Poverty and Sustainable Development in Africa

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Abstract

Development experts have sounded sharp enough alarms: the continually persistent characteristic of poverty and inequality in Africa threatens the flourishing of prosperity, peace, and security on the continent unless the constituent governments take a deliberate risk in the way they develop policies to suit their people. This paper focuses on sustainable development in Africa and its correlation with economic growth. The political system framework espoused by David Easton (1953), defining a political system simply as the structure for the creation and implementation of policies, was the theory used in this study. To cut it short, politics is the bear of policies. There are two sources of data for this study: primary data took the form of notes taken during the discussions as well as documentary materials, which were drawn from a literature search on the same subject which has been published, such as newspapers, journals, books, web sites, government policy documents, publications of organizations and institutions that are not government-controlled and reports of previous research including those on the practice of institutional structures in development. The findings showed that economic growth in Africa has not affected poverty, but rather increased the level of instability with negative implications on the welfare of Africans and the sustainable development of human capital in particular. It is observed that the creation and formulation of developmental strategies in Africa, should not only be left in the hands of the political elite.

Keywords*: Development, Disparity, Instability, Impoverishment, Sustainable Development.*

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Background to the Study

Africa is a huge tropical continent, which has an area of 27,961,000 square kilometers. This continent has a variety of natural resources and its characteristics are unique in their way; likewise, the climate is also varied. The continent is very scantily populated with a population density of fifty people per square kilometer. Although, the majority of African states achieved official independence over half a century ago, most of them, especially those in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), are currently facing devastating crises that cut across the economic, social, political, and environmental spectrums. The one common characteristic that cuts across the whole of the African continent is the widespread poverty that shackles its being. From the outset, poverty has put shackles on the very transformational potential of Africans to improve positively their environment and initiate consistent, sustainable progress both in material and human capacity development (HCD).

It is not just its tragedy that extends far and wide beyond Africa to Latin America, Asia, etc.; it is also the unique adversities that Africa faces with her people left mired in social, economic, and environmental tribulations that make it so. The basic role of any government is to implement the political, economic, social, and psychological welfare of its people. Modern governments have been compelled by the age of industrialization and globalization to provide for the welfare and well-being of their citizenry. The many crises that have recently attacked the continent are just the barriers that poverty has placed on Africa's sustainable development. The present research aims to determine how poverty can be effectively managed to achieve sustainable development in Africa, with the principal objective of establishing an enabling environment that will allow for the reduction or eradication of the poverty cycle on the continent, thereby further entrenching sustainable development for its peoples and cultures. This paper is thus divided into eight sections as follows: Beyond this introduction, the first section reflects on the theoretical and conceptual problems relevant to the study. The second segment looks into the types and causes of poverty in Africa. The third part examines the development of women and youth in Africa. The fourth part investigates the integrated approaches to sustainable development in Africa. The fifth and final part deals with policy and program implementation. The sixth section is on the concept of sustainable development in Africa. The seventh section reveals the challenge being faced by Africa as regards sustainable development. The eighth section deals with the conclusion and recommendations.

Theoretical and Conceptual problems Pertinent to the Investigation

The bulk of the studies in Management and Social Sciences are without an accepted definition. One of these concepts is "poverty". A term that has meant different things to different scholars, it is "deficit and degraded human material conditions which inhibit the optimal realization of basic needs like food, health, education, shelter and clothing" (Bello, 2006, p. 2). It can be justified to say that being poor is a pathetic condition under which humanity is stripped of them. The World Bank (2006) used the level of an individual's income to determine if he or she is poor. Two views of poverty, the absolute and relative, can be inferred from the above discussion. The World Bank (2007) based its measurement of the level of poverty in a society on the per capita income. This would better be described as a relativist approach to poverty. This also has the disadvantage of an absolute perspective. It does not

consider the non-numerical issues that are common in developing countries in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, such as life expectancy at birth, quality of health care, education or literacy levels, etc.

Poverty can also mean an absolutist concept, meaning an absolute deficiency from societal standards and norms. Every society has its ideals of a better way of living. The quality of life is raised as a society and its people work towards it; the living standard of citizens is improved. No country has eliminated poverty, but some have improved their citizen's living standards, maximizing their potential by giving them opportunities to have a creative life. Development has been seen from different views. Some of the prominent scholars have defined it as the citizen's per capita income. Economically speaking, progress establishes a threshold beyond or below which basic human needs cannot be adequately met. Development is not merely an accepted paradigm but a result of human endeavors, as stated by Hyden (1983).

