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New Partnership for African Development and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria, 2001-2017

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Abstract

Over the decades, Africa's political leadership adopted and pursued various development initiatives to translate the immense human and material resources of the continent into prosperity for the benefits of her teeming population. This study assesses the achievement of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) in curtailing poverty in Nigeria from 2001 to 2017. The study interrogated the following research question: Does financial dependence on international donor agencies account for increasing poverty in Nigeria from 2001-2017? The broad objective of the study was to determine whether NEPAD has accounted for poverty reduction in Nigeria from 2001-2017. Documentary method of data collection which comprised content analysis of books, journal articles, and official documents was adopted. The paper adopted the Marxist theory of the postcolonial state of Africa. The paper found that due to the use to which Nigeria State is put by its managers; NEPAD's poverty reduction ambition has not been actualized. It recommended emergence and entrenchment of selfless political leadership which can make the state a creative entity as panacea to Nigeria poverty problems.

Keywords: New Partnership, Nigeria, Development, African State, Poverty.

Introduction

Development in Africa has become a puzzle. Indeed, despite its acclamation, it appears to have become illusive. The history of Africa is a history of woes and miseries arising from backwardness. According to Okolie (2006:249), African continent is known to be the most backward society on earth with excruciating and suffocating poverty, malnourishment, stagnation and backwardness. Majority of the citizenry is mired in a culture of grinding penury, occasioned largely by reckless, rapacious and unmitigated misuse of state power and public wealth. As demonstrated by Subramoney (2004:1) the general picture of Africa is one of underdevelopment, political instability, economic volatility and pervasive poverty. According to him, this grinding poverty is reflected in low life expectancy of only 47 years in sub-Saharan Africa. Worse still, global economic indicators paint a picture of disease, poverty, famine, drought, conflicts wars, instability and bad leadership. In a related study, Subramoney (2004:1), remarks that poverty is endemic in the continent with estimated 65% of the people (520 million) living on less than one dollar a day. De Venn (2003), remarks that in recent decades, people on all continents have seen their living standard improve, except in Africa. Hence, the entire bottom place in world league table is filled with Africa countries (Economist, 2000).

Efforts by successive regimes in Africa to stem the tide of underdevelopment and poverty in the continent are well documented. Indeed, over the decades, successive political leadership in Africa articulated and pursued several development strategies aimed at reversing the dwindling economic fortunes of the citizens. These strategies included the Revised Framework of Principles for the Implementation of the New International Economic Order in Africa (1975-1977); the Monrovia Strategy (1979); Lagos Plan of Action (1980), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP); the African Alternative Framework to the Structural Adjustment programme for Socio-Economic Recovery (1990); the Africa Charter for Popular participation for Development (see <http://www.nigeria.business>). The Conference on Security, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA); Global Coalition to Attract Financial and Economic Assistance to Africa; the 20/20 initiative; Copenhagen Social Summit Framework; The Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative; The poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP); among others. Nonetheless, these strategies failed to positively turn around the living condition of the people.

The failure of the past development strategies to engender positive and sustainable development, informed the decision of African leaders to introduce the New Partnership for Africa Development which objective among others, is to half poverty among African majority by the year 2015. Nearly three years after the dateline, the achievement of one of the basic objectives of NEPAD is still far-fetched as available empirical indicators show that poverty is on the increase. The focus of the study is to examine the challenges of NEPAD which has hitherto, undermined its effort to realize one of its stated basic objectives, which is poverty reduction in Nigeria. Meanwhile, the study relied on documentary method of data collection based on secondary source of data such as textbooks, journals, internet materials etc.

Nigeria as a member of African Union, and by extension, member of the United Nations Organization, is a signatory to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Thus, the country is part and parcel of African and indeed, world league of poverty reduction fighters. To demonstrate Nigeria's commitment as poverty reduction activist, the country keyed into and domesticated the main objective of the New Partnership for African Development, with the view to meeting the millennium development goals. Despite the efforts, Nigeria's poverty situation has grown from bad to worse. Available statistics indicate that from 1980 to 2017, Nigeria's poverty index has continued to worsen. Thus, from 27.2% in 1980; 46.3% in 1985; 42.7% in 1992; 65.6% in 1996; 54.4% in 2004 69.0% in 2010, to 70% in 2017 (<https://naijaquest.com/nigeriapoertystatistics/>) (2018). This scary statistics exists despite the fact that the Nigeria is the 6th world largest producer of oil.

