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AFRICA, GLOBALIZATION & DEVELOPMENT: IN SEARCH FOR CHIMERICAL CHANGE ?

Aliy, AbdulWahid Adebisi¹

&

Olabimpe, R. Adeyemi, (Mrs.)²

Abstract

The world today is divided between developed and developing countries. Incidentally most of the developing ones fall within African continent where daily life is determined by poverty, corruption, and conflict. Africa has not benefited from the economic gains of globalization for its development. One may like to ask: what went wrong in Africa? How could things have gone so badly wrong in Africa? Social conditions generally have indicated that there is failure of development in Africa even in the face of globalization. If Africa is lagging behind in terms of development there must be something wrong about Africa itself that is standing in the way of development. These and some other questions are what this paper sets to re-examine, with particular focus on the pace of development and its trend in Africa. It equally set to underscore what and how the phenomenon of globalization and development has eluded the continent. Like some other works in this area, it is observed that poverty, engendered by corruption as well as incessant conflict occasioned by poverty has been the bane of progress and by implication underdevelopment in Africa. While several policies have been idealized particularly the United Nations agencies, yet the problem of underdevelopment still remain with African. It is thus suggested that perhaps and unless African leaders take the politico-economic destiny of their states into their hands, search for development in Africa might be chimerical as the problem might continually live with them.

Key words: Africa, Globalization, Development, Chimera,³ poverty

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3. Chimera 2 (formal) an impossible idea or hope; Hornby, A.S. Seventh edition, Oxford Advanced learner's Dictionary of current English. Oxford University press. pg 246.

Introduction

After numerous false starts and inability to actualize the much-touted potentials of this great continent, it seems Africans are once again set on a journey to nowhere bereft of well-thought out fundamentals of the socio-political economy. The goal this time around is touted as leapfrogging the continent from nadir of hopelessness and underdevelopment to a rarified group of the most developed economies of the world. Of course, as it has been observed in some quarters that there is nothing bad in dreaming big, but there is everything wrong in seeking pies in the sky or a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.⁴

Reflection on the vision of development in Africa particularly with the trend of events where indiscipline and corrupt practices, self-doubts, mass disillusionment and deepening socio-economic and political crises, one is left to believe that there might not be any reason to be optimistic for development in Africa even at the face of globalization. Such will be chimerical as rightly noted in the topic of this discussion. This paper employs analytical approach in examining the level of development in Africa in spite of the realities of globalization that has caught up with every one over the years.

Pursuant to this, this paper intends to begin by examining the state of Africa in the context of globalization before attempt to properly situate development in Africa in the context of globalization. This will be followed by the assessment of the scorecards of growth and development in Africa in spite of all these quixotic and chimerical endeavours not borne out by the existential realities. It is however, hoped that at the end of this soul-searching experience, which the interrogation of the promise of development in Africa, there might be a certain desiderata in relation to the realization of African vision of development.

4. Oyeboade Akin 'The Vision 20:2020 & Nigerian Universities, being a text of convocation lecture presented at the 2nd Convocation Lecture, Kogi State University, Anyigba 10th October, 2008

Indices of Underdevelopment in Africa

Africa is the world's second-largest and second-most-populous continent today. Although it has abundant natural resources, Africa remains the world's poorest and most underdeveloped continent, the result of a variety of causes that may include corrupt governments that have often committed serious human rights violations, failed central planning, high levels of illiteracy, lack of access to foreign capital, and frequent tribal and military conflict (ranging from guerrilla warfare to genocide). According to the United Nations' Human Development Report in 2003, the bottom 25 ranked nations (151st to 175th) were all African.

Poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and inadequate water supply and sanitation, as well as poor health, affect a large proportion of the people who reside in the African continent. In August 2008, the World Bank announced revised global poverty estimates based on a new international poverty line of \$1.25 per day (versus the previous measure of \$1.00). 80.5% of the Sub-Saharan Africa population was living on less than \$2.50 (PPP) a day in 2005, compared with 85.7% for India.

