

Poverty as obstacle to Achieving Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Poverty is a global phenomenon that has posed greater challenge to livelihood, well-being and development of mankind and the Nigerian society in particular. Poverty is also considered as the harbinger of political instability, economic crisis, corruption, insecurity, genocide, wars, among others. In view of this therefore, this paper intends to examine the destructive impact of poverty on sustainable development in Nigeria. This social problem may be attributed to imbalance in the economic structure, inadequate access to credit facilities, unemployment, untapped natural resources, debt burden, over-population, bad governance and so on. This paper is anchored on Participatory Development Theory while secondary sources of data was employed. Based on the findings of the paper, it recommends that government should be alive to its responsibility of making lives more meaningful by demonstrating strong political will in economic policies that will eliminate and/or reduce poverty among the citizenry so as to prevent the adverse effects of poverty on sustainable development.

Key Words: Poverty, Development and Sustainable development.

Introduction

The rising incidence of poverty has been a major source of concern in the contemporary world, owing particularly to the fact that it continually poses threat to peace, security and development. The trend of poverty in Nigeria also indicates that poverty is not really reducing let alone on the part of eradication. For instance, the poverty situation in Nigeria is not only precarious in income but also in terms of foods. On income poverty, the nation witnessed a worsening income inequality while on food poverty, the proportion of the underweight children stood at 30.7% in 1999. The figure for rural food poverty stood at 34.0% while that of urban food poverty was 21.07%. Similarly, Nigeria's rank in the Human Development Index (HDI) remained low, being 152 out of the 175 countries. This low HDI score reflects the situation with regard to poor access to basic services in the country (UNDP, 2011). The use of socio-economic indicators like Per Capita Income (PCI), life expectancy at birth (year), access to health care services, safe water, education, sanitation facilities, electricity, e.t.c., also depicts the extent of poverty in Nigeria.

The monumental increase in the level of poverty has made the socio-economic and political landscape frail and fragile. Oshewolo (2010) observed the practical realities of the poverty situation in Nigeria and the effects on development and the citizens at large. To him, poverty is a social problem which also creates and sustains other problems. He further asserted that the additional problems aroused mainly because the mechanism and strategies through which the poor attempt to cope with their poverty, that is, to survive in spite of their poverty are not limited to the positive ones but often include some which victimize other people, pose a threat to the economic and social order. One cannot but agree with this assertion especially when the spate of societal ills which include; violence, vandalization of public utilities, killings, robbery, e.t.c., are all traced to the poor trying to make ends meet.

More worrisome is the fact that the country has the resources necessary for the attainment of human development targets, yet it is not meeting them, an indication that it is not only plagued with human development efforts deficit, but there is a deliberate design to ensure abysmal failure of such misplaced efforts. The efforts are partly misplaced because the policies and programmes are not genuinely pro-poor, especially as such pro-poor policies and programmes will succeed if the power relations is sufficiently diffused (Kimenyi, 2005 as cited in Ejumudo and Ejuvwepokpo, 2013) so that all members of the Nigerian society can have significant leverage over the type of policies that are enacted and programmes that are executed.

In ensuring that the issue of poverty is addressed, several attempts have been made by the successive governments at the national, state and local levels so as to assist in reducing (if not eradicating completely) poverty to the barest minimum. Examples of such abound. The following are some of the prominent ones: Operation Feed the Nation (OFN); Green Revolution (GR); Better Life for Rural Dwellers (BLRD); Directorate for Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI); Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP); Family Support Programme (FSP); Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP); National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP); National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS); State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDs); Local Economic

Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDs); Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) and N-Power. However, Olurode (2002), posits that while poverty reduction programmes seems to be producing results elsewhere, the same cannot be said of Sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria inclusive where incidence of poverty is rising on daily basis.

Without mincing words, Nigeria is ravaged by poverty. Therefore, to develop in terms of human and non-human resources, issue of poverty has to be seriously addressed. However, successive governments have been paying lip service to this. What concern them most is how to perpetuate themselves in power and further impoverish their subjects – the poor masses. Hence, the need for this paper to address the impact of poverty on sustainable development and at the same time offer suggestions to some of the problems raised which will eventually lead Nigerians to the path of development that is sustainable.

The aim of this paper is to examine the destructive effects of poverty on sustainable with a view to proffering the way forward. Moreover, for the purpose of eliminating ambiguity in this paper, three basic concepts are clarified. These are: poverty, development and sustainable development.