Rudebeck (1997, p.24) contended that "a people's cultural values should be leveraged to effect progressive changes in their lives, with each phase surpassing the previous one". Humanly, as Ake (1993, p.15) further states: African culture places a premium on the socialization of existence, not its privatization as in the Western culture. In the Western paradigm, existence is conceived within the context of separation, autonomy, and conflict. African cultures conceive existence as social. Individual identity follows from being a member of a community where freedom resides in the tangible capabilities, privileges, and immunities brought about through communal living. The above statement is an indication of the general underlying core values in Africa. Poverty could be eliminated in this part of the world where such communal practices are exercised since every man can help his brother. Greed, strife, and suffering in society will be reduced. This means that when the development procedure starts, it can be maintained through the promotion of the people's cultural values within those development programmes.

According to Oyeshola (2008), sustainable development is a "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," as defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987, p. 400). In this regard, the sustainability of finite and infinite resources cannot be overlooked in the quest for development. Hence, the socio-economic activities have to be in sync with environmental protection. One may have a view of development being the vehicle that prevents the degradation of natural resources. The exploration and exploitation of natural resources, primarily oil in Nigeria's Niger Delta, have caused much pain, exploitation, and tension resulting in a crisis between the oil companies and the local communities. It is worth noting that the operations of MNOCs result in underdevelopment in their areas of operation. Radical scholars claim that underdevelopment is a constitutive part of the development process and that the two are fused into a singular entity (Economic Society of Nigeria, 1980). With several amends, Modernization theory argued that internal factors like lack of capital, traditional methods of production, and shortage of skilled labour are responsible for underdevelopment in the Global South. According to a radical perspective on development and underdevelopment, Africa and other developing nations are

underdeveloped because they are integrated into the global capitalist economy as mere suppliers of raw materials with unstable prices lower than that of capital goods and services from developed nations, which are priced higher. Osaghae agrees with this perspective, according to him, that, "nonetheless, the integration of most African countries into the capitalist world economy has been nothing but brutal," (Osaghae, 1999, p. 17.

Galtung (Weede, 1993) supports the above by arguing that there is an extremely wide gap between developed nations in trade and less developed countries (LDCs) like those in Africa. He says long-term patterns of vertical feudal interaction disadvantage developing nations in their trade. He further observes that whereas the newly emerging African countries are still exporting primary products to the developed world, most prosperous industrialized countries are exporting processed finished products to Africa. It affects African states' economies differently, as the production of high-end goods in developed states supports the accumulation of capital while discouraging emerging economies.

The Research Questions for this Study are:
1. What is the poverty-inducing factors in Africa?
2. How can Africa achieve sustainable development?

The Objectives of the Study are:
1. To find out what cause's poverty in Africa.
2. To proffer workable strategies towards achieving sustainable development in Africa.

The research holds significant theoretical importance as it contributes to the body of knowledge regarding sustainable development in Africa. To conduct this research, an extensive review of the literature was undertaken to explore the underlying factors of poverty in Africa, along with its characteristics and evolving patterns. Various elements such as geographical and historical influences, ineffective government policies, inequitable international trade practices and globalization, inadequate governance within Africa, the prevalence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and other pertinent factors were thoroughly examined. Consequently, this study will serve as a valuable resource for scholars and the general public seeking to grasp the fundamental principles and components of sustainable development in Africa. In practical terms, it will aid national legislatures, political leaders, influential figures in the political realm, and public administrative bodies in reassessing their operational strategies and formulating initiatives, policies, and projects aimed at fostering sustainable development across Africa. The research method undertaken for this study is descriptive. Descriptive research is applied to outline and delve into the existing conditions, attitudes, viewpoints, beliefs, social behavior, and relationships. The secondary data formed the basis of this research. Several secondary sources related to poverty and sustainable development in Africa, such as textbooks, journals, seminar papers, newspapers, and even the Internet, were consulted to gather relevant data. The data was subjected to content analysis to understand it clearly. Content analysis is a qualitative method that was used to explore the issues of poverty and sustainable development in Africa.