The new figures confirm that sub-Saharan Africa has been the least successful region of the world in reducing poverty (\$1.25 per day); some 50% of the population living in poverty in 1981 (200 million people), a figure that rose to 58% in 1996 before dropping to 50% in 2005 (380 million people). The average poor person in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to live on only 70 cents per day, and was poorer in 2003 than he or she was in 1973 indicating increasing poverty in some areas. Some of it is attributed to unsuccessful economic liberalization programs spearheaded by foreign companies and governments, but other studies and reports have cited bad domestic government policies more than external factors.

From 1995 to 2005, Africa's rate of economic growth increased, averaging 5% in 2005. Some countries experienced still higher growth rates, notably Angola, Sudan and Equatorial Guinea, all three of which had recently begun extracting their petroleum

reserves or had expanded their oil extraction capacity. The continent is believed to hold 90% of the world's cobalt, 90% of its platinum, 50% of its gold, 98% of its chromium, 70% of its tantalite, 64% of its manganese and one-third of its uranium. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has 70% of the world's coltan, and most mobile phones in the world are made with elements refined from this mineral. The DRC also has more than 30% of the world's diamond reserves. Guinea is the world's largest exporter of bauxite. As the growth in Africa has been driven mainly by services and not manufacturing or agriculture, it has been growth without jobs and without reduction in poverty levels. In fact, the food security crisis of 2008 which took place on the heels of the global financial crisis has pushed back 100 million people into food insecurity.

An Overview of Globalization and Development in Africa

Globalization however, is the term some use to describe the growing worldwide interdependence of people and countries. This process has accelerated dramatically in the past decade or so, largely because of huge advances in technology. This growing worldwide integration has produced a whole series of consequences – economic, political, cultural, and environmental. Incidentally, some of these consequences are negative. The United Nations publication *Human Development Report 1999* explained: "people's lives around the globe are linked more deeply, more intensely, more immediately than ever before. This opens many opportunities, giving new power to good and bad⁵. Like many other human achievements, globalization has both an upside and a down side.

Globalization in its upside nature has become a catchword of our time, because it is a process that is greatly influencing the shape of the development process of the third world economy. Issues and policies that for a long time were the prerogative of the third world national governments are increasingly decided by or through

5. Akpotor, A. S. ed. 2005 *Deregulation and Globalization in Nigeria: Issues and Perspectives*, Benin City: Mora Mon Bros Ent. P15

international agencies such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Underlying the globalization of policy-making is the internalization of the economic, political, social, and cultural forces and models. Transnational companies have vastly expanded their activities and markets, and now account for an overwhelming share of worldwide production and distribution⁶.

In spite of the fact that apparently some developing countries in Africa and Asia have benefitted from their integration into the global economy, globalization picture is not all that rosy. In sub-Saharan Africa and some other less-developed regions, for example, income has actually decreased in the past 30 years. It is also apparent that Africa has not maximally benefited from the socio-economic gains of globalization.

The world today is divided between developed and developing countries. This has always been regarded in some quarters as curious because in reality, the developed ones are the truly developing, while the 'developing countries' is a euphemism for underdeveloped countries⁷. A number of glosses have been offered for the term 'development'. Development, in most people's mind today, immediately conjures up science and technology. Development, however in human society is a many sided process. It implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, (creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being⁸ (Rodney 1972). So, we can rightly posit that there has been development within human society since the origin of man, because man has multiplied enormously his capacity to win a living from nature.

Development is a multidimensional process which involved major changes in social, structures, popular attitudes and national institutions. It is also an acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty⁹. On

6. Enejo, in Menegbe *et al* Cultural Renaissance...52

7. Banjo, A. 2008 'Cultural Renaissance & National Development in the 21st Century', in

the other hand conceives development as capacity expansion. According to him, development requires adequate empowerment of the state and the society such that they can adequately distill their complimentary responsibilities¹⁰.