Poverty is a state of denial of, or lack of access to the basic amenities (socio-economic, political and psychological) which are necessary for sustenance of life or subsistence. It is a condition where an individual, a group or community find it extremely excruciating to meet the demands and challenges of day to day existence (Townsend, 1979 as cited in Mbanafu and Nnonnyelu, 2015). Black's Law Dictionary defines poverty as the condition of being indigent; the scarcity of the means of subsistence; dearth of something desirable. The Chamber's Dictionary, however sees poverty as the state of being poor, in need, want of necessities, a lack or deficiency, meagerness or inadequacy. Danmole (2003) observes that the poor are regarded as individuals surviving on less than one US dollar per day. This definition has been argued as being inadequate in a society like Nigeria where poverty implies not only poor income, few material assets and low quality of life but includes poor diets, poor environments, poor health and immense psychological stress arising from the need to survive.

The World Bank (1995), defines poverty as an unacceptable human deprivation in terms of economic opportunity, education, health and nutrition as well as lack of empowerment and security. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) equally introduces two relevant concepts. One is on Human Development. It is defined as a process that enlarges people's choices including freedom, dignity, self-respect and social status. The second one is Human Poverty which refers to the deprivation of essential capabilities such as long and health life, knowledge, economic resources and common participation.

By and large, this paper intends to align itself with the thesis of Horowitz, who perceives poverty as "a dense concentration of disadvantaged circumstances that can swamp development negatively" (Horowitz, 2000 cited in Aladegbola, 2012). In his view, extreme poverty such as one finds in a developing country constitutes a swamping factor, thus, placing children at high risk. According to him, this dense concentration of disadvantages is better understood within the Deprivation, Exclusion and Vulnerability (DEV) framework. The forgoing explanation do not only offer the means and methods of measuring poverty and poverty levels, it also offers a conventional explanation for the majority of the Nigerian population languishing in abject poverty and the resultant lawlessness inspite of laws on poverty.

It is a common knowledge that some equated the term development with growth and it is also a common place argument among most Social Scientists that development and growth cannot be placed on the same pedestal. Rather, they imply two separate dimensions of progress in various economic indices such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Gross National Product (GNP), Per Capital Income (PCI), Real Income (RI) and level of civilization, among other indicators which manifest in the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, the consequences are that it produces a reverse that manifest in the non-transformation of the people's life. This often results into what Offiong refers to as 'growth without development'. The point being made here is that, although growth in economic term could be a facilitating instrument for achieving development in a certain phase, yet, it does not serves as sufficient tool that can guaranteed the achievement of development.

Be that as it may, growth can be seen as the increase in the volume of goods and services produced in a country within a given period of time which may not necessarily touch the lives of the people positively while development according to Sen (1999) is a multifarious concept that incorporate three fundamental components:

- (1) Improvement of people living standard in income and consumption levels of foods, medical services education, e.t.c., through relevant economic growth process.
- (2) Creation of conditions for growth of people's self-esteem through the establishment of social and economic systems and institutions which promotes human dignity and respect.
- (3) Increasing people's freedom of choice by enlarging the range of their choices variable.

Development typically involves improvement in a variety of indicators such as literacy rates, life expectancy, environmental quality, freedom to social justice and poverty rates (Arthur and Sheffrin, 2003; Myint and Kruegas, 2009). Development must permeates the entire spectrum and strata of society touching on the lives of the poorest, lifting them up as it were from the abyss of poverty, squalor and ignorance (Soola, 2002). Development therefore, is a change that result in sustained improvement in the general well-being of a society underpinned by broadened social and economic opportunities.

Dudley premised his perception and meaning of development on three basic questions. According to him, the questions to ask about a country's development are: (i) What has been happening to poverty? (ii) What has been happening to unemployment? (iii) What has been happening to inequality? If all these, according to him have declined from high levels beyond doubt, this has been a period of development for the country concerned. However, if one or two of these central problems have been getting worse, it would be strange to call that result development even if Per Capital Income (PCI) is double (Dudley quaoated in Todaro and Smith, 1997).

