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Marriage of Inconvenience Between Poverty and Underdevelopment in Nigeria: Can Elephant and Hippo Tango?

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Abstract

Far from normal, underdevelopment and Poverty has taken center stage in African democracy. Specifically, the combination of cancerous sisters of underdevelopment and poverty is indeed a marriage of inconvenience in Nigeria. No doubt, poverty and underdevelopment breed economic instability, unemployment, youth restiveness and violence. This paper interrogates the variety of assumptions about economic and political dislocation, destabilization and balkanization in Nigeria with the inclination that Nigerian impoverishment and underdevelopment in the midst of plenty is a misnomer. For instance, the 2016 Human Development Index reported by UNDP shows that Nigeria ranked 152nd out of 188 countries in terms of poverty and educational attainment with abysmal HDI low value of 0.514. Additionally, the paper explores the context and operationalization of poverty and underdevelopment with highlight on the challenges and implications for achieving inclusive economic system in Africa. It is identified that misrule, corruption, inequalities, insecurity, instability, lack of scientific and technological development, stagnation, shortage of critical skill and human capital, perpetual conflicts and crisis are accountable for the Nigerian widespread woes of poverty and underdevelopment. The attendant consequences is that Nigerian economy is unable to sustain productivity and unproductive nation breeds unemployment which in turn leads to poverty and underdevelopment. Nations that create new ideas and knowledge produces wealth, while Nigerian nation that consumes wealth produces poverty and underdevelopment. This section is therefore aimed at interrogating the nature and character of Nigeria economy with particular attention to poverty and underdevelopment.

Keywords: Poverty, Underdevelopment, Economy, Development, Nigeria

Introduction

The symbolic relationship between poverty and underdevelopment rest on the belief that underdevelopment is the basic foundation for poverty. Therefore, poverty and underdevelopment are regarded as mutually dependent to the extent that all efforts geared towards poverty eradication is the same for fighting underdevelopment. This has prompted the countries of the world to see development as the greatest challenge that should be tackled to a reasonable level if poverty could be eradicated.

The issue of poverty reduction through development of infrastructural facilities has been a serious challenge to various countries of the world including Nigeria. Nigeria's efforts at eradicating poverty and underdevelopment started before Independence, prompting Jega (2003) to reiterate that the successive government

efforts at reducing poverty dates back to pre-Independence era through to the period of Independence. Most of these efforts were developmental in nature geared towards improvement of infrastructure and other social amenities that would eradicate poverty. It is on this note that Eze (2007) states that the number of government programmes initiated in the past were aimed at improving basic services, infrastructure and housing facilities for the rural and urban population, extending access to credit farm-inputs, and creating employment.

These objectives were to be achieved through national development plans (NDPs) which were designed to indirectly alleviate poverty by achieving an improvement in real income of the average citizen, equitable distribution of income and in the creation of job opportunities. It is therefore, within different theoretical models for development that past policies aimed at bringing development to the rural areas of Nigeria were designed. Realizing that approximately 70 percent of the population then lived in the rural areas where they depended largely on agriculture, public policy on agriculture has been therefore expected to impact positively on the people (Edoh, 2007). governments tried to provide basic infrastructures particularly roads to haul commodities from the rural areas as the population was largely rural, and the regions were largely supported by the wealth of the rural areas, educational facilities, potable water, as well as health facilities were put in place in the rural areas, adding that although these were inadequate, they marked a humble beginning and a conscious attempt to improve the lot of the people.

After Independence, Nigeria like other developing countries, Nigeria operated and based their development plans on the assumptions of perfect knowledge of the problems of the people. This prompted the government to initiate and implement various poverty reduction and developmental programmes some of which included; the farm settlement/school leaver's farms by the three regional governments, the tree crop plantation of the Eastern and Western governments and the small farmer credit scheme. The first National Development Plan: 1962-1968 allocated 13 percent of the gross capital outlay to agriculture and primary production. In the Second National Development Plan: 1970 –1974, three areas were identified for federal assistance to agriculture which includes, grants for development of agriculture, forestry and livestock and fishery; Establishment of a national credit institution and special agricultural development scheme in which the federal government entered into both financial and management partnership with state governments in carrying out projects.

