

NEXUS BETWEEN GROWTH, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA: EVIDENCE FROM THE DATA

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ABSTRACT

Against the background of the fact that global poverty rates have worsened over the years, the United Nations in its global development agenda for the next fifteen years plans to eliminate extreme global poverty. The fight against poverty and inequality through inclusive growth has thus emerged as a frontal issue in both economic, social and political discourse leading to the United Nations adoption of the global goals of sustainable development. It believes that eliminating the incidence of poverty, hunger and attaining optimum health in a sustainable manner for the population should be a global consensus that needs to be embraced by all nations. Though several nations have made progress in their attempt to grow, this has not impacted much on poverty reduction due to the fact that growth has not been inclusive. Using an ex-post facto research design analyzed through an auto regressive distributed lag model and co integration equation, this study finds that there is a weak long run relationship between growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction in Nigeria. There is also only a uni-directional causality between the human development index and sustainable development which has further heightened inequality worsening the poverty index of the country. This suggests that growth has not been substantial and inclusive enough to reduce the rate of poverty. There is an urgent need to re-structure public policy to focus on inclusive growth through increased access to the means of production which targets the largest proportion of the population. This is capable of lifting them out of the scourge of poverty and ensure that the country attains the global goal of total elimination of poverty and zero hunger as enunciated by the United Nations in its global development agenda. This must however be balanced against the efficient and prudent use of natural resources through sustainability for the present while considering future generations through preservation and conservation.

INTRODUCTION

Although the World Bank (2015) asserts that global poverty is decreasing, millions of people still do not have the resources they need to survive and live on. This is against the background of the fact that economic theories hold that as nations experience economic growth poverty levels are substantially reduced. These theories also believe that growth can drive inequality that generates social and economic problems if not properly articulated. This will happen when the growth process fails to cover a large segment of the population in terms of the decision process that affects production, distribution and consumption. In a broad sense, growth and development must evolve a system of sustainable consumption

and production which entails the use of factor inputs and natural resources to meet basic needs and bring about a better quality of life for the present, while minimizing the use of such natural resources and toxic materials, as well as the discharge of wastes and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations. (UNEP 2009).

Evidence suggests that poverty in Africa has been rising in the last quarter-century, while it has been falling in the rest of the developing world in spite of the huge natural resources that the continent has. Based on the report of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2008), of the 162 million "ultra poor" people in the world who subsist on less than \$0.50 a day, 121 million are found in sub-Saharan Africa. With a Gini coefficient of 51 per cent, Africa has the worst income distribution index in the world while its population is heavily burdened by poverty-related diseases. Karakezi, (2003), ECA (2015). The continent's distinctive problem is that its economies have not been growing to keep pace with its population growth, dwindling resources and poor rate of human capital development and this has great consequences for its development. The challenge of poverty reduction in Africa is indeed a daunting task because its poverty seem to be of a different order characterized by high incidence of inequality and unequal distribution of incomes as well as unbridled corruption compared to that of other regions, it therefore will require different strategies. Other low-income regions of the world may be growing rapidly but the issue is how to diffuse this growth through a redistribution of income that can radically reduce absolute poverty.

There is no doubting the fact that the world has made significant social and economic progress in terms of raising living standards for a large proportion of the people over the last couple of years, yet large segments of the population still live in abject poverty. The principal reason is that the rate of participation in the process of production, distribution and consumption of resources has remained abysmally poor and lopsided in many instances creating conditions for entrenched poverty. According to the World Bank, (2015), the result is that over two thirds of the population in most developing nations live on less than one dollar a day, do not have access to universal health care, are denied opportunities to education and have poor nutritional status measured by low calorie intake. Access to the means of production remains a key pathway of enabling individuals earn income that will remove them from the scourge of poverty. In order to stem this tide, the United Nations came up with the global agenda (21) of sustainable development where it hopes to eliminate extreme hunger, fight the scourge of poverty and reduce inequality. This probably is in recognition of what Kennedy (1963) once said *'If the free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich'*

There is no questioning the fact that widespread poverty and unemployment have persisted in Nigeria despite the numerous poverty reduction programmes that

have been adopted to fight this social malaise without a corresponding measure of success in spite of the preponderance of agricultural and natural resources that nature has endowed the nation with. One is quick to say that these programmes have either been wrongly or ill-conceived, poorly articulated or are poorly pursued through execution which has consequently yielded poor results leading to further pauperization of the people. Where a large proportion of the population lack or do not have access to the means of productive resources, there is the risk of over and certainly an un-sustainable rate of exploitation of the finite resource base of the environment especially by the less privileged and vulnerable groups often driven by the instinct of survival.

