

UNDP's Sustainable Livelihood Programmes and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria: The Development Paradox of Prebendalism

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Abstract

Poverty manifests in the absence of basic needs such as good healthcare, education, transport system, sanitation etc. and recent reports have shown that Nigeria is the poorest country in the world. The objective of this paper was to examine the effect of Sustainable Livelihood (SL) programmes of the United Nations Development Programme on poverty reduction in Nigeria. In the course of this research, data was sourced from secondary sources like textbooks, journal articles, internet, as well as government documented sources and analysed through content analysis. It was revealed that whereas the UNDP has committed tremendous resources to help reduce poverty in Nigeria, poverty persists because of what Richard Joseph (1987) called "prebendalism" i.e. negative attitude of governments, public office holders and the general public. It was concluded that for poverty reduction strategies to be effective in Nigeria, leaders must begin to see their positions as platforms for service to the people and not as service to themselves or their ethnic nationalities. The paper recommended among others, that there should be committed effort to close the inequality gap, as well as carry out social re-orientation to change the mind-set of Nigerians.

Keywords: Sustainable Livelihood, Poverty Reduction, Development, UNDP, Prebendalism.

Introduction

The problem of development and sustainability became rooted in global literature immediately after the World War II. This was as a result of the devastation of the war on the economy, human capital, and institutions of government. As a result of these, amongst others, nations alongside International Development Agencies (IDAs) were interested in bringing development to the war ravaged regions of the world as well as engender lasting peace in the world. This search for development and peace led to the establishment of the United Nations in 1945 with responsibilities of development on its shoulders.

With the establishment of the United Nations and the desire to engender peace in the world, UN saw an opportunity to help the world recover from the effects of the war and hence established a lot of agencies and departments under the organization, one of which is the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) in 1956. UNDP is a development apparatus of the UN with its Headquarters in New York City, United States of America. The sole responsibility of this organization is to advocate change and connection of countries and territories to resources that will help them build a better life. Part of its strategies is to help countries develop programmes and policies to help eradicate extreme poverty, provide access to economic opportunities and resources thereby connecting poverty eradication programmes with nations' larger goals and policies.

In order to embark on planned implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN, the UNDP has developed a three broad development context framework, viz: eradicating poverty in all its forms; accelerated structural transformation and building resilience to shocks and crises. These three development strategic plan areas are further divided into what is called "UNDP's Six

Signature Solutions” which are: (1) keeping people out of poverty (2) governance for peaceful, just and inclusive societies (3) crisis prevention and increased resilience (4) environment: nature based solutions for development (5) clean affordable energy and (6) women's empowerment and gender equality. It is through these signature solutions that UNDP programmes are structured and poverty reduction is still central to planned activities of the UNDP.

Within this UNDP's poverty reduction programmes are such focus areas like inclusive growth; employment creation; economic recovery and revitalization as well as sustainable livelihood projects. Our focus is on the sustainable livelihood programmes and its effect on poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Sustainable Livelihood (SL) is one of the UNDP's approaches to poverty reduction. It was first introduced by the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development as a means of linking socio-economic and ecological considerations in a cohesive policy-relevant structure. However, the 1992 United Nations Livelihood Conference on environment and Development (UNCED) expanded the concept, especially in the context of agenda 21 which advanced for the achievement of sustainable livelihood as a broad-goal for poverty reduction.

The concept of sustainable livelihoods can be usefully applied in development studies, given that it contributes to understanding individuals' livelihoods and had mainly been utilized for poverty reduction. Accordingly, poverty must be understood in terms of limitations to capacities. Livelihood concepts are dynamic and vary widely as they are area-specific and based on the level of development of the country the programme is targeting. This strategy has been used in tackling poverty in the Less Development Countries (LDCs) of Latin America, East Asia and Sub-Sahara Africa.

However, in the wake of incessant insurgency and banditry, coupled with kidnapping and other communal crises in Nigeria, the UNDP has, over the years, adopted this strategy to reduce poverty and hunger in the affected areas in the country. In order to achieve the goal of the programme which is to sustain the livelihood of the affected people and reduce poverty, the target group must receive support that leads to increase income and wellbeing. A good example of these assistance include a just and equitable pay for work, decent housing, higher food security, sustainable use of the natural resources based on the reduction in vulnerability to sudden changes or shocks.

In Nigeria however, the UNDP has used these programmes to improve the living conditions of the people and this is complemented by the many poverty reduction programmes that the Nigerian governments have initiated over the years. However, despite these various efforts by the UNDP, Nigerian government and other International Development Agencies (IDAs), the country has been described as one of the poorest countries in the world. This article is therefore sets out to examine the activities of the UNDP as it pertains to sustainable livelihood and poverty reduction in Nigeria using the prebendal theory thesis by Richard Joseph (1987) to unravel the reason behind Nigeria's poverty rate despite these numerous commitments and efforts.

Conceptual Clarification

Sustainable Livelihood (SL)

Literarily, Sustainable Livelihood (SL) refers to the activities of either the government or private organizations aimed at sustaining the lives of persons affected by both human and non-human disasters. It involves a whole lot of programmes targeted at helping people regain their livelihood as a result of the effect of conflict. It is a strategic programme action of the UNDP that was first introduced by the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development. In a classic paper,

Chambers and Conway (1992) proposed that livelihood comprised 'the capabilities, assets (sores, resources, claims and assets) and activities required for a means of living', a livelihood should be sustainable in a way that can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation, and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global level and in the short and long term.