Among some earlier political system theorists include David Easton, who originated the theory in 1953; Gabriel Almond, Karl Deutsche, and others. Easton wrote a book on political systems in 1953 as an attempt to apply the systems perspective in understanding politics and society. His study outlined eight distinct features, identified to have played a significant role in getting the behavioralist revolution in political science started. His definition states that "a political system is a set of persons within any given society who can be utilized to allocate values or influence by making decisions and regulating behavior." Wilson and Asiegbu (2020, pp.34-37) outlined the systems theorist perspective of society as "a system which consists of diverse subunits which interact to advance the best interest of all." Systems theory employs several concepts in explaining strong interdependence and synergy existing among established units of the system that are comprised of inputs (demands), values, outputs (decisions), feedback loops, and the political milieu. The political system is made of entities enjoying authoritative control over the values of society and by this fact may have to encompass international, social, cultural, and economic systems to impact and be impacted by political processes and outcomes. With the use of systems theory in the study, it is indicated that there are numerous subunits of society in Africa that cannot be dispensed with in the quest for the reduction of poverty and achieving sustainable development.

In Africa, poverty and sustainable development are viewed as part and parcel of the continent's political systems and not issues that are separate from the rest. In realizing sustainable development for Africa, all institutions must embrace the agenda of sustainable development as contained in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). All arms of governance, including the legislature, executive, and judiciary, together with other stakeholders, owe it to themselves to carry out the duties they are assigned to realize the goals contained in the Millennium Development Goals for the continent of Africa. It is always argued that the material well-being of its citizens is the main objective of a modern state. Since the advent of social contract theorists like John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and Jean Jacques Rousseau, this claim has always been contentious. To structure the economies of African nations to achieve these aims, there are well-thought-out development policies, programs, and initiatives in place. Before colonialism, many African communities and kingdoms had their indigenous institutions and levels of socioeconomic development. However, during the colonial era, less developed countries not only lost momentum but also threw away the ball of development when it came to making strategic plans and policies for the continent's development.

The Type and Causes of Poverty in Africa
Africa is a hub for religious and communal unrest due to its socio-political conflicts and crises. The presence of violent organizations engaged in daily operations exacerbates the situation. The Boko Haram, Militants in the Niger Delta, Bakasi boys, and the Ecomog group have, over time, posed great challenges and threats to progress within the nation, hence contributing to increased poverty levels. The disparities and resource discrepancies both between and within countries are direct outcomes of the unjust capitalist framework. The trade relationships between developed and developing nations heavily favour the former due to the nature of the products and services provided. While computers, tractors, planes, and cars are versatile and

do not have inelastic prices, while they apply to many different products in the production process, oil as a primary good coming from a globalized South country is nothing but a resource that comes from the ground. Thus, Nigeria is only one example of countries that are treated as rentier states, extractive and, indeed, "rentier", according to Graf by Osaghae (2002, p.17).

Sub-Saharan Africa records the highest prevalence of hunger, where one in every four people is undernourished. More than 32 million children below the age of five years face malnutrition, which contributes to over 45% of their deaths (FAO, 2015). The definitions of poverty, therefore, merit a brief discussion here, albeit in summary, because they all have a commonality: material wants, especially the deprivation of means necessary for survival, in so doing, the definitions and analyses of poverty help to determine the basic needs that enable people to live with dignity and to participate in society (SPII, 2007, p.10).

The modern concept of poverty includes more than a lack of money and material resources; it also includes other factors of standards of living, such as health and education, as pointed out by Sabry (2009, p.48). The identification of poverty is difficult, as stated by Mokoena (2004, p.41). The definition of who is considered to be poor affects the definition of poverty regarding public and private measures, policy structure in combating poverty, and any other relevant dimensions. The meaning of poverty is founded on deprivation, as the International Labour Organization Report states (ILO, 1992, p.46). What one researcher considers "basics" or "necessities" may not be recognized by another who sets the list of items. These basics, needs, and customized demands change from one period and region to another. Distinguishing between basic needs and deprivation is subjective; what is a basic need varies widely from individual to individual. According to the World Bank (2005, p.132), the reasons for poverty can be attributed to the country level, the level of industry, society, family, or individual. The primary leading drivers of poverty are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Main Determinants of Poverty in Africa

Individual characteristics	Age, Gender, Sector of employment, Formal education, Religion, Culture
Household characteristics	Household size, dependency ratio, maximum education attained by any individual, total value of household assets, gender of head, proportion of household members that are female, age of household members, sector of employment of household members.
Community characteristics	Access to key services and infrastructure, urban or rural farmers in the community, access to public goods and services
Regional characteristics	Climate shocks, governance and management, availability of land and its quality, access to markets and services

Source: World Bank, 2005.

