

New Partnership for African Development and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria, 2009-2019

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Abstract

Development strategies are judged by results. Over the years, Africa's political leadership adopted and pursued various development initiatives to translate the immense natural resources of the continent into prosperity for the benefits of her teeming population. Unfortunately, the outcomes of these efforts have been abysmal. This study assessed the achievement of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) in curtailing poverty in Nigeria from 1999-2015. The paper adopted the theory of the postcolonial state of Africa to explain the increasing rate of poverty in Nigeria, despite the NEPAD poverty reduction ambition. The study is anchored on documentary methods of data collection. The paper concludes that genuine poverty reduction can only be realized when Nigeria political leadership sincerely invests in her human resources in terms of genuine empowerment of the populace through skill acquisition.

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Background to the Study

NEPAD is acronym for New Partnership for African Development. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was launched in 2001 as an African-owned and African-driven strategic framework for socio-economic development of the African continent. NEPAD strategy sees the need for reviewing the existing relationship between Africa and the developed world in addressing issue of poverty, underdevelopment and marginalization of the continent. Prior to 23rd October, 2001 after the steering committee and experts finalized the NEPAD policy framework, there were other Action plans that would enhance the economic fortune of Africa, including 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 turn around the living condition of the African people generally and Nigerian people in particular.

The failure of the past development frameworks to engender positive and sustainable development, informed the decision of African leaders to introduce the New Partnership for Africa Development. The objective of this paper is to ascertain whether NEPAD has achieved one of its cardinal objectives of poverty reduction in Nigeria. The study relied on documentary method of data collection such as textbooks, journals, internet materials etc.

Theoretical Perspective

Immense writings on African development and poverty reduction 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 adopts the theory of post-colonial state of Africa 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. 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 (Ake, 1985:10). 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. 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 (Ekekwe, 1985:12).

In applying this theory to the study, states in Africa are instruments in the hands of political class for personal wealth accumulation to the peril of genuine development of Africa and the people generally. Given the instrumentalist character of post-colonial states in Africa, state managers see the implementation of development programmes as opportunity to enrich themselves materially. Thus, development strategies in Africa and indeed Nigeria can be mirrored as mechanisms presented by the political leadership 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 within the context of this theory that the failure of NEPAD as a framework to reduce poverty in Nigeria after many years of its implementation can be explained.

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 of this scholar is that development is associated with changes in man and his creative energies. This implies that development is human-oriented and human-generated. That is a continuous improvement in the capacity of the individual and society to control and manipulate the forces of nature as well as themselves 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, development does not represent procurement of artifacts produced abroad and brought into a country. 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 (cited in Todaro 1977) based his perception of development on three basic questions. 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? If all these have declined from high levels, then this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If on the contrary, 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 externally produced manufactured goods available in that society (Onah, 2017:34).

According to Baster (1972), development is a dialectical phenomenon, which is not static but 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 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). From the conceptualization of development above, it is understandable that man is the driver of development. Thus any development framework not centered on the mental or creative energy of man is effort in futility.

Origin of New Partnership for African Development

The New partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) was established in 2001 to among others, eradicate widespread and severe poverty in the continent. It is based on a firm conscious and shared conviction that African leaders have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and place their countries, collectively and individually on a path to sustainable human development (Subramony, 2004:1). The framework was seen as a vision and strategic policy for African renewal.

NEPAD resulted in the merger of two development initiatives: the Millennium Partnership for Africa Recovery programme (MAP) and the Omega Plan respectively (Kim, 2003:10). According to Kim, the former South African president, Thabo Mbeki, initiated the Millennium Partnership for African Recovery Programme (MAP) at a conference of ministers of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

(UNECA). The then Presidents of Algeria and Nigeria supported the drafting of the document. MAP was considered to be former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki's initiative, because it was he who sought the advice of western leaders before he presented the document to other African leaders. At about the same time, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal launched the Omega Plan which was presented to the French-African summit in January 2001.

Consequently, both African and other western leaders agreed that the two initiatives be merged. The merged plan document was titled the New African Initiative (NAI). This was subsequently adopted at the OAU (now AU) summit in Lusaka on 11th July 2001 and endorsed by leaderships of G8 countries on 20th July 2001. Thereafter New African Initiative was changed to New Partnership for African Development. One of the major objectives of NEPAD is to eradicate poverty in Africa in the 21st century. The main focus of this paper is to ascertain how the NEPAD framework has reduced poverty in Nigeria, 2009 to 2019.