From the position of the authors, livelihoods are those activities, programmes and actions that are undertaken as a source of survival. For sustainable livelihood to be truly effective, it must be able to cope with the present condition and also possess the potentiality to recover from the shock of conflicts and afterwards, maintain and even create opportunities for more sustainable living in the shortest and longest possible time. Sustainable livelihood is therefore nothing more than capabilities to maintain livelihood during and after crises.

Scoones (1998) defines SL as comprising “capabilities, assets including both material and social resources and activities required for a means of living. This implies that sustainable livelihood does not necessarily mean material provision but also the human being involved in these activities, while also considering the importance of the various activities involved in the processes. Sati and Vangchhia (2017) hold that a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets while not undermining the national resource base. Similar to what the scholars hold about the concept, SL must be able to engage in programmes that assist people to cope with the shock of sudden conflicts which could be absence of food, clothing and shelter. It also must be able to enhance the capabilities of the local people to carry out activities and programmes by themselves.

Viewing SL development on the perspective of the benefitting population, Chambers and Conway (1992) maintain that sustainable livelihood requires increasing capacity of rural people to influence and control their future on a long term basis, a goal that can be achieved by strengthening capacity, supporting equity and fostering empowerment. This definition sees SL as capacity building on the part of the individuals who are to benefit from the various programmes. SL according to them must be that which the people are able to control and influence what happens in the short and long term bases within their environment. These activities could be those which support equity in distribution of resources and the empowerment of persons to build capacities.

Sustainable livelihood also shows a variety of activities that people carryout, often in contribution to making a living. This is particularly in the case of poor persons who often rely on a number of different types of economic activities for their livelihoods. It is however also important while talking about SL, to analyze the institutional processes and organizational structures that link various elements of the SL programme together. Sometimes, it could be a shift from materialistic perspective which focuses on food production, to a social perspective which is on enhancing the people's capabilities to securing livelihoods. However, to understand the complex and differentiated processes through which livelihoods are contributed, Scoones (1998) point out that, it is not enough to analyze the different aspects but analysis must be made on the institutional processes and organizational structures that link these various elements together. These analyses must wholly involve the local people to let their knowledge, perceptions and interest be heard, this is what is called bottom-up approach in policy making.

Ashley and Carney (1999) opine that sustainable livelihood offers a fresh approach. Part of the uniqueness of the approach is that it captures and synthesizes diverse strands of evolving thoughts and actions. It can be seen as having conceptual, practical and organizational roots. On the conceptual aspect, it draws on changing views of poverty, recognizing the diversity of aspirations,

the importance of assets and communities. This approach places people rather than resources, organization or facilities as the main focus of concern and actions. It also stresses the fact that development must be participatory for it to be effective and functional. Furthermore, Scoones (1998) sees livelihood resources as the basic materials that people use for constructing their livelihood. It consists of activities which he calls “livelihood portfolios”. To him, livelihood strategies vary between individuals and households depending on differences in asset ownership. This means that what household A needs may not necessarily be what household B will need, hence variation in livelihood needs.

There are three revelations about poverty, which the SL approach is anchored on. The first is the realization that while economic growth may be an important element towards reducing poverty, there is a relationship between the two since it all depends on the capabilities of the poor to take advantage of the economic opportunities. The second aspect is that, there is the understanding that poverty as it is viewed by the poor is not only about income but also involves other aspects like health, absence of social amenities, illiteracy, inequality, unemployment and voicelessness. Finally, the poor in many instances usually know that they are poor and know what they actually need, hence there is need to involve them in the initiation of projects that are intended to benefit them.

On a final note, the UNDP sustainable livelihood approach serves basically as a project strategy as well as an integrated support activity aimed at improving the livelihood of the poor and vulnerable groups through the strengthening of their resilience. In this aspect, special emphasis is placed on improved technologies as well as economic and social investments. These programmes are organized as specific sustainable livelihood projects and implemented according to the specific needs of the different districts and communities.

Poverty

The problem that most governments face in modern day is the sustainability of the lives of its citizens. Many regions and countries lack the capacity to provide basic needs for its population and as a result, poverty thrives. Poverty therefore is a situation of not having enough material possessions or income to take care of one's needs. Poverty could be of political, economic, social or health dimensions. It may be seen as the lack of means necessary to meet basic needs such as shelter, clothing, food, health, sanitation and many others.

Despite the above position, there is hardly a globally accepted definition of the term since it affects many aspects or sectors of human conditions. Notwithstanding the lack of agreement on what poverty is, many believe that it is a condition in which people live below specified minimum income level and are unable to provide basic needs of life for better living. Aside from this, attempt will be made to advance various scholarly definitions of the concept. Just like Aderonmu (2010) posits that poverty is lack of command over basic consumption needs; Narayan and Petesch (2002) hold that poverty also may look quite different, seen through the eyes of a poor man or woman. The two definitions above further proof the divergent views about poverty.

Capturing the definition from the point of view of the poor in different environments, Narayan, Saveedra & Tiwari, (2013) hold that, poverty is humiliation, the sense of dependence and being forced to accept rudeness, insults and indifference when we seek help. The interpretation is that “a beggar has no choice”, therefore whatever is presented to a poor person, it is either he takes it or leaves it and most times, because of the need to satisfy that desire, he have no option than to accept what is offered to hum. This makes scholars to aver that poverty is lack of ability to choose what one wants. The poor are in a position of hopelessness and lack of alternative or choice.

Apart from the monetary aspect of poverty which is a situation of lack of finance, poverty is the inability to participate in recreational activities: not being able to send children on a trip with their school mates or not being able to pay children's school fees and not being able to pay for medication for ill health. This view has been corroborated by many, just like Obayelu and Uffort (2007) who believe that poverty is not just lack of money, food and assets but also lack of access to education and healthcare, dignity and independence.