At this period, Marketing Boards were established in the regions which generated much revenue, the surplus of which the government used to develop the basic infrastructure needed for long term development (Oyesanmi, 2006), in the long run, jobs were created and the rate of inflation, unemployment and productivity remained relatively acceptable as unemployment rate was around 15 percent and was only visible among primary and secondary school leavers. Other notable poverty reduction related programmes that were put in place in Nigeria then included; Operation Feed the National (OFN) set up in 1977, Free Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE) set up in 1977, Green Revolution established in 1980, and low cost

Housing Scheme, Agriculture Guarantee Scheme (ACGS), Rural Electrification Scheme (RES), Rural Banking Programme, National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), (Omotola, 2008). As a result of the oil boom in the 1970s, Nigeria neglected agricultural sector which was its main economic base and focused on oil. This period witnesses remarkable growth rates but the boom had no impact on the real sector as the industrial sector remained relatively weak. The windfall from oil was not utilized in establishing the industrial sectors, therefore, when the recession of the 1980s set in, the economy found itself unable to absorb shocks from declining oil prices (Eze, 2007).

At the time of economic recession, the Nigeria's economy remained such that real wages could not meet basic requirements, social services deteriorated at an alarming rate, while the gap between the rich and the poor though not visible, began to emerge. The government had to make determined efforts to check the crisis through the adoption of Structural Adjustment Programme. However, the implementation worsened the living conditions of many, and Nigeria became importer of basic food items. Gross Domestic Investment as a percentage of GDP which was 16.3 percent and 22.8 percent in the period 1965 – 1973 and 1973 – 1980 respectively, decreased to almost 14 percent in 1980 – 1988. This made the government to design and implement many poverty alleviation related programmes between 1986 and 1993 aimed at providing the people with socio-economic amenities required to enable the people have access to basic necessities of life such as food, drinking water, health care services, education, housing, employment etc. Also, under the guided deregulation that spanned the period 1993 to 1998, more poverty alleviation related programmes were put in place. Some of these programs include: Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DJRRI), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Better Life Programme (BLP), People Bank of Nigeria, Community Bank, Family Support Programme, Family Economic, (2006).

In 1999 when democracy returned to power, a World Bank report indicated that Nigerian's Human Development Index (HDI) was only 0.416 and that about seventy percent (70%) of the population was still living under poverty line (World Bank, 1999). These alarming rates of poverty and underdevelopment both in Nigeria and other countries of the world prompted the emergence of Millennium Development Goals (MDGS). The Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) as stated by Socialist International (2005) cited in Elekwa (2008), is part of the social democratic approach to governance in a global society. It was a commitment at the 2000 United Nations Millennium Summit by 189 Heads of State and government on behalf of their people in the Millennium declaration to free their fellow citizens from the abject dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty. The declaration reaffirms universal values of equality, mutual respect and shared responsibilities for the conditions of all peoples and seeks to redress the lopsided benefits of globalization. At the heart of the declaration are human rights, peace, gender equality, environment and the pressing priorities of the least developed countries and Africa. Eight Millennium development goals emerged from this declaration firmly committing

governments to an ambitious set of goals and targets by deadline of 2015 (Socialist International, 2005).

The specific objectives of the MDGS are:

1. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. To achieve Universal Primary Education
3. To promote gender equality and empower women
4. To reduce child mortality
5. To improve maternal health
6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. To ensure environmental sustainability
8. To develop a global partnership for development

This prompted the government of Nigeria to review the existing poverty alleviation schemes with a view to harmonizing them and improving on them. Three presidential panels were set up in this regard. The findings and recommendations of these presidential panels coalesced in the formation of the National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP) in 2001. The target of the national poverty eradication programme is to completely wipe out poverty from Nigeria by the year 2015 in line with the Millennium Development Goals target. The formulators of the programme have identified three stages to the attainment of this ambitious target.

1. The first stage is the restoration of hope in the masses of poor people in Nigeria. This involves providing basic necessities to hitherto neglected people particularly in the rural areas.
2. The second stage is the restoration of economic independence and confidence
3. The third stage is wealth creation.

In 2004, Nigeria equally came up with National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) to further see to the achievement of the millennium development goals. NEEDS has the following actionable goals.