Development requires an enhanced state capacity and institutional and governmental stability. This will ensure societal fulfillment in terms of the basic necessities of life. The undertone of development is man and society and the capacity to build and sustain the material well being inherent in the society through a process of struggle. Therefore, if we must accept the above thesis, African nation must be seen to have to a reflection of common culture & understanding, common aspirations and sentiments and above all civil ideology.

Scorecards of Development in Africa

In the light of the foregoing, the three questions that are key to success in life, which is apposite to our discussion here, are: where we coming from? Where are we now? And where are we going? These questions are considered key because when focusing on the mundane development, the transient or the transcendental, we need to study our past, assess our present and thereby assure and redeem our future. Let's ask ourselves: Dear Africans, where are we coming from? Where are we now? And where are we going?

African Past

Casting an eye-bird view of the African past, it has been observed that at least, trans-Saharan and the trans-Atlantic slave trade, for example have had some considerable bearing on the subsequent history of this continent, whereby the forced migration has serious demographic and by implication socio-economic implications for this part of the globe. This is because, it has been convincingly shown, for example that the process of dissolution of pre-colonial technologically integrated productive system started with the export of slave trade¹¹. On the other hand, the technological and

Ahmadu Bello University Inaugural Lecture Series, p1

12. Roel van der Veen, (2003) 'What Went Wrong in Africa', in *Institute of Social Science Development Issue*, Volume 5, Number 3

13. Roel van der Veen, (2003) 'What Went Wrong in Africa...

other scientific breakthroughs attained by Europe and America were made possible by the labour provided by slaves, some of whom originated from Africa.

It is pertinent to mention that migration of a virile segment of Africa's population to Europe and America has continued to the present day, resulting in what is popularly referred to as 'brain drain'. Those involved in this migration in one form or the other are trained at great cost by the African government and people whose skills are lost to the continent. This and many other phenomena made some scholars to conclude that Europe has underdeveloped Africa.

Africa Today

While some scholars are of the view that the colonial legacy has continued to shape the socio-political and cultural destiny of Africa, which has in turn wrought woes to the most populous continent of Africa, others will like to disagree. It is equally observed that neo-colonialism has also continued to constitute a stumbling block in the road of development in Africa. At first sight, Africa did not seem to be in a worse position than the other non-western continents of Asia and Latin America, which together used to be called the 'Third World'¹².

In the last fifty years, despite rapid population growth, a reasonable standard of living has come within reach of most people. The percentage of poor has fallen to around 20% of the still expanding global population. In recent decades, people everywhere, on all continents, have seen their living standards improve, except in Africa. The percentage of poor in Africa has risen, not fallen¹³.

When the cold war ended, the dissatisfaction of the people in African countries came to the surface expressed in the wave of democratization, where many groups demanded change of policy. Although, variety of measures were taken to improve the

14. Roel van der Veen, (2003) 'What Went Wrong in Africa...

15. Sirajudeen Adebayo Adam 2014 'Quest for Empowerment & Imperatives of Transformation, an unpublished invited lecture series,

functioning of the state, such as strengthening governance capacity, combating corruption, promoting the rule of law, and supporting civil society organizations. All of these factors combined to generate a force – from both within African societies and from the international community – for renewal of the state. This push towards rebuilding the state aimed to counteract the process of state disintegration¹⁴. The outcome of the current struggle between state disintegration and state building determines the future of African countries and regions where there are various kinds of social problems.

For instance, in some other parts of the Sub-Saharan Africa, numerous factors have led to the revolutionary wave, demonstration and protests. This include issues such as dictatorship or absolute monarchy, human rights violations, government corruption (demonstrated by Wikileaks diplomatic cables), economic decline, unemployment, extreme poverty, and a number of demographic structural factors, such as a large percentage of educated but dissatisfied youth within the population.

