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Development Challenges and Sustainability in Africa

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Abstract

Africa aspires to catch up with Europe, North America and Asia in terms of sustained development. This study evaluates development challenges and sustainability in Africa using secondary data on Kenya and Nigeria from 1980 to 2019 sourced from the World Bank website updated July, 2019. The study adopted the desktop survey approach in sourcing data on three dimensions of sustainable development; economic, social and environment that where analysed using charts and graphs. The study found that African countries occupy the poorest position on global ranking of ease of doing business, there is low employment to population ratio and low population access to technology. The study identified some challenges of sustained development ranging from climate change, social unrest to administrative misconduct and therefore recommend among others prompt policy turn around that will address restiveness and hostility to restore Africa on the part of conduciveness and business friendly so that African countries will be better placed with respect to ease of doing business, social security and environmental friendliness that will promote economic growth and sustained development.

Keywords:
Development,
Challenges,
Sustainability,
Africa

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Background to the Study

Development is a known phenomenon that all countries world over wish to embrace by putting in giant strides and remarkable level of commitment to bring it to fruition. When development is actualized in any aspect, the follow up effort borders on its sustainability. Therefore, bringing the interest and concentration of the countries not only on grasping development but on ensuring that the level of development so achieved is sustained. This same idea was put forward in Egbewole and Olatungi (2012) in which they acknowledged that the concept of sustainable development as goal and mission has remain at the epic of national discuss for almost every nation. Takeuchi and Obijiofor (2011) inferred that with respect to word development statistics, Africa's development is shrouded by a stark paradox- whereas extreme poverty level has fallen in various regions of the world, high percentage of the African population still living within abject poverty net is still on the increase.

In a general assessment of the World Economic and Social Survey (2013), most of the African countries were rated as least-developed economies and only Nigeria and South Africa were rated as developing economies. This position was taken hook, line and sinker following the analyses of common development indices. In line with the works of (OECD, 2001; Oladeji, 2014 and Markus and Lin, 2017) sustainable development could be explained as the deployment of resources in meeting the needs of the current generation without restricting or jeopardizing the ability of the future generation from attaining its obvious needs. Adejumo and Adejumo (2014) saw the concept as efficient management of resources for human survival taking into consideration both the present and future generation. These definitions agree with that of Brundtland Commission's Report 1987 that is widely acknowledged. Hence part of the UNDP (2019) goals center on working with countries and communities to chart development paths for the benefit of the present and future generations.

There is enormous volume of natural, artificial and human resource deposit in the African region ranging from economic, social to environment for which the ADB (2007) avowed that Africa is rich in abundance of renewable and non-renewable natural resources. The fact there for remains that the problem of sustainable development in the African region may not be concluded on availability of the needed resource but more on ensuring the sustainability.

Going through plethora of literature both theoretical and empirical on development in the African region, one sees high evidences of under-development in the region in agreement with global records. With the magnitude of resources deposit in Africa and the level of development being sustained, one may draw an opinion that Africa is suffering from 'resource curse'. A nation cannot be ranked better with a higher proportion of its population living below the USD1.20 per capita incomes, have higher rate of displaced persons, records high in dreaded diseases, higher ratio of soaring population to gross domestic product, ranks low (numerically high) in the ease of doing business.

The United Nation's Conference (2012) pointed out some conditions that make for sustainable development to include; Decent Jobs, Energy Transformation, Food and Nutrition security, Sustainable Cities, Sustainable Agriculture, Clean Water, Disaster readiness among others. But the obvious remains that the least of these is been witnessed in Africa and the scourge continue to perplex the continent.

Evidently, sustainable development strategies in place in Africa according to UNEC (2011) include; the Ghanaian National Environmental policy (NEP), the Tanzanian National Development Vision (NDV) 2025 and the National Strategy for Solid Waste Management in Egypt among others. The National Economic Empowerment Development strategy (NEEDs) in Nigeria, National Poverty Eradication Plan (NPEP) in Kenya and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) at the continental level are equally among them.