Furthermore, life expectancy has remained unsatisfactorily low at 54 years; infant mortality at 77 per 1000 and maternal mortality at 704 per 100,000 (IFAD, 2011:1). Furthermore, a Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) survey indicates that Nigeria is mired in a crippling underdevelopment to the point that since 2003/2004 the material conditions of majority of Nigerians have been depreciating (CBN Annual Report and Statement of Account, 2004:10). In a related study, the Federal Office of Statistics (2010) put Nigerians who live below poverty line to about 70% (this

number may have increased considerably following further withdrawal of oil subsidy in 2016). In a similar vein, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2011) survey suggests that out of the 177 countries surveyed, Nigeria ranked 156th in Human Development Index (HDI).

Also, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) study rates Nigeria 98th out of the 102 countries covered in its countries' economic performance survey. Nigeria equally belongs to the leading poorest countries in the world. (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>). Onuba (2012), ILO (2012), NBS (2012) recognized the increasing rate of poverty in Nigeria. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), (2012), reports that 112.519 million Nigerians currently live in relative poverty conditions, while 99.284 million or 60.9 per cent of the population lives in absolute poverty.

Theoretical Perspective

Immense writings on African development exist. Most of these are predicated on liberal and neo-liberal persuasions. Existing scholarship, which derive its foundation from the frameworks tend to predicate development models on the modernization paradigm. Scholars who subscribe to this, present the global political economy as a natural state, characterized by the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. They conceive development as a global marathon race and hence explain unequal levels of development as arising from natural order of things (Rostow, 1961), (Goulet, 1971). Within this context, these scholars encouraged the underdeveloped states to imbibe imitative attitude; divest themselves of specified internal constraints and to look unto the developed states for their 'salvation'. This paper however, adopts the theory of post-colonial state of Nigeria as espoused by the Marxian scholarship. The Marxists see the state as maintaining an order in which the interest of the ruling class is dominant.

Thus, Ake (1985:5) observes that the state is a specific modality of class domination, one in which domination is mediated by commodity exchange so that the system of institutional mechanisms of domination is differentiated and disassociated from the ruling class and even the society appears as an objective force standing alongside society. According to Ake (1985:10), the state in Africa is crude tool of colonial capital, used to coerce Africans into commodity relations, to change their pattern of production and prevent the emergence of capitalist African bourgeoisie. The colonial state was instrumental in synchronizing the colonial state in the economy with that of the metropolitan state. The pervasive role of colonial state in the economy, which was primarily meant to swerve metropolitan capitalism, foreclosed the development of orthodox capitalist culture in the colonies so that capitalist accumulation took the form of using the instrumentality of the apparatus of the state. Ekekwe (1985:12) notes that the state in post-colonial formations which have to do with the level of development of productive forces make the state direct instrument of capital accumulation by the dominant class or its elements. Thus, we talk of non-autonomization of the state in the peripheral capitalist African formation.

In applying this theory to the study, states in Africa are instruments in the hands of political class for personal accumulation to the peril of development strategies and wellbeing of African people. Given the instrumentalist character of post-colonial states in African, state managers see the implementation of development programmes as opportunity to enrich themselves materially. Thus, development strategies in Africa can be mirrored as mechanisms presented by the political leaders to becloud the vision of the people and hood-wink them into assimilating false values and internalizing sense of participation, which abstracts from objective reality. It is therefore, within the context of the Marxian theory of the postcolonial state of Africa, that the inability of NEPAD to engender sustainable development and reduce poverty in Nigeria in the 21st century can be explained and understood.

The Concept of Development

Development has been a contentious issue. Indeed, the concept has generated a great deal of controversy among development theorists and experts. Development is a dialectical phenomenon in which the individual and society interact with their physical, biological, and inter-human environments transforming them for their own betterment and that of humanity at large and being transformed in the process; the lessons learned and experiences acquired in this process are passed on to future generations, enabling them to improve their capacities to make further valuable changes in their inter-human relations and their ability to transform nature Nnoli (1981). The contention here is that development is associated with changes in man and his creative energies and not in things. This implies that development is human-oriented and human-generated. In other words, it is a continuous improvement in the capacity of the individual and society to control and manipulate the forces of nature as well as themselves and other individuals and societies for their own benefit and that of humanity at large. Development is therefore a process of actualizing man's inherent capacity to live a better and more rewarding life through increasing skill and capacity to do things, greater freedom, self-confidence, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well being. In a nutshell Nnoli is of the view that development does not mean procurement of artifacts produced abroad. Rather, it means the creative energy of man to transform and translate his local environment for a better living. Meanwhile, Todaro (1977) conceptualized development as:

A multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty.