Also, some researchers attribute the 2009 Iranian protests as one of the reasons behind the Arab Spring. The catalysts for the revolts in all Northern African and Persian Gulf countries have been the concentration of wealth in the hands of autocrats in power for decades, insufficient transparency of its redistribution, corruption, and especially the refusal of the youth to accept the status quo. Increasing food prices and global famine rates have also been a significant factor, as they involve threats to food security worldwide and prices that approach levels of the 2007–2008 world food price crises. Amnesty International singled out Wikileaks release of US diplomatic cables as a catalyst for the revolts.

Generally, the reasons for all this unrest is completely economical and non political as huge unemployment & inflation created strong dissatisfaction against the rulers. In recent decades rising living

16. Mahadi, Abdullahi, 1997 Colonial/Neo-Colonial Education and Underdevelopment in

standards and literacy rates, as well as the increased availability of higher education, have resulted in an improved human development index in the affected countries. The tension between rising aspirations and a lack of government reform may have been a contributing factor in all of the protests.

Whereas development means investing in people, better education, better healthcare delivery, better working conditions, and increasing their capacity to grasp opportunities and participate in a meaningful way. In other words, sustainable poverty reduction and sustainable development need to be underpinned by thinking about and including human rights. This follows that there must be a well planned educational system as well as healthcare delivery if sustainable development must come ones way. Let us examine how far Africa has gone in these two fundamental phenomena.

Education

Education is a crucial instrument for producing the needs of society and reproducing society, an instrument for transmitting culture, in all its ramifications, as conceived by the dominant social forces. Education and educational institutions have thus been always central to development and social control in all societies – pre-colonial, through colonial and post-colonial. Nevertheless, proper educational reform is an indispensable tool to guide the nation's growth and development so as to be able to channel it into the desired direction. The heavy reliance on the transferred educational policy has greatly affected our education where there is no recourse to our indigenous cultural background. The paradigm shift attention to science and technology today without recourse to morality aspect of it has continued to prove the ineptitude of our educational policy as it does not avail us of the dividends of educated entities. Besides, what we have is just bulk of educated elites whose intellectual economy is no more than uneducated illiterates as noted earlier.

It is true that there are issues, which affect Africa people, such as access to education, employment, health care and social services. It is equally worthy of note that whenever one of these

abovementioned challenges is overcome, it will invariably ameliorate the other two. Put differently, whenever the problem of education, for instance is solved, health and wealth creation will be a thing of the past. The major problem we are facing however is what was described in some quarters¹⁵ as poverty of mind, or better still intellectual poverty

There is no gainsaying the fact that no individual or nation whose education as well as intellectual economy is a standard one will suffer in terms of wealth creation as health sector. Incidentally, Nigerian educational system has suffered the required standard for its citizenry, hence we have a lot of uneducated literates whose intellectualism could not avail them of untold economic banality and social hardships.

It has been observed that the major features of colonial education in Africa could be summed up in the assertion that 'there was no relationship between what average Africans was being geared to learn and what was obtained in the immediate society to which he was to return'. In fact westernization, which has characterized African colonial/neo-colonial educational policies, has made Africans perpetually dependent, as Tai Solarin aptly observes 'behind the veil of the (imposed) curriculum, - lies the grand design to keep Africans in perpetual dependence'¹⁶.

Right from the primary school level up to the university, African educational system has always been promoting the development of mental enslavement.

Healthcare Delivery

In many developing countries, most of which are found mainly in Africa for instance, there is a lack of information and services available to help understand their sexuality and prevent the spread of HIV. Although early pregnancy has declined in many countries,

Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello University Inaugural Lecture Series...

17. Remi S. Longe, 'The Relationship Between Unemployment, Education and Economy: An International Comparison', in *Education & Development: Journal of the Nigerian Educational Research Council*, Vol. 4, No. 1 & 2, July 1984, p. 5

18. Youth 21... 9

its attendant dangers and potential complications particularly in the use of pills etc, are still of concern to stakeholders.