1. Wealth creation
2. Employment generation
3. Poverty reduction
4. Value re-orientation

The NEEDS as a national policy was intended to meeting some of the MDGS, especially poverty reduction and underdevelopment.

With all these plethora of developmental programmes initiated and implemented, the various United Development Programmes reports still indicate that the Nigerian poverty rate is still below average.

Delineation of Concepts

Poverty

The disagreement on the precise definition of poverty has continued to engage the attention of scholars all over the world. This stems from the multifaceted nature of poverty and the relativity of the concept of poverty which prevents unanimity among scholars as regards its definition. This is evidenced by the intensive and extensive consultations and debates among scholars in determining a conceptual definition of poverty. Consequently, scholars and development economists admit that the concept of poverty is complex and multidimensional and as such a mere definition may not give a clear picture of its complexity. Ugo and Ukpere (2009), confirmed this when they stated that no definition of poverty can be said to be adequate due to its complexity. They averred that there are various factors that shape the interpretation of poverty to different people in different places and at different circumstances, stating that what one sees as poverty can be an affluent to another person. Despite this difficulty in poverty definition, they agreed that poverty has one peculiar instrument which they explained to be involuntary deprivation; hence they see poverty as involuntary deprivation which a person as an individual, household, community or nation faces. At individual level, deprivation could manifest when one is unable to have access to basic needs of life such as food, housing, education and health care services, and at the household level, poverty manifest when a man is unable to take care of his immediate family members such as sending children to school and paying their school fees, take house hold members to hospital when need arises and access the health care services, as well as taking care of family members' nutritional needs, while at the community or national level, deprivation can be seen when community or nation is unable to create access to social-economic and infrastructural services and create jobs and income generating opportunities to the people. Since income is the means of creating access to other needs, income becomes an important issue when poverty is discussed. Lack or insufficient income to be able to create access to meet basic needs is the basis of poverty.

Nnamani (2003) sees poverty in different perspective, as he sees poverty as not just having sufficient income to take care of basic needs of life, but the account of how people were denied the opportunity to have access to the means of production to better their lot. This indicates that people are in poverty as a result of their denial of access to means of production such as land, education, healthcare services, electricity which would have enhanced their standard of living. The denial of access to means of production has continued to throw people to hunger. This is supported by World Bank (1996) assertion that the alarming rate of poverty was basically due to the denial of people the access to means of production which have thrown the poor into helpless situation. Poverty is as well seen as a situation where people are subjected to hardship and lack resources that would have assisted them seek means of assuaging their condition. Poverty can as well be seen from social perspective which portends people who cannot measure up to certain standard in the society as being poor. Here, people are judged by the type of school they send their family members, the type of food they eat as well as their dressing and the type of accommodation they have. This creates economic and social distance. Gasu (2011) sees this situation as a situation where a population or a section of the population is not just unable to meet its

essential needs of foods, clothing and shelter but inability to maintain what the society see as minimum standard of living. Dennis (2011) added credence to the issue of social distance when he states that it is the marginalization of the poor that has created the situation of helplessness as the poor see themselves as people that are condemned to be pathologically on the road to damnation.

Another aspect of poverty came up when it was argued that it was the poor himself that will be in a position to describe poverty in line with his situation. This assertion has given a different approach to the concept of poverty. The assertion is that it is the person that wears the shoe that knows where it pitches him, hence the core of this view of poverty is that poverty has to be defined by the poor themselves or by the communities that poor people live in. Oladikpo (1999) agreed that poverty may look quite different when seen through the eyes of a poor man or a woman. This is seen in the differences in the various definitions, as poverty is weighed in relative term. As a result of this, Social and Management Scholars discern the need to widen the definition of poverty when they famed that poverty can be seen in the areas of history, intellect and ideology, hence, Shepherded (2007) sees poverty as multifaceted.

The concept of poverty is multidimensional, encompassing both monetary and non-monetary aspects. This shows that poverty cannot be defined focusing on one aspect of this concept as doing that would mean not showing good underestimating of its complexity.