Other than the depth of poverty, there is an increasing skewness in the distribution of private consumption. Poverty is the state of being without social, economic, food, and nutritional security, which also includes personal safety. Food security means a situation when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food for their

dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Income security is the money received from employment at regular intervals. The matter of the causes of poverty in Africa is a web of national and international (macro and micro) and social, political, and economic dimensions and factors (White and Killick, 2001, p. 50). The two prime critical causes of poverty in most African countries are inadequacies in the political and social systems. The rate of poverty, he continues, is in a direct relationship with the level of average income. Therefore, it tends to increase during a period of economic decline. Inadequate governance and the presence of a weak rule of law can act as a barrier to investments and can cause poverty to remain persistent.

During periods of widespread corruption, fighting poverty remains almost impossible, and so does poor access to cheap education. In that reference, Moore states, there is a lot of relevance between healthcare access and poverty persistence. People who do not have accessible health care are more predisposed to be poor and are less equipped to withstand financial crises. Malnutrition also places in jeopardy the future of children and ultimately diminishes their capacity to achieve greatness. Even climate change and geographical factors, ranging from a shortage of fresh water to a lack of fertile farmland and mineral resources, are both causes of poverty. It states that there are mainly three theories of explanation as to how poverty emerged: residual, pathological, and structural. The residualist theory sees poverty as a result of being "left behind." The basic idea is that economic progress benefits most, but some are left out in the cold. Residualists hold that economic development and integration will be reducing poverty, and they often identify with theories that explain why the poor remain so (SPII, 2007, p. 15). Pathological definitions of poverty blame the individual for their financial state. Supporters of this view believe that every individual is responsible for their poverty, and it is up to them to do something about it.

According to pathological theories, such unemployment is solely the fault of the jobless individual and turns a blind eye to constrained employment opportunities, a surplus of labor, and the difficulties involved in obtaining and keeping low-wage work (SPII, 2007, p. 15). The structural argument maintains that poverty and inequality are both the consequence of and can only be relieved by, changes in the current system (growth and development). This is evident in the South African economy, which perceives high levels of unemployment as causing poverty. This affects both the national and international production strategies (SPII, 2007, p.15).

Other causes of poverty in Africa
The goal to wipe out poverty is a complex social issue that falls into two main categories - income poverty and human poverty. Income poverty means not earning enough money to meet basic needs. Human poverty refers to the inability to fulfill essential requirements like living a long life, having good maternal health, being able to read and write, getting proper nutrition, accessing clean water, and feeling satisfied with life. Health and education play key roles in showing income poverty, and they affect each other. Many African countries have promised to put various plans into action for international initiatives aimed at eradicating poverty. At the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1995,

governments pledged to fight poverty. They planned to put national measures in place, which included starting domestic anti-poverty programs and working with other countries.

The Millennium Summit in 2000 set up the MDGs as a strong plan for a global team to tackle both human and economic poverty. They aimed to cut extreme poverty in half by 2015. Governments also promised to include gender in all policies and projects focused on ending poverty, as stated in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (ECA, 2004). They also made plans to set up a world solidarity fund to get rid of poverty. At the country level, it pushes to provide healthcare services, improve food supply and make it cheaper, make sanitary facilities easier to access, and encourage equal and full involvement in development to give power to the poor. It asks the world community to back NEPAD its key goal of ending poverty. Also, the 2005 UN World Summit Outcome Document required countries dealing with extreme poverty to create and use MDG-based national development plans, or PRSPs (ECA and AU, 2006). Still, economic growth in Africa in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), has been a bit uneven over time. It depends a lot on isolated primary goods like mineral exports, oil, or farm products. A big hurdle to steady growth and wiping out poverty is how the main economic drivers in African countries can be shaken up. This can happen due to changes in trade or weird weather (UNCTAD, 2004). Even though Africa has seen some good economic growth, it hasn't made a dent in poverty.