Following the position of (Addae-Korankaye, 2014; Oluwatayo and Ojo, 2016) issues as Mal-nutrition, Low life expectancy, Poor access to quality education and weak health facilities have remained recurring decimal in the history of African regions. National Bureau of Statistics (2010) in its assessment recorded that the poverty level in Nigeria grew from 54.4% in 2004 to 69% in 2010.

Objective: The aim of the study is to appraise the challenges of sustainable development in Africa using in particular records from Kenya and Nigeria.

Theoretical Issues: Some of the theories considered relevant to this study are brought to lime light in the following ways;

Dependency Theory: following the position of the proponents of this theory as considered by Bibire, Adegbola and Johnson (2016) the underdevelopment and dependency of the classified third world countries are found to be the result of internal misconducts rather than external affliction and such internal infliction will only be corrected by external intervention. Osuka and Ezedike (2018) explaining further posited that this theory advocates that it takes soliciting external intervention to cushion the internal shortfall in actualizing expected development.

Economic Sustainability Theory: According to the interpretation of Kaimuri and Kosimbei (2017) this theory considers consumption and the impact of natural resource on production, inferring that such is achieved through maximizing the welfare of generations. Citing Pezzey (1992), they stated that "… non-declining utility of a representative member of society for millennia into the future". Another point of consideration here is that of Bojo et al (1992) which recommended that " economic development in a specified area (region in this context) is sustainable if the total stock of resources – human capital, physical reproducible capita, environmental resources, and exhaustible resources – does not increase over time.

Real GDP per capita: Harrod-Domar model implied that growth in a function of labour and capital. Therefore, more investment leads to capital accumulation which in turn generates economic growth. This model implies that economic growth significantly depends on policies to increase investment which increases savings and proposed the use of investment more efficiently through technological advances Kaimuri and Kosimbeei (2017).

Term of Trade: this usually affects the distribution of income between countries and therefore considered an important variable in economic policy decision of a country. A better term of trade is a position of given amount of export exchanging for a greater amount of import. It is obvious that income from terms of trade does not necessarily indicate an increase in a country's welfare but can imply welfare change. This argument remains valid because an increase in export prices with the import prices and quantity remaining constant, such country is considered better off in terms of welfare since at this given import volume, the country has exchanged less export thereby making the country's real national income larger. In this regard therefore, terms of trade variable can be used as a measure of how much a country has gained from trade.

Environmental Sustainability: maintaining a given level of natural capital in line with the safe minimum standard as promulgated in (Ciriacy-Wantrup, 1952; Bishop, 1978) is considered a strong sustainability standard. SMS guarantees that natural capital levels are only breached when the opportunity cost of not utilizing the resources is high. Kaimuri and Kosimbeei (2017) also wrote that alternatively, Daly (1990) theorem of operational principles (OPs) may equally be adopted for this argument of non-declining natural capital. These OPs where grouped into (a) management of resources where exploitation of resources should not exceed the regeneration rate, (b) both natural capital and man-made capital to be maintained at at optimal levels – levels that give maximum yield per time period for natural resources where man-made capital and natural capital are complements of each other. (c) investment of part of the recipts from non-renewable resources into renewable substitute resource at a rate that when the non-renewable resource is extinguished then the renewable resource will replace the non-renewable one, and (d) focus should be placed on technology that that is not resource intensive (Kaimuri and Kosimbeei, 2017).

Empirical Review

Kaimuri and Kosimbeei (2017) did an investigation of sustainable development in Kenya employing annual data series for Kenya covering 1991 to 2014. The study made use of autoregressive distributive lagged model (ARDL) for the analysis and the bound test for cointegration to test whether the long run relationship exist between the study variable-sustainable development being the endogenous variable as proxy by Adjusted net savings rate (ANSR) and the exogenous variables as household consumption per capita, unemployment rate, resource productivity, energy efficiency, real gross domestic product per capita and terms of trade. The study found that a long run relationship exists between the variables. Also, it found that household consumption per capita negatively

impacted sustainable development in the long run while unemployment rate and energy efficiency both negatively influenced sustainable development in the short run. The other variables Resource productivity, real gross domestic product per capita and terms of trade are insignificant contributors to sustainable development.