The above attempts made at conceptualizing poverty are mere outlines of the general characteristics of poverty which do not really pin down to specifics on how it affects different kinds of people like children, women and others who are vulnerable. Based on this, Abonade (1997) believes that defining poverty is a difficult thing. In similar manner, Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) hold that appropriate definition should be able to capture the different areas in which either of the sex is deprived. These standpoints however talk about how poverty should be defined and not the actual definition.

On the one hand, poverty means the inability of men to take care of the needs of their families. According to World Bank (1999), the gender dimensions of the powerlessness are sometimes emphasized with focus on men, women, boys and girls. Poverty therefore affects men and women likewise boys and girls in different ways. While women suffer poverty of joblessness, violence and most times, illiteracy, men on the other hand suffer from the inability to take care of the home, while the girl child, especially in Africa is treated less compared to her male counterparts. It therefore means that men and women see poverty within the household circle differently. A man that is not able to take care of his wife and children sees himself as poor and this may lead him to negative actions so as to be able to meet up with the changing demands at the home-front. On the other hand, a wife who is not free to go out and do things she would love to do, sees poverty as lack of freedom and choice.

Poverty can be seen in absolute and relative terms, as well as classified as being permanent or transient. In the words of Aliyu (2002), poverty is a situation where an individual or a people are unable to meet up with their basic human needs. In relative terms, poverty is a situation that an individual can have access to basic needs but is poor among his contemporaries within the same community. Those within the relative poverty line live outside what is generally accepted in that environment. Yet poverty may be distinguished based on time or duration. If poverty is widespread throughout a population, it involves relatively permanent lack of means to secure basic needs.

Development

As a concept, development has passed through many years of universal unacceptability as regards to its definition. Just like in the case of poverty, scholars define the concept from individual perspectives and long years of association with other scholars of note. As people and society grow, there is usually the need to advance from one stage to the other in terms of achieving greater heights and getting those things that were before that time not achievable. Therefore, development may connote moving from a stage of lack or absence of wealth to a stage of plenty and wealth. In the view of Anger (2010), those who are father from development wish they were close and consistently strive to be closer to it, while those who are close wish there is nothing separating them from it. It means that people are always thriving to reach or to maintain their developed status. In this wise, those countries that have developed already continue to implement policies that will sustain that position, while those who are yet to get there adopt policy options

that will drive them to that state of development. However, what is seen as development in one region, may be primitive in another hence the diverse conceptualizations.

In the view of Rodney (1976), development is the ability of a state to harness its natural resources or endowment for the well-being of the citizens. On the other hand, Sen (1989) views development as encompassing the economic, political, social, cultural and environmental dimensions. He went further to state that economic and social progress and the elimination of poverty are the objectives of development, and that it also includes freedom from fear; arbitrary arrest; free speech; free association and the right to vote and be voted for.

Seers (1979) and Sen (1999) were very critical of the development literature of their times. Seers talked about the “meaning of development” while Sen saw development as freedom. Here, the meaning of development emphasizes increase and strategies of development and approaches to its study. For Seers, neo-classical economics has a flawed paradigm and dependency theory, a lack of public realism. To him, the purpose of development is to reduce poverty, inequality and unemployment. For Sen (1999), development involves reducing deprivation or broadening choice. Deprivation here represents a multidimensional view of poverty that includes hunger, illiteracy, illness and poor health, powerlessness, voicelessness, insecurity, humiliation and a lack of access to basic infrastructure. Seers summarizes his concept of development thus:

What is happening to propertyfi What is happening to unemploymentfi What has been happening to inequalityfi If all three of these have become less severe, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concern. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development even if per capita income has soared (Seers, 1969).

The quote by Seers is instructive and relevant in explaining or relating the relationship between development and poverty reduction. We can therefore summarize that a country cannot be said to be developed when majority of the population are poor. Development comes when majority of the populace are lifted out of extreme poverty. He went further to state that development is also aimed at reducing unemployment and inequality gap.

To the classical and neo-classical Western European social scientists, particularly Adams Smith and David Richard, development is simply economic growth which essentially means rapid and sustained life on the material productivity of a society. Two indicators are used to measure economic growth i.e. Gross National Product (GNP) and the per capita income. Development as a concept is based on the assumption that everybody partakes in the process of economic growth and equally benefits from the process. It therefore means that, the higher the economic growth, the higher the per capita income and the likelihood that poverty will be reduced.

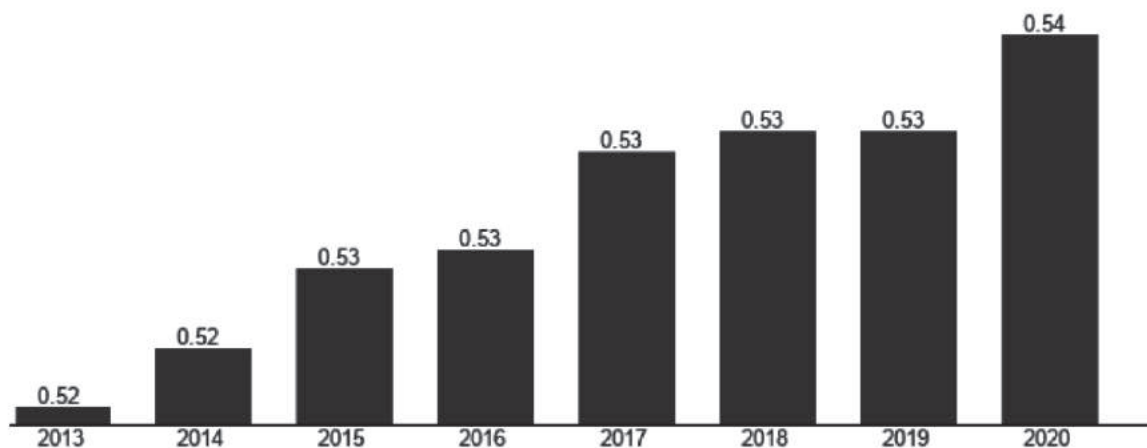
On a final analysis therefore, development, especially the economic dimension of it has the propensity to engineer development in every other sectors of the economy. It is through the economic sector that all other sectors are sustained. On another note, poverty will be reduced if development, especially the inclusive one is present in a country.