The HIV/AIDS scourge for example is another aspect of health challenges in many of the developing regions mainly Africans. Ten million young people currently live with HIV/AIDS, mostly in Africa and Asia. Poverty (wealth), the lack of essential information to protect themselves (knowledge), stigma, access to education and gender inequality are just a few of the elements that fuel the vulnerability of youth in this scourge. Young women and girls are particularly at risk and disproportionately serve as caregivers when families and communities are devastated by HIV/AIDS.

Young people also have serious concerns that they are not benefitting from general health care and awareness-raising campaigns because of the beliefs of families and health professionals. Some know they have been denied treatment because of their poverty, with families choosing to prioritize their non-disabled brothers and sisters for medical help. However, the attitudes of health professionals are of greatest concern for many young people. Their lack of awareness means that they often fail to see how youth are missing out on important information.

The Future of Africa

In order to obtain the desired developmental strata in Africa there is need for us to ensure efficiency in the areas of education and other social services, which will take care of unemployment rate as well as some other indices of development in Africa.

Functional Education is an essential element for a substantial number of young people in developing countries. Although the global youth literacy rate increased from 84 per cent during the period 1985-1994 to 89 per cent during 2000-2006, progress has been uneven, with youth literacy rates below 80 per cent recorded in sub-Saharan Africa and in Southern and Western Asia. Secondary enrolment levels are as low as 25 per cent in some Pacific countries and 16 per cent in parts of Asia, but the lowest

rates are found among youth in Africa.

In a situation where there is functional education as enumerated above, there is tendency that the health sector as well as wealth creation will be taken care of. An instance is when a graduate of a particular course of study obtains standard but functional education, such a graduate will be able to be self employed, create wealth, and take good care of his health which will in turn contribute directly and indirectly to the development.

Despite the fact that youth are receiving more years of education, youth unemployment has increased to record levels and youth are two to three times as likely as adults to be unemployed. The youth unemployment rates are highest in sub-Saharan Africa and in the Middle East and North Africa regions. The difficulties young people face in finding suitable employment with a decent income are compounded by other problems including illiteracy, insufficient training and the difficult transition from school to the job market.

Unemployment is described by the International Labour Office to comprise variously of those who are available for employment but their contract is either temporarily terminated or suspended; persons available for work (but for minor illness and or have been previously employed) or have been in retirement; as well as those persons without job and currently available for work but have not got any.¹⁹

Employment is an integral part of the transition to adulthood and plays a central role in the social integration of African people. It provides people with economic security and facilitates their participation in society at multiple levels in a positive way. Youth access to employment essentially translates into income and resource access, both of which are pivotal to shaping adaptive capacity. Youth's participation in the economic life of the society,

19. See External Imperatives in Nigeria: Path to Sustainable Democracy, (Oseni et al eds.) Obafemi Awolowo Foundation 2000

20. Banjo A. 2008 Cultural Renaissance & National Development in the 21st Century, in

for instance is also increasing its purchasing power and serves as potential taxpayers¹⁸.

Social condition in the developing countries of sub-saharan Africa presents a startling paradox despite a rich endowment of natural and human resources the continent is poor. For decades African have struggled to improve socio-economic conditions, which have declined despite increasing revenue from the natural resources as well as human resources. The growing incidence and the dynamics of poverty in these regions have stratified and polarized African society between the haves and the have nots, the north and the south, the educated and the uneducated, and the list is endless. Poor parents beget poor children thereby creating a kind of dynasty of the poor. The resulting tensions and social conflicts have eroded the fabric that held society together. The challenge is not only to reform the economy in order to boost economic growth but revitalizing the weakened social pillar.

Epilogue

It will be more rewarding to preface this epilogue by referring to the earlier focus in the introduction of this paper particularly by provoking thoughts and reflections on the issues of growth and development in Africa...It may be apposite here to ask ourselves some questions, rhetorically anyway to see how transformation strategies could avail us of underdevelopment in Africa. Are we on the upward growth path of our development? what is our performance indicators and feelers indicating? What are the economic strategies that we should undertake and how do we accelerate the process against the backdrop of time line that is fast running out? How do we develop appropriate strategies to eliminate poverty of all kinds-disease poverty, squalor, intellectual... these are some among many questions that flickered in mind right away that will engage our focus and attention.