Nzioki and Mugigu (2014) carried out an empirical investigation on sustainable real estate development in Kenya. The paper made use of field survey on which it gathered results from several commercial developments in Nairobi city in Kenya using specifically the Standard Chartered building built at US$36 million and the Coca Cola Plaza built at US$10 million in Nairobi in the same year of study and found that both houses attained the leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

Adejumo and Adejumo (2014) conducted a study on the prospects for achieving sustainable development through the millennium development goals in Nigeria. The study was done with the view to enhance the understanding about the analytical content of sustainable development as well as sensitizing the Nigerian economy to key into the wave of sustaining the world economy.

Akpo and Hassan (2015) carried out study on national security and sustainable development in Nigeria using time series data sourced from the Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin covering the period of 1980 to 2012. The study employed econometric software making use of Ordinary least square technique. The study developed two models. The first model reveals that internal security and the cost of defense have positive relationship with gross domestic product as a proxy for sustainable development. The second model finds that national security, internal security and cost of defense have positive impact on aggregate investment.

Considering studies on Africa generally, Ahenkan and Osei-Kjo (2014) examined the achievement of sustainable development in Africa using the qualitative method. The study adopted the desk top instrument in data collection by reviewing issues on the progress, challenges and prospects of sustainable development in Africa critically. The work utilized only secondary data contained in relevant journals, articles, books, reports and periodicals using narrative analytical method in analyzing the data and found that the progress of sustainable development in Africa is mixed across indicators.

This study intends to add to the quantum of studies being carried out on African countries with respect to sustainable development by conduct a desk top survey on Nigeria and Kenya on the challenges of sustainable development.

Method: this study employed the use of desktop research instrument in the collection of data. The data collected for the study where secondary data sourced from journals, books, conference papers and periodicals. The researcher subjected the data to narrative analysis to draw relevant conclusions.

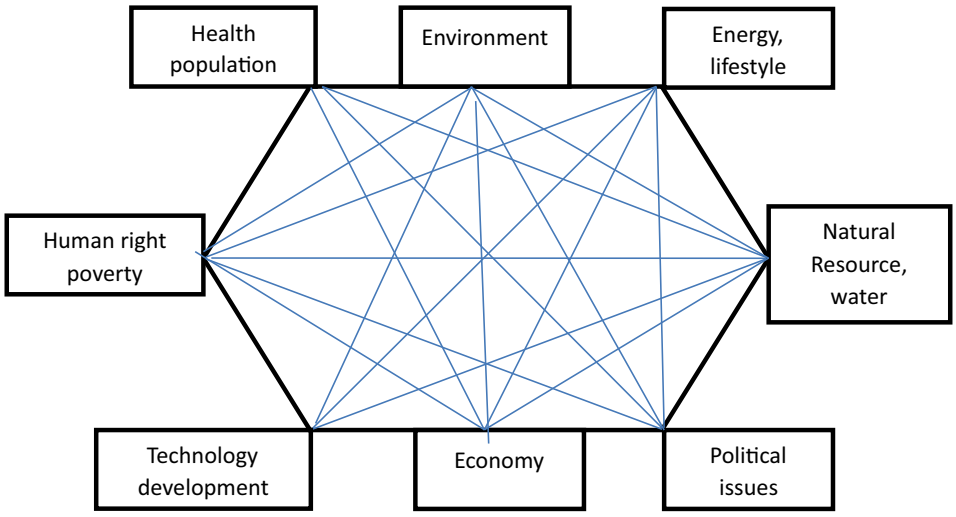
Results and Discussions

Efforts to Sustain Development

To make for sustainable development, the national policy formulation on development should corroborate the possible regional and or global externalities or repercussions. All efforts and policies are required to be carried out in an environmentally sustainable consciousness. No aspect of development being pursued should undermine another. Current strategies should not jeopardise the ability of the future generation in attaining their needs, (WESS, 2013).

The functional relationship between the key fundamentals in sustainable development discussion may be guidedmore by the 'Kjellen diamond of sustainability' on which Adejumo and Adejumo (2014) prioritises as being very useful in issues of principles of sustainability.