Poverty Situation in Nigeria

Just like every other country in the world especially those of the third world, poverty reduction remains one of the major focus areas for the government of Nigeria. Given the poverty profile of 60.2%, the federal, state and local governments are aggressively pursuing programmes that will eliminate poverty in the country (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2015). It was because of the recognition of this huge poverty gap in the country that the United Nations declared 1996 as the international year for eradication of poverty and 1997-2006, the decade of poverty eradication (Ubosi and Omoke, 2004). In the pursuit of this target, the government of Nigeria have become increasingly aware of the poverty problems and several development programmes have been carried out to reduce poverty.

In Nigeria, there has been a decline in the general human living conditions since 1975. Available data show that from 198-2006, real income per head, private consumption and overall physical, social, psychological and economic wellbeing went below the internationally accepted standards. UNDP (1997-1998) reported that with regards to quality of life, Nigeria scored 38% in 1991 and this translated to a low living standard with approximately over 70% of Nigerians living on less than \$1 a day. In 1998, the Human Development Index of the country was 0.391, which placed the country at 142 out of 174 countries surveyed and in 2000, the HDI was 0.439 (Ewhrudjakpor, 2007). However, the underdeveloped nature of the country, coupled with the worsening economic crisis, with the continuous low exchange rate between Nigeria's Naira and United States Dollars, the living standard has further deteriorated. With this situation, Nigeria is fast becoming one of the most backward countries with respect to infrastructure and human development in the sense that access to basic needs has continued to be a challenge. As a consequence of the poor state of development in the country, the 2020 Human Development Index of Nigeria is estimated at 0.54 which puts the country in the low development category, hence making the country to be at 161 out of 189 countries assessed (UNDP, 2020).

Figure 1: Trend in Nigeria's Human Development Index



Source: The Global Economy, (2020)

Despite the decline in the living standard as evident from the HDI report, the country's population keeps on increasing in a geometric progression meaning that with the population increase, the number of people living below the poverty baseline has also increased. According to World Population Review (2021), Nigeria's population is about 212,611,652 million people. As the population of the country keeps on increasing with low GDP along with low naira dollar parity, the per capita income of an average Nigerian has comparatively reduced over the last three years viz: 2018 (2,53.09), 2019 (2,29.85) and 2020 (2,083.16).

Table 1: Poverty Headcount Rate in Nigeria as of 2019, by State

S/N	State	Percentage	S/N	State	Percentage
1.	Sokoto	78.73	19.	Cross River	36.3
2.	Taraba	87.72	20.	Benue	32.9
3.	Jigawa	87.02	21.	Abia	30.7
4.	Ebonyi	79.76	22.	Imo	28.9
5.	Adamawa	75.41	23.	Kogi	28.5
6.	Zamfara	73.98	24.	Ekiti	28
7.	Yobe	72.34	25.	Akwa Ibom	26.8
8.	Niger	66.11	26.	Rivers	23.9
9.	Gombe	62.31	27.	Bayelsa	2.6
10.	Bauchi	61.53	28.	Kwara	20.4
11.	Enugu	58.13	29.	Anambra	14.8
12.	Nasarawa	57.3	30.	Ondo	12.5
13.	Katsina	56.42	31.	Edo	12
14.	Kano	55.1	32.	Oyo	9.8
15.	Plateau	55.1	33.	Ogun	9.3
16.	Kebbi	50.2	34.	Osun	8.6
17.	Kaduna	43.5	35.	Delta	6
18.	FCT	38.7	36	Lagos	4.5

Source: Varrella (2020)

As could be observed, the population of people living in poverty is 8.7 million. This means that about half of the Nigerian population are poor. On the other hand, a projection by the World Poverty Clock compiled by the Brookings Institute indicates that more than 643 million people across the globe live in extreme poverty, with Africa accounting for about two-thirds of the total number including Nigeria. This figure will likely rise before 2030 (World Bank, 2018). This report also placed Nigeria as the poorest country in the world taking over from India.

According to the (NBS, 2019), the unemployment rate in the country has also made the poverty rate to sky-rocket. As at 2019, a total of 23.1 percent of Nigerians were unemployed. This geometric jump especially in 2018 and 2019 shows that despite the concerted efforts, not much had been achieved towards reducing unemployment which also lead to further reduction in the poverty level in the country. Also, as a result of the negative development trends and unemployment resulting in poverty, the life expectancy of Nigerians also decreased when compared with other countries, even those most hit by crisis and war.