Seers (quoted in Todaro 1977) based his perception of development on three basic questions. According to him, the questions to ask about a country's development are: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? To him, if all these have declined from high levels, then this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been getting worse,

especially if all three have, it would be strange to call that result development, even if per capita income doubled; and no matter the existence of artifacts in that society (Onah, 2003:34). According to Goulet, development is the sustained elevation of an entire society and social system towards a better and more humane life. He advanced three core values of development which include life sustenance – that is the ability to provide basic necessities like food, shelter, health and protection. Goulet contends that when any of these is absent or in critically short supply, state of absolute underdevelopment exists. The second core value of development is self-esteem. This connotes a sense of worth and self-respect of not being used as a tool by others. Goulet regretted that with the proliferation of the modernization values of developed nations, many societies in the developing world which previously may have possessed a profound sense of their own worth suffer from serious cultural confusion when they come in contact with economically and technologically advanced countries. The third universal value which constitutes development is the concept of freedom, freedom from servitude of men to nature, ignorance, other men, misery and dogmatic beliefs.

Rodney (1971) categorized development into three: the individual, social and economic levels. At the level of individual, development implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity and self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. At the social level, the concept is expressive of increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relations. The tools with which people work and the manner in which they organized their labour are important indices of social development. As regards economic development, a society is said to develop economically when its members increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment. The point being made here is that development at the individual level subsumes the other two categories because when individuals are developed, a society is developed. According to Baster (1972) development is a dialectical phenomenon, which far from being static, is dynamic and therefore assumes a continuous transformation process and a movement towards better and improved conditions, locally and in relation to the international economic order. Development, as Ofuebe (1998) argues, is nothing to be bequeathed by one people to others. Rather, the process has been manifested in the existence of all people from the earliest of times as they have generally made attempts, as Rodney (1972:7) puts it, to,

Increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment. This capacity for dealing with the environment is dependent on the extent to which they understand the law of nature (science), on the extent they put that understanding into practice by devising tools (technology), and on the manner in which work is organized.

Nwosu and Nwankwo (1988) see development as self-reliance in which peoples of a given society are mobilized in order to transform economic and social environments, for their general well-being and those of other humanity. It is a development strategy which relies mainly on a people's ability to bring about self-generating and self-sustaining socio-economic and political system which is problem-

searching, problem-learning and problem-solving. Self-reliance as an approach to development cannot be seen in terms of imitating or catching up with developed countries (Ikoku, 1980).

NEPAD and the Challenge of African Development

The challenges of NEPAD as panacea to sustainable African development in the 21st century are enormous. Tamele (2001:6) argues that the basic challenge of NEPAD is that it is constructed by the unseen hands of the West, contrary to its homegrown claim. Adesina (2003:10), Bond (2003:5), Govendex (2003:2) argue that NEPAD did not shun and, or eschew neo-liberal prescriptions, which are essentially, the very policies that constrained past African development strategies. Similarly, The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa and the Third World Network-Africa, maintain that despite NEPAD's claim to be African origin, the content of the plan has inbuilt "neo-liberal economic policy framework", which is an obstacle to the achievement of its poverty reduction objective. Katzenevenbogen and Mvoko (2002) argue that one of the problems of NEPAD is that its drivers had located it within the "Washington Consensus" which is likely to perpetuate and reinforce the subjugation of Africa in the international global system and more effective marginalization of Africa people. Keet (2002) maintains that NEPAD is a World Bank Programme, which African leaders have undertaken. Robidoux (2002) notes that NEPAD is located within the currently dominant globalised economic system, which leads to ever widening inequality and deepening poverty in Africa and the third world countries. Mpande (2003) argues that NEPAD is much concerned with raising external financial resources, relying on external governments and institutions.