Figure 1: Kjellen's diamond of sustainability



Source: Nwokeforo H N (2019)

Sustainable development as explanatorily given in the definition and shown in figure 1shall be discussed under the following three blocks. Markus and Lin (2017) described these blocks as the three main pillars of sustainable development.

Figure 2: Dimensions of Sustainable Development

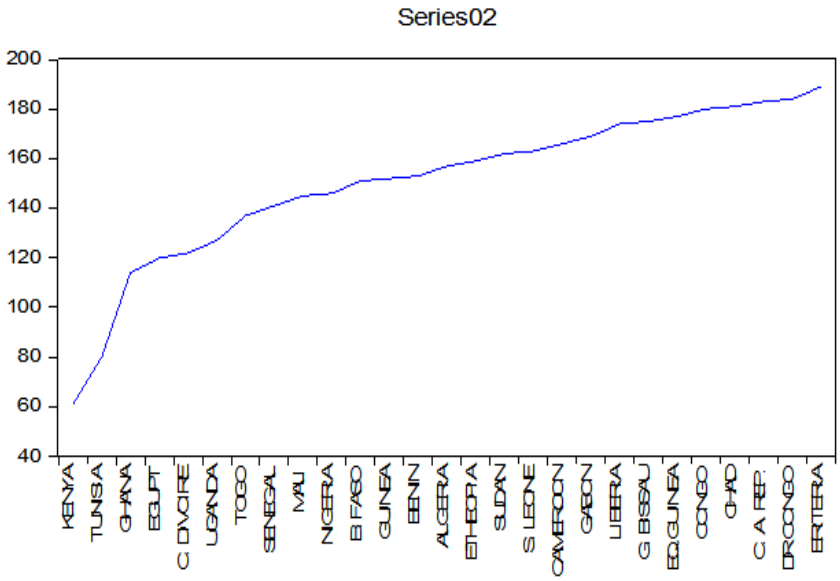
Economic	**Social**	**Environment**
Ease of Business	Social Conflict	Climate Change
Financial Stability	Income Inequality	Energy Needs
Per capita Income	Food Security	Technology
And more	And more	And more

Source: Author's design, 2019

Figure 2: Dimensions of Sustainable Development

The essence of this tripod analogical approach is meant to have a common channel and scope of discussion for this paper. However, the effort in pursuing each of the blocks is recommended to be inclusive and take care of the poorest and most vulnerable. The WESS (2013) posited that the strategies to be adopted in tackling these fundamentals used should be ambitious, action oriented, collaborative and adapt to different levels of development. The interconnectedness of these three dimensions of sustainable development was stressed in Agenda 21(United Nations, 1993). The discussion for these dimensions will include the analyses of available data on African countries but will dwell more on Kenya and Nigeria as freely chosen.

Figure 3: The Place of Most African Countries in the World Ranking of Ease of Doing Business



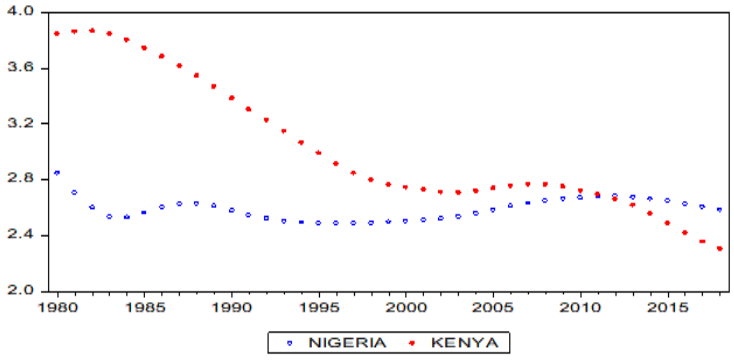
Source: E-view 09 of World Bank Data, 2019

Economic Dimension: some of the point of concern under economic dimension of sustainable development includes topical issues as Ease of Doing Business, Financial Stability, Standard of Living measured through per capita income. Figure 3 presents the analysis of World Bank data (September, 2018 update) on the ease of doing business, no African country came within the first 50 countries. Kenya ranked 61 while Nigeria got as low as the 146th position in the ranking. Ease of doing business ranks economies from 1 to 189 with the first being the best indicating that the regulatory environment is conducive to business operation (World Bank, 2018).