Literature Review

A great deal of literature exists on New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) as development plan for Africa within the global economy in the 21st century. Some scholars described NEPAD as a neoliberal policy of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Others described the Partnership plan as agreement of unequal partners which implementation is dependent on the sponsorship of the external superior partner. In other words, African leaders are not the drivers of the development project. Therefore, the saying that he who plays the piper dictates the tune suffices. Deriving from the above, (Tamele, 2001:6). (Adesina, 2003:10), (Bond, 2003:5), (Govendex, 2003:2) argue that NEPAD did not 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 African 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, (including Nigeria). Mpande (2003) argues that NEPAD is much concerned with raising external financial resources, relying on external governments and institutions rather than self-reliance.

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.

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. 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.

Indeed, when one examines the processes leading to the formation 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 African 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 at Davos in January 2001 and New York in February 2002; the G8 in Tokyo 2000 and Ganoa in July 2001, the European Union in November 2001. There was lack of African civil society participation in the project's origin and implementation. This prompted Emily (2002) to described NEPAD as “African plan without African society”. Thus, Sikawe (2002), 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 many decades with catastrophic outcomes. The NEPAD policy did not emphasis man as epicenter of development. 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.

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. Okereke and Ekpe (2002:5) see human being as constituting the fulcrum on which development revolves. As Kay (1995), quoted in Okereke and Ekpe (2002:7) succinctly points out that:

The essence of material production consists of the actions men take upon nature in order to transform natural objects of little use in their original form into condition where they satisfy human needs.

The development of people's potentials is the epitome of development. Unfortunately, this was not captured in the NEPAD document. This undermines the plan's capacity to put African countries, including Nigeria in the path to development as well as to eradicate poverty. 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 of rural society and its transformation from traditional isolation to participant integration into world economy. These types of development frameworks had over the years been implemented in Nigeria with catastrophic results.

NEPAD and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

Over the years, Nigeria has put in place several poverty reduction measures, including the establishment of Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the Green Revolution, the Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Peoples' Bank of Nigeria (PBN), the Better Life Programme (BLP) for rural women; a gender specific programme designed to improve the life of rural women, the Family Support Programme (FSP), the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) the N-Power, among numerous others, in order to stem the tide of increasing poverty in the country.

Similarly, the country had ceded to, and domesticated several continental development plan initiatives including, the Lagos Plan of Action; the United Nation's New Agenda for the Development of Africa; the Africa-Europe Summits' Cairo Plan of Action; the World Bank led Strategic Partnership with Africa; the International Monetary Fund-led Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the Japan-led Tokyo Agenda for Action, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD); the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) among others., which aim was to mitigate the grave effect of poverty in Nigeria. Since the implementation of NEPAD in Nigeria, its major objective of poverty reduction is still far from being realized. For example, Nigeria's poverty rate has continued to escalate to the extent that the Global Finance Magazine, (2019), identified Nigeria as the poverty capital of the world. According to the magazine, the nation exceeded India with the largest rate of people living in extreme poverty. In its recent report, the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics indicated that poverty and inequality in Nigeria stood at 40 percent of the total population or almost 83 million people live below the country's poverty line of N137,430 (\$381.75) per year.

Conclusion/Recommendations

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. The study observed that NEPAD is guided by the argument that all

countries must follow similar path to development along the lines of the western societies. However, NEPAD failed to recognize that different socio-cultural context does not require uniformity of action and policies to succeed. The paper concludes that unless, and until Nigerian political leadership realize the fact that Nigeria can only develop within her cultural imperatives by honestly investing in her population, sustainable development and poverty reduction will be difficult to achieve in Nigeria. The paper recommends that Nigeria's political leadership should not embrace unduly western-induced development policies like NEPAD. This is because a western-induced development policy which NEPAD represents is cosmetic and serves only the interest of the western partners and their local collaborators. Secondly, Nigerian political leaders must cultivate the culture of investing in her human resources through skill acquisition for true development. This is because true development which can engender poverty reduction can only be realized by harnessing local talents.

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