The way income is spread out makes it even harder to cut down on poverty. It stops the benefits of economic growth from being shared and helps to reduce poverty (ECA, 2007). Most countries face the challenge of growing their economies in a way that creates good, satisfying jobs. In many countries oil, gas, mining, and other industries that need a lot of money have been the main reasons for recent economic growth. But most of this growth has been in industries that take things out of the ground. These industries are shaky, spread wealth, and don't create many jobs (ECA and AU, 2007). This sector accounts for about 20% of Africa's GDP (ECA, 2004), 60% of its workers, and 20% of all the goods it sells to other countries (CAADP, 2003).

In Africa for instance a recent Household study described by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) showed that 90 percent of rural households earn their livelihood through farming. If the education effectiveness is well addressed and enhanced it indeed becomes a prognosis that shapes and defines the degree and capacity of Africa. It can be considered the primary way of developing human capital as well as nurturing the proper attitudes, knowledge, and skills in people. Education is the root source of science, technology, and innovation. This has to be done to develop this resource, industrially grow, to compete for a place in the knowledge economy, and to genuinely stake its rightful place in the global comity. Further, this is how Africa shall erect a solid foundation of gender equality, /and/brotherhood, and/or instill substantive African values of culture and/or peace.

Poor Governance in Africa and Poverty-induced Insecurity
In an elaboration of this, Agudiegwu et al., (2019) categorize the Nigerian scenario as the 'Intersection of inadequate governance with poverty and insecurity in Africa'. On African soil,

nepotism, poverty, insecurity, corruption, and poor governance are gradually becoming the new culture. While most of the leaders only give lip service to fighting such challenges the followership at times not only accepts their fate but also engages in illicit activities to fuel the very calamities the leaders are supposed to be fighting. It argues that impunity and lack of noble, visionary, incorruptible, honest, and responsive leadership puts the continent's progress in deep jeopardy while denying the people the basics and putting them to crime in search of necessities.

There is evidence that suggests that the capacity of the government to execute policies aimed at poverty reduction can be improved through good governance. Currently, sub-Saharan Africa is home to almost two hundred and twenty million poor people, which is half of its total population. It has more than half of the world's poor with both South Asia and itself contributing to 85% of the world's total poor. The rest of the 15 percent or about 106 million vulnerable people live in other parts of the world (World Bank, 2018). Poverty signs are usually, little or no earnings, housing insecurity, poor or no healthcare, little or no education, hunger, or polluted surroundings. Because of different characteristics depending on the area and population group, the estimation of poverty is made difficult by the fact that it has several dimensions. This can be seen with poverty being defined by its components where it hits the persons differently instead of evenly.

The UNDP elaborates on three poverty concepts: absolute poverty, relative poverty, and human poverty. Extreme poverty indicates that one is in a condition where he or she cannot afford a meal per day with 1800 calories (Acheampong et al., 2022). While extreme poverty is in a gradual decline and has become a global concern, 710 million people continue to live on this amount of money or less in a day predominantly in South Asia and the sub-Saharan Africa region. COVID-19 is present as a threat, which may plunge an additional 71 million of the world's population into extreme poverty baseline scenario and 100 million in the worst case since 2017, all the development that has been achieved since then is threatened. The level of income disparity appears to be increasing in developing countries while South Asia carries 216 million of the global 736 million extremely poor (World Bank, 2018).

Sub-Saharan Africa zone stands third in terms of the regional growth rate globally with an estimated 6.6% in 2022 & 6.3% in 2023 (Mercer-Blackman V. A., 2022). However, the poverty level has experienced economic improvement but the rate of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia is still high as compared to other regions. The economy of Sub-Saharan Africa has since the mid-1990s registered higher economic growth than in Europe, Central Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East even though growth has been patchily in the Western countries. However, the actual pillage in poverty has increased, and most of the poor still live in South Asia and Africa. In these regions, the focus is usually taken on handling immediate poverty by using various approaches to empower the poor populations not to remain in the vice of poverty. It has been seen that increasing the governance standards makes it one of the key solutions to address this problem.

HIV/AIDS Epidemic and Poverty in Africa

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the poverty and vulnerability indicators across Africa and this has been elaborated in the 2021 Economic Report on Africa. In the context of vulnerability, poverty, and resilience, the Report provides an assessment of underlying and emerging causative factors and impacts of COVID-19 and other shocks including the sharp decline in oil prices. It also shows the national projections of populations at risk of being in the poverty line concerning the different country classifications. The Report says that poverty in Africa is endogenous and spatially concentrated, and states such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria, both of which are important exporters of goods, host a large part of the poor population in the continent (Hamel, Tong, and Hofer, 2019). According to ECA estimations, the disturbances caused by COVID-19 caused an estimated 55 million African people in 2020 to become extremely poor erasing more than 20 years of poverty reduction progress in the region.