The Church Forum (2001) argues that one of the challenges of NEPAD is that it lacked African consultation and consent and therefore very likely to fail. Tango (2003), Mecojun (2003) report that NEPAD is not free from Western Imperialism. Nwanolue (2005) argues that NEPAD is a policy instrument masterfully formulated to perpetually render Africa individually and holistically dependent on the west. He contends that NEPAD is an instrument of super-imposition on the continent by few African leaders in collaboration with the countries of the North and the Breton woods institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organization (WTO). Graham (2002), Oredo (2003) view NEPAD as an initiative located within the Washington consensus which is likely to perpetuate and reinforce the subjection of Africa in the global system. Nwanegbo (2005) contends that even though NEPAD may be different in its approach and strategies from previous plans, it is likely to be bedeviled by the same problems that hindered earlier plans.

The character of African states is seen as major obstacle to the success of NEPAD initiative. Omoweh (2002) argue that African states have remained instrumentalist state used by the leadership to consolidate their personal accumulation. He contends that the reason why the founders of the regional agenda are inclined to western liberal democracy is because it enables the political elite to

retain power or redistribute power between and among them. He cited the re-election of President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria as case illustrations. Omoweh further argues that the Peace and Security Initiative of NEPAD is not different from its democracy and good governance initiative. According to him, the African political leaders see security largely in military strategic terms, ostensibly to protect their personal rulership rather than in the ability of legitimate national government to provide for its people and protect them from external and internal aggression.

Okolie (2006) argues that a major challenge of NEPAD is the constraints imposed by the hostile international economic and political order within which African economies operate. According to him, African economies are integrated into the global economy as exporters of primary commodities and importers of manufactured products, leading to terms of trade losses. Eze (2004:140) contends that though NEPAD is a partnership that might enable Africans to take up their own destiny; the fundamental problem is NEPAD structure which operates within the globally dominated framework of the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He maintains that these are dominant institutions used by the west to deny Africa the right and freedom to achieve real development.

Bukarambe (2004:15) looks at the historical origin of NEPAD and argues that NEPAD's problems and prospects cannot be divorced from those of the initiatives before it. Omoweh (2004:37) argues that the state in Africa is an impediment to the success of NEPAD. Akinterinwa (2004:67) argues that NEPAD is a programme of action designed to resist any form of recolonisation. He posits that this can be realized if NEPAD project is re-defined to the extent that African leaders must look inward in the search for solutions to Africa's problems before seeking external help. Peter (2004:115) looks at the human security perspective of NEPAD and identifies two major human security threats, which NEPAD has to contend with. These according to him are the local and global threat, which among others include economic, food, health and environmental security. On the global threats, he highlights growing disparities in global income, increasing international migration, drug trafficking and international terrorism. Ngwane (2003:12) argues that NEPAD is presented as a programme of partnership, which relationship is lacking in reciprocity and complementarity, which characterizes genuine partnership. Thus, NEPAD acronym has humorously been pronounced "KNEE-PAD" to import Africa's preparedness to remain on their knees or "going cap in hand" while pleading for aid, Orakwe (2002:6) Asante, (2003:3) see NEPAD as a "partnership of unequal groups".

According to Giyose (2003), beset with poverty and adversity, a truly formulated African development strategy must be people centred and poverty-targeted which are visibly lacking in NEPAD initiative. Brutus (2002) contends that NEPAD is a new form of colonization with the consent of Africa leaders. Melber (2002) sees nothing new in NEPAD. According to him, NEPAD in its present form is development plan without the people, which made it no different from the previous continental plans. Gambari (2002:5) argues that a credible and effective strategy for

vibrant and robust implementation of NEPAD must begin by moving away from the “begging bowl” and “broken promises” characteristic of African development plans. Chester and Taylor (1999) contend that a strategy of financing must seek to mobilize and build on internal and intra-African resources through imaginative saving measure, reallocation of expenditure away from wasteful items to creative use of remittances of Africans living abroad, corporate taxation, retention and reinvestment of foreign profits, prevention of capital flight etc. The contention here is that African leaders could revert NEPAD from aid seeking initiative to effective and efficient internal resource mobilization for Africa’s development.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the challenges of NEPAD as African development strategy in the 21st century are enormous. First, the policy did not emphasis man as epicenter of sustainable development. According to Okolie (2005:137-8), development should be conceptualized as man-centered and directed, socioeconomic and political transformations of self and the basic institutions and structures of the society from a comparatively present level to a more qualitative and, or remarkably improved form. These transformations must have at its wake, the improvement of the materials and non-material conditions of the citizenry and those improvements in life sustenance and self-esteem which must be sustainable so that human development will derive its sustainability and self-reproduction from it.