Oni and Bello (1987), sees development as a continuous process of positive change in the quality and span of life of a person or group of persons. They identified indicators of development which include:

- (1) Ability to feed, clothe and shelter oneself resulting from more income earned from one's occupation and from provision of infrastructural facilities like roads, water, electricity, telecommunication and improvement of other factors of production.
- (2) Ability to live much longer life as a result of provision of health and medical facilities, prevention of diseases through better sanitation and other preventive measures.
- (3) Ability to read, write and to understand forces surrounding one through provision of formal and informal education.
- (4) Ability to participate meaningfully in political activities and in policy making at government level.

The above indices of development by Oni and Bello are far from development which Nigeria is identified with (Oni and Bello quoted in Akinlade, et al., 2013).

The extensive review of the various definitions of development is purposive so as to enable us to ascertain the real meaning of development. However, there is a common agreement among all the scholars that development is self-reliance in which people of a given society are mobilized into, in order to transformed economic and social environment for their personal well-being and those 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. Development is therefore, a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political processes which aim at constant improvement of the entire population and of all individual on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and fair distribution of the benefits there-from.

Sustainable development has remained an issue of foremost concern to governments, non-governmental organizations and scholars around the world. The challenge of achieving economic development maintained within acceptable level of global resources depletion and environmental pollution appears to continuously overwhelm humanity and it therefore requires urgent practical attention of all. What then is sustainable development? The most frequently cited definition is from Our Common Future, also known as the Bruntland Report, which describes sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987). This definition contains two key concepts; (i) The concept of needs in particular and the essential needs of the world's poor to which overriding priority should be given; and (ii) The idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs (Akwe, 2013).

Development becomes sustainable when it has an in-built mechanism for enduring and improving capacities for the present and future generations with relevant cognizance of the socio-economic, political and cultural factors affecting the people. This is when the utility achievable from such developmental programmes and actions countries to make today's life better than yesterday's and tomorrow's better than today's or at worst when the utility is constant without depreciating (Agbaenyi and Ikenna, 2015). Sustainable development therefore, is an effort to inject enduring capacity to developmental achievements to serve present and future needs of the society. It is an attempt to protect the society against decay and unwarranted setback. It is that type of development which blends its policies and programmes with the people's culture and environment. It is humane and aims at rendering enduring services to the people. Sustainable development is indigenous and cultural friendly. It considers the past, present and makes preparation for the future (Agbaenyi and Ikenna, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Participatory Development Theory offered by Hyden (1994) and extensively used by Agagu (1995) and Agagu and Ola (2004). This model is considered suitable for this study and therefore become inevitable as various studies on poverty alleviation and other economic development studies have shown the top-down approach to programme design and lack of involvement of the beneficiaries in the formation and implementation of public programmes (Agagu, 1995; Jega and Waliki (Eds) 2002; Ijaiya, 2002; Ogwumike, 2001; Olurode, 2002). There had been claims that beneficiaries failed to fully identify themselves with the programmes and that they did not support them, either in the form of local resources mobilization, contribution or in identifying themselves with the sustainability of the programmes. Based on this assertion, PDM becomes an indispensable tool in analyzing the levels of people's participation in poverty reduction programmes and the impact it has made in their socio-economic well-being. The PDM approach will also assist greatly in finding solutions to the problems that had bedeviled the past strategies.

Participation in development, according to Ijaiya (2006), involves partaking, sharing and contribution to a project by the people. As a process, it denotes individual's involvement in the group's activities. As a goal driven concept, it encompasses the social interactions which characterize a group as well as their contribution towards a desired end result (Picciotto, 1992). The use of participation in development process, according to Picciotto (1992) entails certain components. It allows for representation, contribution, information flow, mediation, negotiation, deliberation and influencing of decisions by the people in policy formation and implementation. In other words, participation is the vehicle through which representation, consultation, negotiation, and deliberation is achieved to enhance support and secure organization's goals. It is also an information medium and a way of eliciting the people's motivation, commitment and loyalty.

The importance of PDT to generate practical economic development is remarkable as over the years, a number of studies have identified the importance of the involvement of the people in the successful implementation of development projects. On this note, Ijaiya (2006) listed countries like China, Uganda, Philippines, Brazil, India and Kenya to have had success stories of project performance because of the involvement of the people who are meant to benefit from them. Kwakwa (2002), Jega, 2003 and Bellow 2003 equally identify with this approach and they termed it political empowerment of poor people, partnership for change and the need for collective action.