Consequent to the aforesaid adverse experiences at the household level, economic activities, employment, and incomes related thereto have been impacted negatively due to parallel supply and demand shocks. The 'near-poor' those with daily per capita consumption of $1.90-$2.09 – technically only 0-10% above the poverty threshold – are highly vulnerable to slipping into poverty due to the COVID-19 impact because any shift in status can easily put them into poverty. It is vulnerable and has been hardest hit because its members engage in the informal sector with little assets, credit, formal employment, and low wages to offset the pandemic containment measures. Since the vaccination rates remain low across the majority of African countries, the long-term consequences pandemic could be felt in numerous countries affecting their economy and household welfare.

Women and Youth Development in Africa

The need to empower women and the young are two of the critical strategies that have been recognized to be critical in the achievement of sustainable development goals. Empowering women and youth also have the possibility of spurring the economy, unification, and improvement of well-being. Many cross-sectional research and development programs have emphasized the importance of empowering women and youths for a sense of development. Therefore, the course that sustainable development in Africa is going to take depends on the ability to meet those challenges and adopt new ideas. One of the areas that requires more focus is the proper use of natural resources for enhancing economic growth without compromising the environment. Therefore, ensuring the continent of Africa embraces renewable energy, the impacts of which have been greatly felt in the world will be checked and ensured that the environment has been protected. Education and innovation are the pillars of the attainment of sustainable development initiatives in Africa. Investing in education to develop human capital thus can help in developing technologies to enhance human capital through research and development. Promoting the rights of the poor, experimenting with social justice and the proportion of men and women is an important formula of change.

Further, addressing food insecurity, largely through specific approaches and strengthening governance frameworks is equally central to Africa's development agenda. With such

immense resources to tap into, with promoting talents and innovativeness, as well as the right solutions put in place, Africa is capable of bringing a prosperous future for its people and the continent as a whole. The African leaders should embrace the pan-Africanism strategy, and make local innovations as a reference in tackling problems and achieving sustainable development for future generations. Recommending the use of renewable energy to support sustainable economic development, stressing education and innovation to drive technology, strengthening citizens, promoting gender equality, enhancing healthcare access, and food insecurity, and building effective governance systems for policy implementation are the key mantras of the African agenda for sustainable development. It is by adhering to these suggestions and proactively seeking sustainable growth that Africa can take the lead as a model of progress and sustainability on the global stage.

Women's empowerment is crucial for achieving gender equality, seeing economic development as one of the factors. Empowering females involves not only giving them the right to schooling but also employment and engaging them in the decision-making process as well. Africa's road to sustainable development is a process with a beginning and an end that requires everybody's help. An essential issue that merits the attention of the government is the insistence on inclusive growth plans that focus on the upbringing of women and youngsters. By creating programs that increase the capacities and opportunities of women and youth, the nations of Africa will be able to tap into their potential and drive societal and economic development.

Besides, the development of a spirit of creativity and entrepreneurship among women and youth can be the driving force behind innovation, the creation of jobs, and the growth of the economy. Involving women and youth in decision-making processes, leadership positions, and entrepreneurial ventures can lead to more inclusive and resilient societies. By equipping them with the necessary support, resources, and guidance, African countries can utilize the wasted talents and energies of women and youth to move sustainable development projects ahead. Besides empowerment initiatives, dealing with environmental issues like climate change, water, and biodiversity depletion is a key aspect of Africa's sustainable development agenda. It is important to construct a resilient and environmentally sustainable future for the continent by implementing sustainable resource management practices, amplifying water conservation initiatives, and advocating for the preservation of biodiversity.

Additionally, improving governance systems, countering corruption, and pushing for transparency and accountability in public institutions are the key points for creating a supportive atmosphere for sustainable development. African nations can achieve good governance by adhering to the principles of good governance, thus ensuring that development policies and programs are carried out efficiently, resources are distributed fairly, and the needs of the most marginalized people are prioritized. Africa's sustainable development journey requires a multifaceted approach that includes women's empowerment, youth empowerment, environmental sustainability, and good governance. If Africa accepts these principles and carries out specific interventions, African nations can seek out a most assuredly, inclusive and sustainable future for every one of their citizens. Youth development focuses on the well-being

and empowerment of young individuals. Investing in youth education, skills enhancement, and employment opportunities can lead to a more productive and stable society. Youth represent the future leaders and workforce, and their development is pivotal for sustainable growth (World Bank, 2018).