Social Dimension: the social dimension of sustainable development comprises issues and variables that reflect the social setting of an economy such as social welfare, income inequality, population growth, communication such the percentage of internet users and

more. These variables have direct correlation with both the economic and environmental dimensions. Figure 4 presents the population growth rate for Nigeria and Kenya indicating that Keyian population growth rate has been declining over the years from 3.48602 percent in 1980 to 2.30595 in 2018 while that of Nigeria float from 2.84925 in 1980 to 2.58655 in 2018. The population growth rate for a given year is the exponential rate of growth of midyear population from fromit's previous year to that given year, expressed as a percentage (World Bank, 2019).

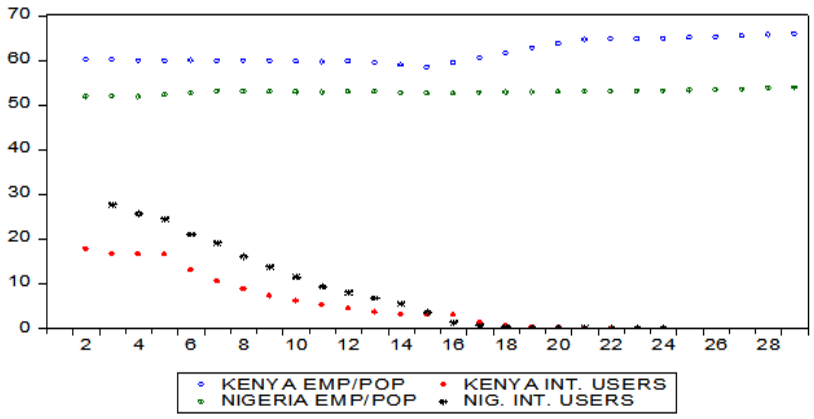
Figure 4: Population Growth Rate: Nigeria and Kenya (1980-2018)



Source: E-view 09 of World Bank Data, 2019

Environmental Dimension: equally, environmental protection should be ensured to preserve the environment for the present and future generation. There have been issues of concern bordering on environmental preservation such as Ozone depletion, Waste management, Climate change, Energy needs, Technology and more. Figure 5 presents the ratio of employment to population with that of Kenya standing at 65.95 percent in 1991 and 60.13 percent in 2018 and Nigeria recording 53.87 percent in 1991 to 51.88 percent in 2018. Figure 5 equally presents the percentage of the population with access to internet technology. It measures how many persons out of every 100 people that accesses the world-wide internet. It could be clearly observed that the rate is decreasing for both countries.

Figure 5: Comparing rate of employment to population with proportion of internet users. The ratio



Source: E-view 09 of World Bank Data, 2019

Conclusion

Sustainable development has not been fully embraced across the African regions as reflecting in some challenges feasible in the African region including; high level of Poverty, Desertification, Deforestation, Financial instability, Climate change and inclusively from Adejumo and Adejumo (2014), Corruption that cause difficulty in prioritizing long term issues; Not using qualified people to develop and implement alternative technologies due to a poor educational system and the brain drain; Poor education about finite resources. And in the recent time African countries have witnessed greater height of pandemic diseases, poor living standard as well as insecurity of lives and properties as the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) continue to increase. African countries rank low in the world ease of doing business, the rate of employment to population growth as well as access to internet- being the corridor of world technology are equally poor. The spate of corruption on the part of the African leader is rated high causing capital flight and set back development. These disturbing statistics are counterproductive to sustainable development.

Recommendations

The study recommends

a) Prompt policy turn around that will address restiveness and hostility to restore Africa on the part of conduciveness and business friendly so that African countries will be better placed with respect to ease of doing business and therefore promotes economic growth and development.
b) African regions to continue on the part of population growth control and secure productive opportunities to engage more of it work force.
c) African countries should design policies perhaps in form of reduced tariff to accommodate a better percentage of its population in having access to technology.

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