The strength of this approach lies on the fact that it measures people's involvement in developmental programmes and poverty alleviation policies. More so, a common reason advanced and behind every limited success of poverty alleviation policies is non-involvement of the people in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes and projects they are supposed to embark on. As a poverty alleviation mechanism, Holt (1999), states that participation is a necessary component of effective and sustainable poverty reduction programmes since it enhances project effectiveness because poor people's input helps to identify needs and local constraints, it increases project targeting by reducing leakage to elite, it also allows for local resources mobilization that plays a very important role in generating local commitment to programme goals, it enhances people's involvement, thus, reducing the financial and administrative pressures on government when local resources mobilization and human resources development components are involved and contributes substantially to programme financial and institutional sustainability.

Causes of Poverty

The causes of poverty are multi-dimensional and cannot be easily exhausted within the confine of this discourse. In what follows however, we shall briefly highlight some of the causes as they relate to Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. In view of this, some of the causes of poverty include the following; inadequate access to credit facilities, environmental degradation, low productivity, low endowment to natural resources, untapped natural resources, unemployment, over population, small market, debt burden, bad governance, effects of globalization, obnoxious and unstable macro-economic and monetary policies resulting in low economic growth rate and currency depreciation, among other things (Abubakar, 2002 108-116). Notable theoretical approaches woven around reasons and causes of poverty were however, offered by Akeredolu (1975:110) and Sheriffdeen (1997). They are; the power theory of poverty, the capitalist entrepreneurial theory of poverty, individual attribute theory of poverty and corruption theory of poverty.

The power theory of poverty posits that the structure of political power in a given society is sometimes responsible for the level of poverty being experienced by the citizens. This is where the ruling class established and legitimizes an exploitative property system, allocating opportunities income and

wealth and relying on the use of state powers to their advantage. In this regard, a vast number of disadvantaged citizens remain poor; a vicious cycle of poverty is entrenched when the poor continues to be poor and the rich becoming richer. This fits into the Nigeria situation.

The capitalist entrepreneurial theory of poverty argues that the crude exploitation of workers through low wages and poor conditions of service often lead to pauperization of the working class. This theory is hinged on the fact that capitalism brings about fundamental social problems including inequality which lead to poverty. Since wealth is concentrated in the hands of the minority who are bent on pursuing profits through exploitation of labour, re-distribution of resources is more within the classes than between classes. Those stricken by poverty are often subjugated by bourgeoisie so as to glean profits and capital via exploitation.

The individual attribute theory of poverty posits that individuals location in the society's hierarchy of income and wealth is presumed to be largely due to his motivations, aptitude and abilities. Hence, an individual founded in poverty may be as a result of low or lack of motivation, low initiative and lower thinking power. This theory is viewed from the angle of the individual's inability to be productive so as to get out of poverty. In other words, this theory attributed poverty to individual weaknesses. It is founded on self-help and survival in which those who work hard succeed while the weak fail to succeed giving rise to the non-poor and the poor respectively. The individual attribute theory of poverty is of the opinion that the poor are the architects of their misfortune. The corruption theory of poverty as given by Sherriffdeen (1997:12) is highly relevant to Nigeria. In this case, a two-way causation between poverty and corruption is established. Unarguably, the Nigeria 'national poverty', a combination of individual 'ill being' is directly or indirectly a function of personal and collective corruption which has remained the trouble with Nigeria (Ribadu, 2006:35).

Abubakar (2002:108-116), identifies some causes to include macro-economic distortions, bad governance, debt burden, the environment as the case of Niger Delta, socio-economic factors like "419" syndrome, unemployment and high population growth. Yahie (1993) (cited in Ijaiya, 2007:473) equally put the factors that cause poverty as structural and transitional. He listed the structural causes as more permanent and depends on a host of factors as limited resources, lack of skills, location disadvantage; in this group are the disabled, orphaned, landless farmers and households headed by females. The transitional causes according to him are mainly due to structural adjustment reforms, changes in domestic economic policies that may result in price changes, increased unemployment, natural calamities such as wars and environmental degradation, among others.

In one of his writings, Edoh (2003:71) identifies the following as some of the causes of poverty in Nigeria:

- Corruption and embezzlement;
- Poor leadership;
- Lack of comprehensive National Poverty Alleviation Programme;
- Lack of sound agricultural policy and protracted neglect of the sector;
- Lack of basic infrastructures;
- Rapid population growth; and
- Excessive internal and external debt burden.