Integrated approaches to sustainable development in Africa
Africa's pledge to sustainable development requires a holistic approach that covers environmental, social, and governance aspects. Starting with climate change mitigation, water management, and biodiversity conservation, African nations can then implement good governance practices thereby ensuring a more sustainable future. Women's and youth's empowerment, helping people thrive together, and encouraging creativity are among the key elements of Africa's sustainable development objectives. With a joint approach and an effective strategy, Africa can not only face the challenges but also use its strengths to become a model of sustainable development globally. Integrated methods that combine women and youth development have shown positive results. For example, participatory initiatives that teach both women and youth can be regarded as an equalization strategy that could lead to the creation of more jobs and entrepreneurship for every one of them (UNICEF, 2019). This can be achieved through the following programs:

   i.   Promoting Sustainable Agriculture: In order to promote sustainable agriculture, it must be supported, secure food supply and environmental preservation. Moreover, the funds will be channeled into researching new techniques and maximizing agricultural output.
   ii. Empowering Local Communities: Giving zest to resourcefulness and the independent development of community initiatives in order to mitigate the failures and provide sustainability. Molding cooperation among local authorities, NGOs, and companies for the promotion of sustainable development activities.
   iii. Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change: Making dry rugged places bloom by devising and implementing climate adaptation strategies. Reducing disaster-related losses by enhancing preparedness and providing help for those who are at risk of danger.
   iv. Promoting Green Technologies: Redirecting money to green energy alternatives such as solar, wind, and hydroelectric power will result in lower carbon emissions. Those who are involved in industries are also pushed to embrace adopting green habits.
   v.   Enhancing Access to Education and Healthcare: Enhancement of the educational infrastructure and the provision of the necessary resources to bring quality education to all children and teenagers would be the main focus.

The swath of people who do not have proper access to we...l care is to be expanded to assist and increase the well-being of this population as well as to decrease the prevalence of diseases. The road to a sustainable future for Africa entails an all-inclusive strategy to be applied to the intertwined problems of poverty, ecological degradation, and social inequality. Sustainable Agriculture, for example, can be supported by African nations through the empowerment of local communities, increasing resilience to climate change, promoting green technologies, and improving access to education and healthcare. Thus, African countries can lead to more

prosperity and sustainability not only for their citizens but also for the whole planet. By working together and coming up with creative ideas, Africa can overcome its difficulties and be an example in terms of sustainability around the world.

Policy and Program Implementation
Effective policies and program implementation are essential for the development of women and youth, governments, and international organizations. The NGOs play a key role in creating and implementing initiatives that empower women and youths. Cooperation and partnership between listed stakeholders can promote the effectiveness of development efforts (OECD, 2020).

Enhancing Social Safety Nets
Implementing robust social safety nets to shield vulnerable populations from descending into poverty, providing targeted assistance to those most vulnerable, including the elderly, disabled, and jobless.

Promoting Financial Inclusion
Expanding access to financial services for women and youth to foster economic empowerment, encouraging savings, credit, and insurance options customized to the specific requirements of these demographics, fostering entrepreneurship, creating conducive environments for entrepreneurship through provision of training, mentorship, and access to capital, supporting small enterprises and startups spearheaded by women and youth to propel economic growth and innovation, investing in digital infrastructure, developing digital infrastructure to bridge the digital gap and enhance connectivity in remote regions, leveraging technology to enhance access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for women and youth, strengthening governance and accountability, enhancing transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption measures to ensure effective implementation of policies, promoting good governance practices that prioritize the needs and rights of women and youth in decision-making processes.

The journey towards sustainable development in Africa requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the multifaceted challenges faced by women and youth. By strengthening the social safety net Promoting financial inclusion Promoting Entrepreneurship Investing in digital infrastructure and strengthening good governance and accountability. African countries can unlock the potential of their populations through collaborative efforts and targeted interventions for inclusive growth and sustainable progress. Which can pave the way … despite progress there are still significant obstacles in achieving women and youth development objectives. Challenges include gender bias and limited educational and employment opportunities. And limited decision-making power still hinders progress Comprehensive strategy Including policy reform capacity building and community participation It is necessary to address these barriers (UN Women, 2021).