Table 2: History of Unemployment Rate in Nigeria

Years	Unemployment Rate	Annual Change
2015	4.31%	-0.25%
2016	7.06%	2.75
2017	8.39	1.33%
2018	8.45%	0.06%
2019	8.53%	0.06%
2020	9.01%	0.48%

Source: Author's Creation, 2021

Table 3: Life Expectancy of Nigeria Compared with other Countries

Country	Life Expectancy at Birth	Expected Years of Schooling	Gender Inequality Index
Libya	72.7	12.8	0.172
Nigeria	54.3	9.7	NA
Syrian Arab Republic	71.8	8.9	0.547
Rwanda	68.7	11.2	0.412
Sudan	65.1	7.7	0.560
Haiti	63.7	9.5	0.620
Afghanistan	64.5	10.1	0.575
Yemen	66.1	8.7	0.834
Liberia	63.7	9.6	0.651
Pakistan	67.1	8.5	0.547
Iraq	70.5	11.1	0.540

Source: HDR, UNDP

Source: HDR, UNDP, 2018

Governments in the country, over the years, especially immediately after the inauguration of the fourth republic, have initiated a number of poverty reduction programmes ranging from National Poverty Eradication programmes to the current N-Power programme, but without concomitant reduction in the poverty level in the country. The inability of these programmes to achieve the set aims forms part of the reasons this research is conducted.

UNDP Sustainable Livelihood Programmes and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

The LDCs have experienced natural and climate-related disasters (both rapid onset disasters and droughts), pandemic and conflicts. It is good to note that over half of the LDCs are subject to multiple crises, in addition to poverty, volatility of commodity prices and aid flows, and severe structural challenges. The macroeconomic impact of these episodes of extreme drought and flooding is not only significant by itself but also exacerbates the impact on poverty in the context of conflict or early conflict recovery (UNDP, 2018).

To curb these challenges, the UNDP's resilience approach aims to reduce development risks, prevent crises, avert major development setbacks and promote human security. This approach provided an impetus to closely align climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction frameworks in livelihood support and to production policy advice on these intersecting areas with a risk-sensitive approach to poverty reduction.

In Nigeria, the UNDP launched several sustainable livelihood programmes geared towards helping the poor during crises situation and give them a comfortable and meaningful life. For instance, environmental challenges like greenhouse emissions, ozone layer depletion, soil erosion and afforestation, among, come about as a result of human interaction with the immediate environment. These interactions are shaped by different characteristics from place to place and people to people (UNDP Annual Report, 2015). In 2015, through the UNDP support to the National Ozone Office of the Federal Ministry of Environment under the HCFC Phase-out Management Plan (HPMP) of the Montreal Protocol (MP) on substances that deplete the ozone layer, a hydrocarbon plant for the production of high grade hydrocarbon refrigerants was constructed and commissioned in Irolu, Ikenne LGA of Ogun State. It used locally available Liquid Purified Gas (LPG) as the raw material and was expected to produce hydrocarbons (HCFC) being used in the refrigeration and air conditioning industry (UNDP Annual Report, 2015).

UNDP and Elections in Nigeria: electoral violence has been associated with electoral processes in Nigeria for a long time. Although the nature of this violence has varied from place to place, the common causes have traced to intra-party disputes, inter-party feuding, campaign methods, allegations of vote-rigging and subsequently disputed election outcomes. A number of factors have affected elections in the past, notably, the existing level of insecurity in the country at the time, pronouncement by political leaders prior to the conduct of the polls, threats and counter threats of boycotts, violence and general absence of peace (UNDP Annual Report, 2015).

UNDP's support to the electoral process prior to the 2011 elections had followed the traditional approach of mainly logistic support to the pre and operational phases of the election, support to civic and voter education, enhancement of participation of women and youths in politics. By 2015, the support was expanded further to include major support to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) especially in the area of Information Communication Technology (ICT). In the 2012-2015 cycle however, through the second phase of the Democratic Governance of Development (DGD II) project, UNDP support was significantly transformed with a more robust theory of change. However, the focus of the UNDP's support in the 2015 elections was:

- i) enhancing participation and inclusion of women and youth in electoral processes
- ii) strengthening civil society's advocacy and sensitization capacity
- iii) establishing and strengthening platforms for dialogue and conflict prevention
- iv) building new partnerships at both state and federal levels for enhanced democratic governance
- v) development of policy and legal framework that would strengthen confidence in the electoral process.

Working in partnership with the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), together with the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), an independent civil society network, UNDP supported and facilitated a number of strategic stakeholder dialogues aimed at promoting peace in the run, up to, during and after the 2015 elections in Nigeria. The initiative brought stakeholders in the election including traditional and religious leaders, political party leaders, representatives of academic institutions, CSOs, the media and the electrical body (INEC).

Strengthening National Capacity to Respond to Disasters and Conflicts: in all climes, man-made and natural disasters are inevitable. Nigeria continues to experience these disasters in diverse magnitudes. The country is vulnerable to shocks both internal and external as a result of structural conditions which act as drivers of macroeconomic vulnerability. It is this vulnerability that threatens the country's potential to achieve its long term development goals. National disasters especially those that are climates induced continue to expose countries to conditions that jeopardize their livelihoods, household and natural food security.

In order to help support the fight against the effect of climate change, the UNDP supported the launch of the country's National Climate Change Policy (UNDP, 2015). The policy served as a guide for the implementation of future actions on climate change in the country. Going further, it is expected to guide all sectors towards achieving the goal of low carbon, high growth and resilient socio-economic systems for equitable socio-economic and environmental development. The UNDP also supported the Federal Ministry of Environment in the training of climate change negotiators along with their counterparts from other African countries. The participants were able to develop a common position on climate change challenges and how they can address its adverse effect on the continent's population's livelihood (UNDP, 2015).

With the overall goal of supporting national efforts aimed at conflict prevention and peace-building, UNDP undertook a number of initiatives at both national and sub-national levels. Their intervention sought to identify pro-poor approaches to improving livelihood as a means of conflict prevention, and promoting community dialogue as a means of facilitating peaceful resolution of conflicts. UNDP conducted trainings targeted at traditional rulers in the South East, focusing on conflict prevention and peace building. This intervention was key to ensuring that the local leadership understand and appreciate the many channels and approaches for resolving conflict within their kingdoms. This effort also contributed to ensuring that the traditional structures were engaged on the need for peaceful elections period.