They are also questions that as true lovers of Africa should reflect upon in our private and public spheres. It should as a matter of fact

engage our honest interpretation and until we are ready to address the issues at stake, we may continue to wallow in the dungeon of poverty- God forbids!. A cursory look at the term transformation however, suggests that a particular state of being has been attained and there is need for better form, which requires a number of factors to bring such desire into bare. Hence, this paper sees transformation as being synonymous with growth and development. If this idea is welcome, then the interchange use of transformation to mean development will be employed here. Besides, transformation may equally indicate here a further step on development. Hence, improvement on growth and development could also be employed here to interpret transformation.

It is not advisable to continue with the indirect dependency policy in the socio-political, economic, as well as intellectual crutches borrowed from somewhere. Besides, it is not also imperative for us to shrug off the prevailing colonial mentality prevalent among the policy-makers regarding things as varied as building construction, equipment maintenance or football, such an attitude casts a slur on our claim to leadership in Africa and, possibly, the rest of the developing world¹⁹.

It has been declared in some quarters that the twenty-first century is the Africa's century, because if Africa does not make it this century, it is highly unlikely that it will ever make it. Friends of Africa in Europe and America are, for this reason intensifying their interest in Africa, realizing, of course that an irretrievable failure of Africa would have serious implications for the 'global village'²⁰. It has to be realized however, that the continent cannot be developed unless the people are developed, and they can only be developed if, fully rooted in their own culture, they are empowered 'to be hospitable to experience wherever it comes from. And here Africanness in all our endeavours have a key role to play, provided

it is adequately allowed to play that role unfettered.

Accordingly there is an urgent need for Africa to revise the assumptions underlying development. It is self-evident that nothing is done except it was done right. Even at that, realization of the goal would well-nigh be impossible without a well-conceived blueprint based on our experience as a neo-colonial dependency. It is observed that without massive investment in human capital development, all hope and desire to development can only be mere wishful thinking. There is need for Africans to re-invent and re-configure their positions and status vis-à-vis other international community as there is need for restoration of self-confidence in themselves.

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i. M. A. Kanu, (2010), "The Indispensability of the Basic Social Values in African Tradition: A Philosophical Appraisal", *OGIRISI: A New Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 7, p.151

ii B. Davidson, (1969), *The African Genius*. Boston: Little Brown, p.31.

iii. O. Onwubiko, (1991), *African Thought, Religion and Culture*, Enugu: Biggard Memorial Seminary, p.14.

iv. Davidson, op.cit, p.55.

v. 'Clan vital' - 'a living clan': is a community where real life is assured, where one can suffer neither social nor cultural alienation. It is a clan that is alive because life in it is human and humane.

vi. Steve Biko, (1987), *I write what I like*, New York:

Heinemann, p. 42.

vii. Davidson, op.cit., p.57.

viii. Biko, op.cit., p. 43.

ix. A beggar in this context is someone who is not accommodated in the elastic means of the community's life and resources. He is outside the "clan vital". He has no hope of survival.

x. F. C.Okafor, (1974), *Africa at Crossroads*, New York: Vantage Press, p.22.

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xii. Onwubiko, op.cit., p. 19.

xiii. C. Ifemesia, (1979), *Traditional Humane Living among the Igbo*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Company, p. 2.

xiv. Biko, op.cit., p. 41.

xv. Okafor, op.cit., p. 23.

xvi. Onwubiko, op.cit. p. 21.

xvii. E. Amadi, (1982), *Ethics in Nigerian Culture*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, p.58.

xviii. J. S. Mbiti, (1975), *Introduction to African Religion*, London: Heinemann Education Books Publishers, p.141.

xix. Okafor, op.cit., p. 21.

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