Effects and/or Consequences of Poverty on Sustainable Development

Following the oil boom of the 1970's, there were mass migration of people, especially the youth to the urban centres seeking for jobs, consequently agricultural based jobs which were the mainstay of the economy began to suffer. Again, following the downturn in the economy in the 1980's, the problem of unemployment started to manifest, precipitating the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), the rapid depreciation of the naira also affected the means of procuring the raw materials required to sustain industries output levels (Aladegbola, 2012).

A major consequence of the rapid depreciation of naira was the sharp rise in the general price level, leading to a significant decline in real wages. This low wages in turn fuelled a weakening purchasing power in wage earners and declining aggregate demand. Consequently, industries started to accumulate unintended inventories and as rational economic agents, the manufacturing firms started to rationalize their workforce, an embargo was placed on employment and with the simultaneous rapid expansion in the educational sector, new entrants into the labour market increased beyond the absorptive capacity of the economy. Thus, the avowed government's objective of achieving full employment failed to materialize. From there, individual poverty set in and over time resulted into accumulation of national poverty.

As a result of the prolonged military incursion into the country's political landscape, it was obvious that the Fourth Republic would inherit a very weak economic structure and poor infrastructure. However, with the emergence of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo who was once a former Head-of-State with requisite experience, Nigeria widely comforted themselves that the Fourth Republic would indeed bring a new lease of life to them and their families. It was therefore on this hopeful note that Nigerians commenced the Fourth Republic. Unfortunately, the situation has not improved as the economy had consistently witnessed poor domestic and foreign investments since 1999 to date. The economic situation in Nigeria was best captured thus:

The economy, to all intents and purposes, runs rudderless robbed of the deft and steady hands of creative managers. Policy uncertainty, executive arbitrariness, unsustainable expansionary spending and wastages are the defining characteristics of what could pass for monetary and fiscal policies. The logical effects are there for all to see: decaying infrastructure, growing unemployment deepening poverty, increasing crime and insecurity (Dumoye, 2005).

Poverty, reinforced by mass unemployment is not only a threat to true democracy but to sustainable development. The federal government had on different occasions declared 'war' on poverty but joblessness among other factors has not lessened. Any individual deprived of the basic wherewithal cannot participate effectively in a democratic political process. Therefore, a poor person is not a full-fledged social individual, as he or she lacks the basic freedom to engage in the lives he or she enjoys. Thus, Sen (1999:20) observes in **Development As Freedom** that, "Expanding the freedom that we have reason to value not only makes our lives richer and more unfettered but also allows us to be fuller social persons, exercising our own volition and interacting with and influencing the world in which we live". One can then safely argue that poverty constitutes a hindrance to true democracy and sustainable development in Nigeria since economic chaos can topple democratic institutions. The problems of poverty and injustice are good part of Nigeria and the citizens do not seem to understand what is in their culture that prevents them from achieving a just, prosperous, dignified life, true democracy and sustainable development. It is essential to note that about 70 per cent of the Nigerian population is estimated to be poor (Sen, 1999). Hence, it is not an exaggeration to argue that poverty is an obstacle to sustainable development in Nigeria.

Evidences abound that Nigeria still exhibit the common characteristics of under-development as identified by Todaro (1989) (i) low level of living; (ii) low level of productivity; (iii) high rate of population growth; (iv) high and rising level of unemployment and under-development; (v) significant dependence on agricultural production and primary export; (vi) dominance, dependence and vulnerability in international relations. Yet, the multilateral institutions under the control of the West had continuously given the country a clean bill of health.

One of the themes of Obasanjo's presidency was "Accelerating Physical and Human Infrastructure for Wealth Creation and Poverty Reduction". The provision of functional and cost-effective transport, telecommunication, health, power and other facilities is the goal of most governments. It is the test of administrative competence and the benchmark of governmental efficiency. At the onset of the Obasanjo's presidency, it made the rehabilitation of the country's decaying infrastructure one of its top priorities. In his inaugural address in 1999, the then President observed that roads, railways, education, housing and other social services were allowed to decay and collapse and therefore pledged to redress the situation. In a bid to achieve this, the federal government spent an estimated ₦7.169 trillion on infrastructural development between 1999 and 2007 (Alabi, 2009). The results, however, was less than spectacular and very little to have changed for better. Therefore, the story of infrastructural development between 1999 and 2007 was one of the disappointment and unfulfilled expectations.