Early Recovery and Livelihood Support to Victims of Insurgency in Nigeria: more than eight years of insurgency in the North East of Nigeria has resulted in loss of lives, displacement of people, disruption of livelihood and destruction of property. The crisis has directly affected more than 14.8million people in Borno, Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe states. UNDP Nigeria Country Office co-led the Early Recovery and Livelihoods Sector Working Group (ER&LSWG) with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). The ER&LSWG is one of the ten sector working groups established by the Humanitarian Coordination Team (HCT) under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator in 2015 (UNDP, 2015).

Early recovery is critical in allowing the gains of the programme action to be more sustainable. It provides a foundation for resilience and ensures continuity towards longer-term development objectives. As the co-lead with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), for the Early Recovery and Livelihood Sector Working Group (ER&LSWG), UNDP supported the early recovery through coordination role at the country level and UNDP programme approach. The working group supports national efforts aimed at restoring normalcy to the affected regions under UNDPs four areas:

- * Debris and waste-management – handling of solid waste to reduce public health risks,
- * mine-action – mine clearance and risk education for people returning to contaminated areas,
- * Economic recovery and livelihood – emergency livelihoods through cash for work/unconditional transfers,
- * Recovery shelter – clearing damaged buildings and making them safe to help returnees with recovery shelter.

The UNDP conducted Debris and Waste Management assessment in 2015. It was discovered that there was wide scale damage to homes and public buildings in the North East as a result of the conflict. For example, in Yobe state alone, more than 20,000 structures had been either destroyed or damaged. The debris from damaged buildings is a health and safety risk to returnees and an obstacle for their safe return unless measures are undertaken for its removal. Within the assessment period, recommendation was given for the initiation and scale up of a comprehensive labour intensive debris clearing and recycling programme. This in a long-run provided emergency employment as well as opportunities to recovery and the recycling of many valuable materials resulting in long term sustainable solutions.

A Case of UNDP's Integrated Community Stabilization Programmes in North East Nigeria

The North East region of the country comprises Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states. It was one of the economically viable regions in the country from the 1960 to the late 1970s. Prior to the discovery of oil in Nigeria, cash crop from the region significantly contributed to the economic growth of the country. Such crops like groundnuts (peanuts); cotton and coffee. These farming activities helped the farmers to be engaged in productive agriculture which generated decent income for them. However, overtime, the fortunes of the region have been negatively affected by radicalization through violent extremism and degradation of the natural environment.

The year-long conflict in the region and its effect on neighbouring countries like Cameroon, Chad and Niger left over 10 million people displaced by 2017 with 1.7 million internally displaced in Nigeria, with approximately 155,000 Nigerians as refugees (UNDP, 2017). The conflict has also resulted in massive destruction of basic infrastructure, health and educational facilities, commercial buildings, private houses and agricultural asserts. In three states of (Adamawa, Borno and Gombe) where the target of the programme intended to cover, the total damage was estimated at \$8.93 billion with the bulk of the losses (79%) attributed to agriculture (\$3.7 billion) and private housing (\$3.32 billion). Damage to private enterprises was also significant at \$0.9 billion or 10 percent of total damage (RPBA, 2016).

Causes of Conflict: over the years, poverty level in Nigeria has been high after the oil boom of the 1970s. By 2015, over 64 percent of the population lived below poverty line. Nigeria's Human Development Index in 2015 was 0.514, placing it at 152 of 188 countries ranked in that year (HDI Report, 2015). Also, the geographical disparity in the country is demonstrated by differences in social development indicators among the 36 states with North East states consistently bringing up the rear. Poverty and hunger have remained high in rural areas, remote communities and among female-headed households. A combination of religious and socio-cultural factors is implicated in persistent low literacy levels. An estimated 3 million children are in need of education assistance in the three states.

The current conflict has worsened pre-existing issues of underdevelopment and local governance gaps, which were key drivers of the conflict. Following 2014, conflict and displacement have eroded and in some cases, ruptured the bonds and relationships between and within groups and

communities. Intra-communal structures and processes that traditionally regulated violence and resolved conflict have been weakened. There are signs of several fragmentations as tensions based on ethno-religious, social and other dimensions including between Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and the host communities in some areas, are emerging as the crisis continues. In fact, more worrisome is the activities of the dreaded Boko Haram sect whose motive of attacks is not clearly defined.

Livelihood Situation: as at 2016, the UNDP conducted a detailed post-conflict livelihood assessment. The result showed the extent of suffering of the population in the North East. Of the over 3,500 household sampled in the three states, 86 percent spent more than they earned. Moreover, 30 percent of households were economically inactive. Also, the average income per household and month in 2016 stood at \$ 60, which translated to an average income of \$0.4 per day per person (UNDP, 2017). This figure, which is significantly below the official poverty base line of \$1.9 per day, explains why 46 percent of households borrow money to buy food. It further explains the impending livelihoods and food crisis in the country.

Most importantly, income from labour dropped from 21 percent before the crisis to under 5 percent within the assessment year. Without immediate and significant support to economic revitalization, this situation will be difficult to turn around. The assessment also revealed that 23 percent of the households are headed by women, further pointing to the importance of targeted support to the womenfolk.