Underdevelopment

Underdevelopment is seen as the inability of a nation, state or community to improve the socio-economic and infrastructural wellbeing of the people in the provision of education, road, electricity, pipe-borne water, hospital. Imhonopi & Urim (2010), see underdevelopment of a country as the inability of a country or countries to improve the social welfare of the people in the areas of social amenities such as education, healthcare services, power, housing, pipe-borne water, roads, access to means of production, participation in governance among others and others. The components of underdevelopment in any country include; economic underdevelopment, socio-cultural underdevelopment and its impact on human development. Ogboru, (2007) observed that economic development expressed in GNP can increase human development by expenditure from families, government and organizations such as NGOs. With the increase in economic growth, families and individuals will likely increase expenditures with the increase in income. This increase can lead to greater human development, showing that development must be measured in terms of jobs created, justice dispensed and poverty alleviated.

Causes of Poverty and Underdevelopment in Nigeria

The high rate of poverty and underdevelopment in Nigeria as indicated by various studies despite its abundant human and natural resources, the various poverty reduction and developmental programmes initiated and implemented by various governments in the country has continued to be of paramount concern to both scholars, economic experts, development agencies and other organization. This is

made more difficult when compared with other countries that have similar resources with Nigeria. However, a search of the causes of poverty and underdevelopment in Nigeria has revealed different factors. One of such factors as stated by Maiangwa (2009), is lack of political will and commitment by government. He noted that most of the poverty reduction and developmental programmes initiated and implemented by various governments in the past were not directed at the poverty. He explained that no poverty programme no matter how much is expended on it can successfully reduce poverty when the people whose poverty are being reduced are not identified and involved in the planning and implementation of such programme, stressing that Nigeria has been fighting poverty through top-bottom approach. This he states created opportunities for government to have continued to waste a lot of resources without achieving any result, and that rather than achieve the objectives of such programme, their implementation worsened the situation of the people.

He went further to add that the failure of these programmes to achieve the desired objectives had prompted various governments to abandon any poverty related programmes instituted by other administration. This is line with the submission of Obadan (2002) when he revealed that the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programme by government made the people poorer and widened the gap between the rich and the poor. Another reason for the continued persistence of poverty and underdevelopment in Nigeria is the postulation of Adeyeye (2000) that one of the major causes is the non-diversification of the economy. He argued that since Nigeria discovered oil, that the agricultural sector which was the main stay of the economy was neglected. He argued that as a result of over dependence on oil that Nigeria not only neglected agriculture but equally neglected all other sectors including the manufacturing sector and that this left Nigeria at the mercy of the world oil market which was never stable.

He recounted that when the recession came in the early 1980s, that the Nigerian economy crashed and since then, Nigerian poverty profile has continued to grow while the few available infrastructures deteriorated. Contributing to the causes of poverty and underdevelopment in Nigeria, the World Bank Report (2008) revealed that one of the major causes is corruption, which it explained as the abuse of entrusted power to personal benefit. The report reiterated that this has become a common practice in Nigeria where government funds meant for developmental purposes were embezzled by public office holders, stressing that this has led to the failure of government programmes since funds meant for the execution of government projects were diverted to private accounts while the projects were abandoned. In some cases, unexecuted projects were paid for while the masses who would have benefitted from such projects were allowed to swallow in poverty. This is the case in Nigeria where the country is rich while the citizens are poor. Many have attributed bad governance as the cause of corruption in Nigeria as those who ought to stop this trend are those that perpetrate them. This is supported by several allegations by Transparency International that the federal government was not serious in her fight against corruption and has been severally rated as one of the 20th most corrupt nation in the world and ranked 152nd in 2016 Human Development Index out of the 188

countries as released by UNDP Report (2017) with HDI value of 0.514, showing that Nigeria is still placed on Low Human Development category outside High Human Development and Medium Human Development.

Elumilade, Asaolu and Aderebi (2006) in their contribution to the causes of poverty and underdevelopment in Nigeria explained that lack of employment or access to means of production and job creation were reasons for poverty in Nigeria. They argued that any nation that does not create job opportunities for its teeming youth will definitely continue to leave its citizen in poverty, explaining that creating job opportunities starts with the building of infrastructural base, good educational system, skills, market and availability of land and capital accessible to the people which Nigeria has ignored over the years.

