; of these, 310 of 400 surveys (77.5%) were completed and returned.

Table 3. Respondents’ Perceptions on how cost of governance is the economic growth decelerator in Nigeria

S/N	Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Money generated from various productive sector of the economy are used to finance massive governance (the elected and it aides) thereby decelerating the economy growth of Nigeria.	4.32	4.01	Agreed
2	The economy growth of Nigeria serve as the opportunity cost of massive and high cost of governance.	3.66	3.55	Agreed
3	High cost of governance (the elected and it aides) deprive other sectors of the economy from growing as a result of little budget been given to these sectors.	3.88	3.66	Agreed
4	High cost of government (the elected and it aides) has crippled and worsen Nigeria economic by making it a debt servicing economy.	4.08	3.91	Agreed
5	Nigeria is now known as a dead weight debt nation as a result of high cost of governance were loan are obtained to finance and service the political class and her aides.	3.75	3.75	Agreed
6	High remuneration in governance and political structure serve as a bottle neck to the growth of Nigeria economy.	4.30	4.03	Agreed

7	Cost of governance has put Nigeria into debt which is one of the major reason for the nation economy decelerator.	4.16	3.81	Agreed
8	As a result of high cost of governance, it has led to extravagance and injudicious spending in the political class and her aides as this serve as a hindrance to economy growth of Nigeria.	3.97	3.63	Agreed
9	Most sector of the economic has been ignore as a result of high cost of governance.	3.36	3.24	Agreed
10	Cost of governance has led to economy brain drain as a result of the fact that the political class and her aides are the ones sharing the national cake.	3.50	3.37	Agreed
11	It has brought about change in the mindset of expectorate and technocrats that can transform the economy to start thinking and working towards becoming the elected or her aides so as to be a beneficial of the national cake as this serve as economy growth decelerator in Nigeria.	3.71	3.53	Agreed
12	The economy of Nigeria is placed in the hands of selfish and corrupt political class and her aides which this makes it difficult for economy growth.	3.48	3.26	Agreed
13	Majority of those in government and her aides are mediocre and unproductive thereby leading to economy growth decelerator.	3.47	3.26	Agreed
14	As a result of high cost in financing and servicing government (the elected and her aides), they are now stomach infrastructure leaders instead of being people oriented and this hinder economy growth of Nigeria.	3.70	3.60	Agreed
Aggregate Mean		3.81	3.62	Agreed

Source: Survey, 2024.

Table 3. shows that every one of the respondents anonymously agreed that cash gotten from different sector of Nigeria economy are used to finance and maintain the political magnificence, excessive cost of governance deprive different sector of the economy from growing, cost of governance has crippled Nigeria financial system and made it a debt country in addition to a country in which the affairs of government and the financial system are pioneered with the aid of using corrupt, mediocre and egocentric politicians etc. as these kind of function financial system decelerator of the country. The mixture suggest criterion is 3.81 that's above the suggest criterion of 3.0 and the mixture fashionable deviation is 3.62 that's above the usual deviation of 3.0 indicating that every one of the respondents anonymously agreed that cost of governance is the economy growth decelerator in Nigeria.

4. Discussion

The outcomes of how cost of governance is the economy decelerator of Nigeria have been exposed with the aid of answer of the research question (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2020). The findings of this study from table 3, reviewed a number of methods with the aid of using how cost of governance is an economy growth decelerator of Nigeria are: cash gotten from different sector of Nigeria economy are used to finance and maintain the political magnificence, excessive cost of governance deprive different sector of the economy from growing, cost of governance has crippled Nigeria financial system and made it a debt servicing country, a country in which the financial system are pioneered with the aid of using corrupt, mediocre and egocentric politicians, excessive cost of governance worsen the economy growth of Nigeria etc. which is in line with the findings of (Ogunsola, 2023) that cost of governance that cost of governance in the presidency and national assembly worsen economy development of Nigeria, (Olabiyi & Olowookere, 2021) that corruption in governance negatively have an effect on financial improvement, excessive cost in governance and high political structure hinders economic development of Nigeria (Abubakar Oladeji, 2022).