Response to the Situation: international assistance provided to the North East has experienced significant improvement since the 2nd half of 2016. Before the assessment, about 1 million vulnerable persons had been provided with needed food items and other sectors of aids also increased their support though limited by fund. On its part, the UNDP, in the course of 2016 launched a number of pilot programmes for early recovery in the North East in partnership with Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (MRRR) in Borno state and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Adamawa and Yobe states supported by the government of Japan, Norway, Switzerland and USAID. These programmes were in the areas of reconstruction of public infrastructure and housing; livelihood diversification and creation of economic opportunities and enhanced social cohesion and reconciliation.

Within this framework, a lot of schools and healthcare facilities were rebuilt in Kaga, Mata, Ngala, Damboa, Hawul LGAs in Borno. Opportunities were also provided for emerging employment. Also, about 1,300 farmers were empowered to restart their businesses in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states. In order to bring peace and reconcile war factions and communities, four mediation networks in 10 communities were established targeting 80 religious leaders. This network reached out to about 1 million people through community-focused radio and other sensitization programmes.

Recent Interventions: Solar Lanterns to Light up Conflict Affected Communities/Covid-19 Response

The UNDP's in 2018 introduced the solar lantern projects in the conflict affected states in the North East of Nigeria. As a result of the destruction of electrical lines, some communities in the crisis region had been without electricity. Recognizing this, the UNDP through its Sustainable Livelihood Programmes launched the above project to light up the area and bring back livelihood to the residents once again.

The solar lantern programme of the UNDP is in partnership with Panasonic, a Japanese company. The company donated 900 solar lanterns which were distributed to communities that suffered the

most damage to power infrastructure in the region and this was done through the UNDP project funded by the government of Japan (UNDP, 2018).

Under its support to Reconciliation and Reintegration initiative, the UNDP funded by the European Union in 2021, embarked on the process of strengthening local infrastructure for peace to contribute to effective community transitions from conflict. In Bama, Borno State, a community-based social cohesion platform was established collaboratively between the Borno State government and International organization for Migration (IOM) (UNDP, 2021). The creation and continuous capacity building of the platform has been a needed development in the town because it has helped to promote cooperation in the community. This programme enhanced stability through the provision of alternative to violence and enhanced social cohesion.

To help the Nigerian government battle the scourge of Covid-19 in the country, the UNDP in partnership with the government of Japan donated three ambulances to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to help in the fight against the spread of Covid-19 in the country. Apart from the above, the sum of N1.3 billion was contributed from the UNDP and government of Japan which went for the procurement of medical equipment to aid healthcare response in the country (UNDP, 2021).

The Prebendal Politics Explanation of Poverty Persistence in Nigeria

In a classic 1987 study of Nigeria, the political scientist, Richard Joseph argued that the country's political culture was strongly influenced by the fact that holding public office provided officials with access to resources and that the theft of such resources went unpunished. Joseph called this system "prebendalism" linking it with the European Feudal practice. He used the prism of prebendalism to look at the permanent struggle in Nigeria over access to public resources which structures the way Nigerians perceive citizenship, shapes the country's complex and sometimes contentious ethnic dynamics and contributes to growing social inequality.

Prebendalism refers to a political system whereby elected officials and government workers feel they have a right to a share of government resources and use them to benefit their supporters, co-religionist and members of their ethnic groups. According to Joseph (1987), the state offices are regarded as prebends that can be appropriated by office holders, who use them to generate material benefits for themselves and their constituents and kin groups, to the detriment of others especially the disadvantaged ones. As a result of this kind of patron-client or identity politics, Nigeria has consistently been one of the lowest ranked nations for political transparency by Transparency International in its corruption perception index.

Prebendalism is the pattern of behaviour that justifies the pursuit of and use of public office for the personal gains of the office-holder and his clients. People in this category assume that the office they occupy is for the enrichment of self, not to serve the people. For example, a local government chairman who is elected to serve the interest of his people first of all seeks the interest of self. However, this attitude may be due to the political culture that his/her predecessors have practiced or could be as a result of class struggle, i.e. wanting to be just like some other persons thereby making the office occupants to do things that are outside the regular conventions. For instance, a Nigerian who occupies an office, apart from seeking the interest of self, disburses the benefits of the office to his/her ethnic group or ethnic-based clients. In Nigeria, public offices are seen as prebends for a particular ethnic group. This is why there is usually the struggle to occupy public offices especially at the national level. This scenario led to the unconstitutional rotational presidency practice in Nigeria. It is a convention that the office of the Nigerian president should revolve around the three major ethnic groups of Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. Apart from the minority

ethnic groups, the Igbo ethnic group have not occupied the office of the president especially since the return to civilian administration in 1999. Therefore, if by 2023 an Igbo man becomes the president of Nigeria, it would be seen as the government for the Igbos and hence the Igbos as a group will likely benefits more.

As a result of the motive behind the desire to occupy public offices, the official purpose for the occupation of any office becomes secondary while the satisfaction of personal and client interest becomes the primary concern of the occupant and his/her clients. A prebendal state is highly unstable, hence the aspiration to build a capable state, a democratic system and a coherent nation are ultimately halted by prebendal practices. This means that no matter how a handful of determined individuals try to change the narrative, the impact may not be felt because of the prebendal tendencies of the vast majority.

Based on the standpoint of the prebendal politics framework of analysis, it is worrisome that despite the huge financial commitment of the UNDP and that of the Nigerian government, poverty rate still soars in the country. Over the years, the UNDP have supported the Nigerian government with both financial and material aids. However, sometimes, most of these funds found their way into the hands of politicians, county representatives, presidential or governor's assistants attached to the UNDP offices. These folks see their appointment or position as an opportunity to enrich themselves and not that of helping the UNDP to reduce poverty, as they embezzle and divert projects meant for a particular location to that of their ethnic groups.