Theoretical Construct of the Study

This study adopted the Progressive Utilization Theory. This theory contends that governance is a social contract and that those elected to govern the people owe it as a duty to see to the welfare of the masses. It believes that poverty and underdevelopment could best be eradicated by providing the social economic requirements of life such as access to basic education, healthcare facilities, good drinking water, good roads, accommodation, transportation, electricity, security and access to participate in all matters that concern the people.

The progressive utilization theory states that the people should be treated with dignity since the wealth of the nation belongs to everybody and for peace and progress to reign, and that all should be involved in the progress of the state by seeing to the welfare of the people and that this could be achieved by the government providing the enabling environment that will encourage people to contribute their quota for the improvement of their living standard.

The theory argues that no matter how hard working one may be, that if the ruling class which is the government, does not provide such essential commodities such as good roads, health care facilities, good drinking water, education, electricity, sanitation among others, that it would be very difficult for people to strive and improve their standard of living.

This theory was propounded by Prabhat Ranjan in 1962 in an effort to overcome the strategies of both capitalism and communism (Maheshvaranda, 2003). The theory optimizes the use of socio-economic, industrial and human resources based on cooperative coordination and a wide basis ranging from local communities to large regions and nations and between the people of diverse geographical areas and seeks the welfare and happiness of all. It is not concerned only with economic but encompasses the whole of individuals and collective existence, educational, social, political and mental wellbeing. It analyzes the political forces that shaped the development of the economy which comprises inhumanity, deprivation and other social dimension of poverty and underdevelopment that include; lack of access to basic social and infrastructural facilities which is the responsibility of the government. Thus, the theory is germane in the analysis of poverty and underdevelopment in Nigeria especially when the combination of poverty and

underdevelopment have denied the people access to means of improving their living standard in Nigeria.

Methodology

Content analytical approach was utilized in the study. This analytical technique was adopted as a result of the need for a reliable scientific method for assessing, analyzing and interpreting a large variety of materials. For clarity of purpose, content Analysis is a research technique adopted primarily for the objective, systematic and qualitative analysis and interpretation of information.

Data were sourced from existing records like books, journals, United Nations documents, World Bank publications, government and other official publications, internet materials, other documents related to Poverty and underdevelopment in Nigeria and direct observation.

Dimensions of Poverty and underdevelopment in Nigeria

The magnitude of Poverty in Nigeria for many years now has not been encouraging. This is more disturbing judging from the fact that the country is endowed with both were capable of seeing Nigeria as one of the richest countries in the world. The present poverty situation in the country has necessitated the country that was rated among the first twenty richest countries in the early 1970s to be rated today as the first twenty poorest nations in the world as noted by Chigbo (2001). He revealed that the measurement of poverty in the country was first carried out by the federal office of statistics in 1980 where it was discovered that about 27.2% of the population were already below poverty line. He noted that by five years later in 1985, that the country was estimated to have moved about 46% of its population to poverty line, and by 1996 survey, the poverty trend was already at 66% of the population.

This trend has aroused the curiosity of scholars, economic experts, development agencies, civil society organizations and other world bodies to raise questions as to what has gone wrong especially when compared with other countries that are endowed with similar natural resources. Nigeria is endowed with petroleum resources among other resources and the sixth largest oil producer in the world and a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) but the report of UNDHDI (2010) ranked her 156th out of the 187 countries surveyed and the poorest among the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Comparative analysis of members of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries showed that Indonesia is ranked 124th with its life expectancy put at 69.4 years, education index at 0.584 and gross national income per capita of \$3, 716. Qatar is ranked 37th with its life expectancy put at 78.4 years, education index of 0.623, and gross national income per capita of \$107,721, while United Arab Emirate (UAE) is ranked 30th with its life expectancy put at 76.5 years, education index of 0.741 and gross national income per capita of \$59,993. Others were Saudi Arabi at 56th position, Kuwait 63rd, Iran 88th Venezuela 73rd , Algeria 96th and Iraq is ranked 132nd (UNDHDI, 2010).