Apart from the above, fraud, corruption and financial crimes are other difficulties facing the economy. These vices have created a lot of leakages in the economy. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes once informed the nation that about \$100 billion had been lost to corruption in Nigeria (Amokeodo, 2004). Consequently, Transparency International in 2004 rated Nigeria as the most corrupt nation in the world. Apart from discouraging potential foreign investors for shooting up the cost of business by as much as 20% (Amokeodo, 2004), it also determined the ability of the Nigerian government to provide infrastructural and social services. Many transfer millions of dollars from Nigeria for non-existing business ventures thereby giving the country a bad image abroad and consequently closing investment openings against Nigeria.

The economic burden arising from the above discussion ganged up into an accumulation of individual poverty. The resultant national poverty which has endured till date, remains a heavyweight on the country's development ambitions. This is to suggest that various economic reforms by the successive

governments had merely sought to maintain economic growth without a corresponding development. The resultant crises of poverty comprehensively discussed here has a great impact on our laws and sustainable development in Nigeria. In a country of this nature, the natural survival instincts rather than due process dictates people's responses to law and order. Also, personal and primordial interests rather than national interest dominate people's responses in matters affecting our national development. In a circumstance of poverty described above, the existence of laws on poverty issue is only on paper and not in the spirit of obedience. In such circumstances, lawmakers may turn out to be law breakers; executive lawlessness becomes inevitable as enforcement of laws becomes an uphill task (Aladegbola, 2012).

On this note, one may wonder "who guides the guards". At the electoral and governance level, the few who have access to wealth via perpetual corruption from the corridor of power impose themselves on the majority. At the end, the people are not seriously considered nor placed at the center of policy process. Where this persists, sustainable development may be a tall order (Aladegbola, 2012: 398 - 399).

In summary, the consequences of poverty on sustainable development can be put in three giant blocks. First, is on the affected - as they suffer physical and psychological miseries. Second, is on the national economies of countries affected which lead to formation of slums in cities, worsening of ecological problems as a result of failure to use the available human resources. The third, is on the political and social development of the countries affected which lead to problems of power structures, the minority groups of the population and inhibition on the development of democratic structures and higher level of participation. Aku et al (1997) have identified this to be problems of political apathy and social disillusionment.

Conclusion

Poverty and sustainable development are interrelated. As the study has attempted to demonstrate, many factors were responsible for poverty in Nigeria among which are bad economic policies, unemployment, untapped natural resources, inadequate access to credit facilities and so on. However, the lopsided structure of the country's economy had consistently been a serious problem and it remained outstanding thereby leading to mass poverty which has rendered sustainable development unattainable.

This study is also of the opinion that a development strategy, no matter its potency and efficacy can hardly be imposed on a people and yet expect a credible success. Therefore, without any fear of contradiction, any credible development strategy must take into account or consideration the needs, peculiarities and local initiatives of the people in order to succeed, thus Participatory Development Model becomes inevitable.

From the forgoing analysis, it is very revealing that poverty remains a heavyweight on the country's development ambitions. What then is the way out? This study will attempt to answer this question by making certain recommendations which hopefully could assist in putting the country on the path of rapid economic development in the 21st century where poverty will be a thing of the past.

Recommendations

It is very important at this juncture, in the light of our preceding analysis, to make certain recommendations on how some of the effects of poverty on sustainable development could be eliminated with a viewing to putting Nigeria on the path of lasting economic development in the 21st century. Hence, the following recommendations:

- It is the responsibility of government to make lives more bearable for her citizens. In view of this, government should try as much as possible to formulate sound economic policies that will provide more employment opportunities to the teeming population.
- Another way of going about this is for the government to set up a contingency fund for industrial and agricultural development. From this fund, credible local investors, unemployed youth and farmers could have access to required credit so that the productive base of the economy could be enhanced.
- No matter how good or development strategy is, if there are no adequate popular consultations and the people's involvement, the essence and goals of development will always remain largely elusive. Thus, people's participation must be entrenched in development strategy.
- Despite its abundant human and material resources, the country's economy is continuously by held hostage by mismanagement, lack of probity and accountability. In this regard, there must be a tougher and more effective method of fighting corruption mismanagement in the country.
- Finally, government at all levels (federal, states and local governments), non-governmental organizations and the general public should co-operate and show more commitment to the essential

task of eradicating poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development in order to decrease the disparities in the standards of living and better met the need of the majority of the people.

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A goal is not always meant to be reached, it often serves simply as something to aim at.

~ Bruce Lee