It may not also be wrong to state that the diversion of these funds into the pockets of public office holders for their selfish end, have had deliberating effects on development and poverty reduction activities, fight against inequality and unhealthy rivalry as well as competition for public offices. Therefore, the conditions of poor Nigerians are seen in the behaviour and actions of Nigerian elites and those in positions of authority who divert monies meant for development to themselves and their ethnic nationalities, to the continuous impoverishment of the greater number of poor (masses). This negative practice is evident in the persistent high rate of poverty despite concerted actions of the successive Nigerian governments and other development partners like the UNDP.

In many instances, even when economic growth is achieved, it is only the well-placed and government officials that enjoy the proceeds. This wealth created by the state are not redistributed to all facets of the society and Joseph (1987) termed this “prebendal state” where he described the features of neo-patrimonialism, where people, especially elected government officials, assume ownership of government revenue. This interplay however made the UNDP in its 2008-2009 report to assert that Nigeria is an embodiment of systemic structure of inequality in which only 20 percent of the population own 65 percent of national assets while over 70 percent of the population are rural workers and artisans. This action translates into few decent jobs, dearth of infrastructure, institutional failure in key sectors including education, health and transportation.

The analogous description of the connection between poverty and the prebendal nature of the Nigerian state could be drawn from the fact that most of the poverty reduction programmes in Nigeria are not totally tailored towards helping the poor but also to service the interest of the public office holders in the country. The poverty situation in the country today is also a result of the class character of the Nigerian elites and public office holders. Therefore, the relationship between these oligarchs in the country and the UNDP as it relates to poverty reduction seems to aim at making people who are rich to be richer, more capitalists while on the other hand, creating more poor masses in the country.

In Nigeria, people who are rich do not want to be poor and those who are poor want to be like the rich. In the light of this, Joseph used the prism of prebendalism to look at the permanent struggle in Nigeria for access to public resources, hence there is scramble for any available resource resulting in mismanagement and misappropriation. However, the ineffectiveness of poverty reduction programmes in the country does not in any way suggest that the UNDP, and IDAs have not done enough, but poverty persists because of the attitude and ineptitude of the Nigerian government and the private citizens. It is important we summarize as follows:

- * UNDP cannot implement poverty reduction programmes in Nigeria without the involvement of the Nigerian government and Nigerians. It is through this partnership that government agents and individuals siphon funds and try to influence the location of certain projects to favour a particular region or group. In the final analysis, those who end up benefiting may likely not be the target group.
- * There are instances where the beneficiaries of the UNDP programmes, mostly those that involve cash, disappear with the money without using it for the purpose it was meant for. Hence, poverty persists despite huge sums committed. A good example is the Conditional Cash Transfer programme of the UNDP.
- * People who work in government like the civil servants sometimes apply to be part of poverty reduction programmes. For instance, in the N-Power programme of the Federal Government, the office of the Minister of Finance once alleged that they have uncovered names of civil servants on the payroll of the programme. By so doing, it has unavoidably denied a good number of persons the opportunity to be benefit from the programme.
- * In Nigeria, people who are rich do not want to be poor and those who are poor want to be like the rich. In the light of this, Joseph (1987) used the prism of prebendalism to look at the permanent struggle in Nigeria for access to public resources hence there is scramble for any available resource.
- * The ineffectiveness of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria does not in any way suggest that the UNDP and other IDAs have not done enough but poverty persists because of the attitude and ineptitude of the Nigerian government and private citizens.

The Way Forward

Concerted Fight against Corruption: embezzlement of public funds has become the order of the day in Nigeria. The public sector is riddled with corruption and every individual who assumes public office first thinks of how he/she will make money and with this mind set, the office holder sees government monies as his/her own. To curb this and pave way for development and subsequent reduction on the rate of poverty in the country, the government must be sincere in its fight against corruption, not minding who is involved. Corruption fight should not only target members of the opposition party or those who served in previous governments but also turn the search light on current public office holders as well.

Inequality Gap: in Nigeria, the gap between the rich and the poor is so wide and this creates a situation where we have the extremely rich and the extremely poor in the society. As this situation persists, many people strive to be rich so as to level up with their contemporaries, hence the circle of looting of public offices continues as there is struggle for class attainment. There is need therefore to close the inequality gap in the country.

Provision of Social Amenities: in order to dissuade citizens from competing and struggling to sustain their livelihood, the government must be proactive in the areas of provision of basic services which would make life better, meaningful and enjoyable to the citizens. In the absence of basic service provision, the people resort to self-help hence engage in activities that undermine the drive of government towards attaining its development goals.

Ethnicity: Nigerians in public offices should first of all see themselves as Nigerians before considering themselves as Hausas, Yorubas, Igbos etc. With prebendal scenario continuously playing out, whatever the office holder does while in office will be to the benefit of the group he/she represents.

Social Reorientation: having had a negative orientation and mind set towards the things of government, and being influenced by the ethnic patronages, there is need to carry out social reorientation to change the mind-sets of Nigerians towards service, first to the general public rather than service to individual self or ethnic clients.

Conclusion

Nigerians see their positions as opportunity to take part of their national cake. Therefore, the position one occupies is first of all primarily seen as one that will service his interest and that of his client (ethnic group). We should however note that, it is not that the UNDP and other development partners that have not done enough in terms of provision of monies or initiation of poverty reduction programmes, poverty persists due to the behaviour and actions of Nigerian elites and the masses who see every little opportunity to serve as avenue to loot and enrich themselves and their ethnic clients, thereby robbing greater majority of their due. It is therefore safe to conclude that poverty can only be reduced or eliminated in the country when Nigerians themselves see public offices and positions as avenues to serve in order to better the lives of the people and not prebends

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