Africa's journey toward sustainable development requires a holistic approach that addresses the many challenges faced by women, youth, and communities. By strengthening community

resilience Promoting sustainable tourism Investing in green infrastructure Empowering women in leadership roles and promoting youth entrepreneurship African countries can pave the way for a more sustainable and inclusive future. Through collaborative efforts and strategic investments, Africa can overcome obstacles and forge a path to sustainable progress and prosperity. At the start of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), there was a strong focus on education at all levels in Africa (African Union, 2006), drawing on lessons learned from other sectors. Approaches to tackling poverty should focus on sustainable growth and potentially accelerating progress (Dollar, et al, 2013). The concept of sustainable development.

The Notion of Sustainable Development

A specific development approach that aims to improve human living standards without compromising the integrity of the environment is called sustainable development or SD. This concept arose from the recognition of the relationship between the environment and economic progress. This idea gained prominence with the publication of the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) Report: Our Common Future. Commonly known as the Brundtland Report. Sustainable development seeks to preserve and enhance the environmental resource base. At the same time promoting A prosperous, equitable, and stable future Sustainable development involves a process of change that is aligned with the exploitation of resources. Direction of investment Method of technological progress and institutional reform that addresses current needs and future aspirations. Efforts to maintain existing natural capital reserves are therefore important in promoting sustainable development. Ideas Movements and a strategy called "Sustainable development" was developed to encompass the twin goals of environmental protection and global economic progress. This approach supports an inclusive and socially responsible development path. It recognizes the complexities of poverty, deprivation, and inequality within and between countries. Social class and community.

Africa's Challenges for Sustainable Development

The 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) aims to maintain fresh political commitment to sustainable development. Evaluate the extent to which previously agreed commitments have been met. And address new and emerging challenges. It also provides an opportunity to strategize defense methods and Take advantage of emerging opportunities... In addition to serving as a resource at the Rio+20 summit, this Africa report on new and emerging challenges aims to add value to discussions at the UN Conference on Global Preparedness. Africa's Region for Sustainable Development Conference African countries have accumulated a wealth of experience in implementing the sustainable development agenda since the Rio Conference in 1992, although they have not always achieved their stated goals.

Continuous supply of water for domestic, commercial, and ecological purposes. While the world food crisis has been resolved Many African countries continue to face rising food prices, factors such as droughts in major grain-producing countries. Decreased productivity Decreased number of cereals and the competing demand for food and biofuels has pushed

food prices up. But there are sustainability challenges that, if not addressed, could threaten to undo the progress achieved in recent years. These challenges include inequality based on class; ethnic or sub-national identities that undermine national unity, weak legal and governance systems, high levels of interstate conflict, environmental degradation, prevalent disease and inadequate access to medical care and information, including the importance of traditional products and technological advancements.

Yeager's (2010) study of women's employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in the export sector in Egypt and Kenya highlights key barriers to sustainability. This includes lax enforcement of labor regulations. Inadequate environmental standards and policies Labor standards in Kenya shortages Include the risks of immigrant labor exploitation and the marginalization of women gathering together.

Conclusion

The study concludes that executives and political leaders in Africa should spend time formulating development-focused policies that can lead to sustainable development in their countries, to increase the economic capacity of the poor. Africa's journey towards sustainable development involves addressing many challenges, from the impacts of climate change to biodiversity loss. The continent's potential for growth and progress is hampered by factors such as food insecurity, insufficient access to health care, and governance issues. Values should also be included. As Africa faces these challenges, Africa must prioritize sustainable development strategies that promote inclusive growth, environmental management, and social equality by controlling resources, investing in education, and promoting innovation. Africa can pave the way for a brighter, more sustainable future for its people and the continent because all of Africa's commitment to sustainable development is critical to ensuring a prosperous and resilient future for future generations by addressing these challenges head-on and implementing strategic solutions. Africa can unleash its full potential and become a beacon of sustainable development on the world stage.

Recommendations

This study recommends that:

1. To achieve sustainable growth in Africa, African leaders need to go inward to create an African answer to Africa's challenges;
2. Africa's journey towards sustainable development is a complex and diverse endeavor, which requires a comprehensive approach to addressing the continent's challenges by turning inward to devise solutions to African challenges and ensure enduring progress for generations to come.

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