According to Pigou's framework, the government is assumed to operate primarily for the public good, making decisions that ideally should enhance societal welfare. This theoretical expectation serves as a stark contrast to the empirical data gathered, which points to a misalignment between government spending and public welfare outcomes in Nigeria. From table 3, it can be said that the high mean scores consistently above 3.5 suggest a strong consensus among respondents that governance costs are detrimentally high, contradicting Pigou's assumption that government actions inherently optimize public welfare. This could indicate that, while the government intends to act in the public's interest, there are inefficiencies or misalignments in how resources are actually utilized, leading to suboptimal economic outcomes. The significant standard deviations observed across responses highlight a diversity of experiences and perceptions regarding governance efficiency. This variability can be interpreted through Pigou's theory as indicative of differential impacts of governance across various sectors and regions. It suggests that while some may see benefits from government actions, others perceive these actions as inefficient or detrimental, pointing to a need for more equitable and effective governance strategies.

The diversion of funds from productive sectors to governance aligns poorly with Pigou's ideal of government as a facilitator of economic growth. This theme suggests that governance costs are currently not serving the broader economic needs of the nation, instead stalling potential developments in other vital sectors. The themes of opportunity cost and debt-servicing reflect a misallocation of resources that could otherwise be invested in promoting economic innovation and sustainability, which is crucial under Pigou's concept of public interest. Aspect of economic brain drain and political aspirations are particularly troubling as they indicate long-term socio-economic repercussions. The shift towards political careers for financial gain rather than public service is antithetical to Pigou's vision of governance aimed at public welfare.

The aggregate mean score reinforces the notion that there is a general agreement on the negative impacts of high governance costs. In terms of Pigou's theory, this suggests a systemic failure to meet the expectations of public interest, necessitating a reevaluation of how resources are allocated and managed. The theoretical framework provided by the Nigerian Constitution, which echoes Pigou's principles, mandates the promotion of national development and welfare. The dissonance between this mandate and the perceived outcomes, as reflected in the survey data, underscores a critical gap in governance execution versus constitutional ideals.

The data interpretation, framed by Pigou's public interest theory, illustrates a significant disconnect between the theoretical roles and actual outcomes of governmental actions in Nigeria. While the government is constitutionally and theoretically envisioned as a body that promotes public welfare and economic growth, the perceived and reported impacts suggest otherwise. This analysis underscores the need for a strategic reassessment of governance expenditures, aiming for a realignment that more closely adheres to both Pigou's theoretical insights and the constitutional mandates, thereby ensuring that governance truly contributes to public welfare and economic development.

5. Conclusion

Nigeria crucial authorities have a president and vice, 109 senators, 360 federal representative members, 45 ministers, unspecified and limitless numbers of aides all representing simply 36 states plus the federal capital territory making it 37 states even as on the country level, she have 36 governors, 36 deputy governors, 973 state assembly members, 774 commissioners, unspecified and limitless numbers of aides all representing simply 36 states even as on the nearby authorities place they've 774 council chairmen (council boss), 8,809 ward councilors, unspecified and limitless numbers of aides all representing the 774 nearby authorities regions and all ex-President, vice, former head of country, senators, federal representative members, governors, deputy governors and chairmen are all entitle to month-to-month and every year gratuity and pension allowance even as retired civil servant which have labored for the authorities for 30-35 years are locating it tough to get their 30-35 years' gratuity and pension. All those positions include numerous allowances

consisting of application bills, wardrobe, feeding, accommodation, vehicle, entertainment, journey allowance etc. which the fund utilized in financing that political magnificence restrict the economy growth and improvement of Nigeria and render it as a possibility cost of large governance thereby retaining the population in depressing circumstance and abject poverty. Nigerians will experience sustainable economic growth that will lead to development if she promotes and accepts a part-time unicameral legislature which will reduce the size of the political class and the salary structure, her economy will continue to slow down, thereby causing population poverty and course diseases in the country.

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