Reaffirming the indispensability of man as the king-pin for economic, political and socio cultural transformation, the World Bank Report (2000:103) argues that Africa’s future lies in its people. According to the report, “African must solve its current human development crisis if it is to claim and assert its authority among committee of nations in the 21st century. The Report concludes that investment in people is becoming more important because Africa’s future economic development and growth now depends less on its natural resources and more on its labour skills. In the same vein, Ejiofor, (2000:12) contends that adaptation and distribution of resources to man and society cannot be accomplished without extensive and intensive human activity.

Ofoegbu (1985:57) contends that the assemblage of the inanimate factors of production (raw materials) into a single, coherent and operational production system is a human act, conceived by human genius and realized by human efforts. Onyishi (2002:21), maintains that the universal reality about organizations is that human resources is the kingpin around which spins other resources.

Kay cites, for example, hollowing a tree to make a canoe and using iron, coal, tin, rubber etc. to manufacture cars are products, as opposed to natural objects, since their existence depends upon human action (labour). He contends that since economic, political and socio-cultural transformation is dependent on human labour, development should centre on human beings. The development of people’s potentials is the epitome of development. Thus the realistic development efforts is man (see Cairncross, (1961); Mabongunjo, (1981:6). Nnoli (1981), Ake (1996) etc. Unfortunately, the indispensability of man as epitome of sustainable development was not captured in the NEPAD document. This casts doubt in the plan’s capacity to put Africa in development terrain by 2015 and beyond.

Secondly, the development plan is driven by the West. It is germane to appreciate that NEPAD strategy was fashioned in line with neo-liberal economic framework known as the Washington Consensus (Okolie 2006:264). The initiative was based and steeped in the Western neo-liberalist and neo-imperialist traditions. The proponents conceive development in terms of modernization and monetization of rural society and its transformation from traditional isolation to participant integration into world economy.

Indeed, when we examine the processes leading to the conception of NEPAD initiative, one appreciates that the major exponent, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa attests to its external packaging. His speech to the world economic forum, in Davos in January 2001, was an eloquent testimony that the policy was externally designed and packaged. As Bond (2002:2) remarked, during the formulation of NEPAD, no trade union, either civil society, church, political party, parliamentary or other potentially democratic or progressive forces were consulted. In contrast, extensive consultation occurred with the world bank, IMF in November 2000 and February 2001, transnational corporations and advocated government leaders at Davos in January 2001 and New York in February 2002; the G8 in Tokyo 2000 and Ganoa in July 2001, and New York in February 2002, the European Union in November 2001 and individual Northern Heads of state. There was lack of African civil society participation in the project's origin and implementation. Thus Emily (2002) described NEPAD as "African plan without African society". Africa's "new" partners are selected from the "old world of Europe and America, rather than the emerging industrialist countries of Asia. Thus, Sikawe (2002) contends that NEPAD's central characteristics are the rehash of mild mannered pro-globalization rhetoric and the promotion of tired, unsuccessful economic conditions imposed by West on Africa. He further stressed that NEPAD is based on development and economic model crafted by the Breton Wood institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that had been in place for the past four decades with catastrophic outcomes.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated the fact that NEPAD is neo-liberal development strategy driven by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other western capitalist interests which, in the long run, engender poverty in Nigeria. It observed that African civil society did not participate in the formulation and implementation of NEPAD. The paper noted that although efforts were subsequently made to involve African civil society organizations and other stakeholders through seminars, conferences and symposia, such efforts did not induce radical change in NEPAD focus and orientation. Also, the study observed that NEPAD is guided by the argument that all countries must follow similar paths to development along the lines of the western societies. However, societies must develop based on their indigenous imperatives. Different socio-cultural context does not require uniformity of action and policies to succeed. The paper concludes that unless, and until Africa is allowed to develop within her cultural imperatives, sustainable development will be difficult to

achieve in Africa. NEPAD strategy as it is currently pursued is doomed to eventual abortion.

Recommendations

The paper recommends among others that Africa and indeed Nigeria should de-emphasize closer tie with industrialized societies. This is not only because industrialized nations do not mean well for Africa but also because strong tie with the west engenders poverty within African environment. Again, African leaders must cultivate the culture of investing in her population for indigenous-oriented development; this strategy will not only encourage productivity among Africans but also promote sustainable development and reduce poverty in the continent. The Western development, which NEPAD represents is cosmetic and serves the interest of the western partners and their local collaborators and therefore engenders and sustains poverty in Africa generally and Nigeria in particular.

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