Chimobi (2010) argued that judging from the rich natural resources in Nigeria that the level of poverty is very high, stating that the poor rating of various measures of poverty such as life expectancy at birth, level of education, gross national income per capita are all indication that the country's poverty level is bad. He added further that infant mortality in the country is as high as 99 per 1000 birth. The above position is supported by the Human Development Report on Human Poverty Index 1999 - 2007 in Nigeria. **Data Presentation and Analysis**

Table 1: Human Development Report, Human Poverty Index (1999-2007)

Human Development Population without Report (HDR) Adult Literacy (YEAR) (Knowledge) Rank & sanitation %	Human Poverty Population Index without access to water, health & sanitation %	Population of People not expected to survive at age of 40 (Longevity) %			
Value					
1999	63	38.2	33.4	40.5	51
2000	62	37.6	33.3	38.9	51
2001	59	36.1	33.7	37.4	43
2002	58	34.9	33.7	36.1	43
2003	54	34	34.9	34.6	38
2004	57	35.1	34.9	34.6	38
2005	75	38.8	46.6	33.2	40
2006	76	40.6	46	33.1	52
2007	80	37.3	39	30.9	52

Source: UNHD Reports (2007) on Human Poverty.

The table above shows that Nigeria's human poverty level, life expectancy, education, access to water, health care as well as sanitation have continued to remain low despite all the efforts of the various administration in reducing poverty in the country.

Table Two: Trend in Human Development Indicator 2009-2013

	2009	2010	2011	2012
2013				
HDI		0.462	0.467	0.50
0.504				
IHDI				0.276
0.300				
GNI per capita (2011 ppp\$)	4597	4716	4949	5176
5353				
GNI index	0.578	0.582	0.589	0.596
0.601				
Life expectancy at birth (in years)	50.8	51.3	51.7	52.1
52.5				
Life expectancy index	0.474	0.481	0.488	0.494
0.5				
Mean years of schooling	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2
5.2				

< 5 mortality rate (per 1000 life births)	132	128	12.4
124			
Educational Index	0.8686		
0.8139			
(Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 0.31*			
0.247			
*2008 value			

Sources: Human Development Report (various years), 2015

The above table shows the development index (HDI), GNI per capita, GNI index, life expectancy at birth (in years), life expectancy Index, Under 5 Mortality rate over 1000 live births, educational index and multidimensional poverty Index. It also dwells on analysis of development and progress in components of human development indices and factors influencing them. In this respect, focus is on life expectancy, the economy and the role of harmful social conditions, knowledge, learning and literacy as well as income and standard of living.

It is this continued drifting of Nigerian population to poverty line that prompted Ukwu (2002) to argue that the life of average Nigerian citizen has been progressively going down over the years and that since no solution seems to be available that the people have started seeing it as part of their existence. Since the measurement of poverty has gone beyond the per capita income, to include the level of illiteracy, access to health care services, life expectancy, infant and maternal mortality, sanitation, gross domestic product of a nation as well as nutrition, it has become necessary that efforts geared toward reducing poverty should be all embracing. Although Nigeria's gross domestic product per capital has been increasing, Chimobi (2010) noted that despite this increase that many Nigerians are still living in poverty. He noted that the average income per capita does not give the real picture because of the gap between the rich and the poor in Nigeria, adding that about 71% of Nigerians live on less than \$1 a day while about 92% live on less than \$2 a day. He noted that the high rate of mortality in the country is caused by lack of money for parents to take care of their children while many mothers are ignorant of some preventive measures such as immunization and vaccines due to illiteracy. The prevalence of poverty is higher in the rural area where over 70% of the population lives. The rural area is characterized by poor sanitation, lack of socio-economic facilities such as healthcare services, educational infrastructure, good roads, skill acquisition centers and other human resources that would have helped them improve their living condition. Shepherd (2007) agreed to this position when he noted that rate of poverty is higher among the regions where we have more concentration of rural areas as there are differences between regions in the concentration of poor and the rich in the society as poverty varies from the North to the South with more concentration of the poor in the North. The North-East geopolitical zone he noted has the largest proportion of its population living in poverty compared to other geopolitical zones, noting that while the average family expenditure per month was N4, 058.00, the North East recorded the least figure of N2, 941. This he noted was

associated with lack of formal education, unemployment, lack of skills, healthcare services among others. As if that was not enough, the country again was ranked the 152nd position in the poverty ranking out of 188 countries surveyed by UNDP Report in 2014, 2015 and 2016, showing no effort in improving its poverty and underdevelopment level.

Effects of Poverty and Underdevelopment

The efforts to reduce poverty and underdevelopment all over the world have been a global issue. This is mostly due to its associated effects. Since poverty and underdevelopment are both economic and social deprivation, those who find themselves in this situation will never be at ease with serious economic and social consequences as noted by Odion (2009). Apart from the material deprivation associated with poverty and underdevelopment, it is dehumanizing and socially disruptive. It brings about social alienation, powerlessness and worthlessness. Other effects of poverty and underdevelopment are outlined to include; lack of respect for both the country and the citizens, unhappiness, lack of self-esteem, lack of confidence or courage (Ukwu, 2002).

Deprivation associated to poverty and underdevelopment can lead to bad habit like armed robbery, causing of confusion in the community and apathy towards community development. Since being poor includes not having food to eat, shelter, clothing, low income etc., and underdevelopment to include lack of socio –economic and infrastructural facilities, it therefore means that those born under such environment are likely to have high infant and maternal mortality, illiteracy, poor health condition, while those on low incomes are often nutritionally poor. UNECA (2005) noted other conditions to include; poor housing and homelessness as shown by the type of houses the people live. People on low income often experience debt which affects the prospective standard of living in future since they are denied access to education. As a result of poverty occasioned by lack of access to education and resultant unemployment especially the youths, more and more of them stand the risk of suffering from mental disorder or engaging in drug addiction with associated crime.

Chimobi (2010) noted that apart from crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, internet fraud and other forms of fraudulent activities, many turn to immorality out of sheer desperation, leading to high increase of people being infected with HIV/AIDS. Ibrahim (1999) noted that these were people who would have been contributing to the growth of the economy if they were gainfully employed but are rather thrown to destructive activities thereby creating unhealthy environment for the thriving of the economy. Soludo (2006) revealed that the North East is the poorest geopolitical zone in the country, and today the severe crisis that engulfed the Nigerian society especially in the North East has been attributed to poverty and underdevelopment.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined the relationship between poverty and underdevelopment in Nigeria. With the initiation and implementation of various poverty reduction and developmental programmes in Nigeria which dated back to pre-independence, down to period of independence. The paper equally examined the period when democracy returned in the country in 1999 in the areas of poverty reduction and development, and it was discovered that the challenges of poverty reduction has been on how to develop our infrastructure and diversify the economy. We realized in the cause of the study that poverty reduction and development have come to assume a new aura of significance in the modern world affairs. This was based on the interest of the world to accelerate socio-economic development, given that it is perceived to enhance poverty reduction.

Though, poverty and underdevelopment are totally misinterpreted especially in the developing world, the provision of socio-economic infrastructure and access of the poor to these amenities are still viewed as a sure way for poverty reduction which will guarantee equal rights and participation of the poor in the formulation and implementation of developmental plans and as well guarantee security to the entire populace, it is still assumed to be the bridge –builder. Most importantly, development has a better opportunity to facilitate the provision of and equal distribution of resources and basic needs of man. It is the embracement of development that can address the general problems that militate against poverty reduction. This measures entails the mobilization of the domestic resources which includes human resources to increase production and stimulate employment, raise the capital flow of the people, reduce poverty and alleviate their standard of living. It equally enhances agricultural development, rural industrialization development, education, health care facilities, rural housing, and transport, sanitation through provision of access to good water, roads and bridges.

Therefore, poverty and underdevelopment are inseparable and in eradicating poverty, the development of key sectors of the country plays a very significant role, especially in the areas of healthcare facilities, road, electricity, education, transport system, sanitation, and drinking water among others.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made for poverty and underdevelopment to be addressed in Nigeria with the findings that the two issues go hand in hand and cannot be separated.

1. There is urgent need for revival of socio-economic and infrastructural facilities in Nigeria in the areas of electricity, healthcare facilities, good road network, education, skills acquisition, transport system, drinking water, and industrialization among others.
2. Poverty should be addressed using the people oriented approach where the poor must be key actors.
3. Government should create agencies responsible for the continues maintenance of existing infrastructure in the country

4. Abandonment of development projects should be discouraged irrespective of the administration that initiated such project since government is a continuum.

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