Several studies have been conducted on the rate, pace and inclusiveness of growth where a large proportion of people are expected to be lifted out of the incidence and scourge of poverty without discussing the risk or implications that such heightened rate and pace of exploitation has on the finite resources base of nations even for the short run. For example Haan and Throat (2013) opined that growth is pro-poor if it reduces poverty and inequality while enhancing the share of the poor but does not suggest the likely consequences of the over actions of these individuals in the growth process. Similarly, Kakwani and Pernia (2000), the World Bank (2009), Ianchaovina and Lundistoram (2010), McKinley (2010), Ramos and Raneiri (2013) and Vellala (2014) believe that policy actions should be focused on reducing inequality by creating new economic opportunities for the people. This they believe would ensure equal access to opportunities especially for the poor through employment generation, health, education and the benefits that flow there from. There is no explicit suggestion on how this can be done to guarantee survival of future generations through sustainability.

The above and several other studies however have not discussed the negative consequences of the extreme actions of individuals and even governments through competition which would endanger the sustainability of resources. In addition, little has been done to highlight the dire consequences of the actions of the present generation on the utilization of the earth's resources for their consumption without a consideration of the future. This clear departure sets the basis for this study which is intended to provide valuable information to nations on the need to pursue growth through sustainable exploitation of the limited resources of their environment and also bear in mind the fate of future generations bearing in mind the dire consequences of the unsustainable actions of the present.. One would ask: to what extent is the present rate of resource exploitation sustainable and what are the consequences of these actions on the environment to ensure the survival of generations yet unborn?. While not downplaying the need to pursue and promote inclusive growth that targets the pro-poor and the most vulnerable members of society, such growth should be pursued in a sustainable manner by not compromising the future. This study is intended to generate information about the weak nexus between growth,

sustainable development and poverty reduction so as to raise the level of consciousness of policy makers to act so as to balance present interest and survival of the future.

CONCEPTUAL AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of sustainable development has been—and still is—subject to criticism. For sure, sustainability has several dimensions and different meanings to different people. What, exactly, is to be sustained in sustainable development? It has been argued by scholars such as: Dyllick and Hockerts (2002), Faber. (2008), and Brown (2011), that there is no such thing as a sustainable use of a nonrenewable resource since any positive rate of exploitation will eventually lead to the exhaustion of earth's finite stock. This perspective renders the industrial revolution as a whole unsustainable. These scholars have also argued that the meaning of the concept has opportunistically been stretched from "conservation management" to "economic development" and that the concept is promoting nothing but a business as usual strategy for world development, with an ambiguous and insubstantial concept attached as a public relations slogan. Scholars such as Chivu and Stoinescu (2012) treat the concept of sustainable development as the link between economic growth, environmental sustainability and human development which they view from three dimensions-economic, social and environment. Humans interact with the environment to create the economic and social atmosphere that promotes optimum welfare

The idea of sustainable development has received extensive attention in the literature; however there is yet no consensus amongst scholars on its basic framework due to a lack of common ground on issues such as the problem of poverty, environmental degradation and the role of economic growth on sustainability. Scholars such as Adebakin (2015) see sustainable development as the type that recognizes the obligations of the present generations to the future. Perhaps the most critical aspect of development should focus on the welfare of the people and this is domiciled in agriculture. For sure, sustainable development focuses on economic posterity, effective environmental management and the social responsibility of the people in which they do not compromise on the ability of future generations to meet their needs while meeting their present needs. The basic philosophy of sustainable development is anchored on the belief that development should 'keep going'. This is emphasized through the creation of sustainable improvements in the quality of life of all peoples, increases in their real per capita income, improvements in their education, health and general quality of life. This is to be done through an improvement in the quality of the natural resource base of the environment.

Sustainable development, or sustainability, has been described in terms of three spheres, dimensions, domains or pillars, i.e. the environment, the economy and society. These three-sphere framework was initially proposed by the

economist René Passet in 1979. This has been expanded by some authors to include a fourth pillar of culture, institutions or governance, or alternatively reconfigured as four domains of the social - ecology, economics, politics and culture, thus bringing economics back inside the social, and treating ecology as the intersection of the social and the natural. An unsustainable situation occurs when natural capital (the sum total of nature's resources) is used up faster than it can be replenished. Sustainability requires that human activity only uses nature's resources at a rate at which they can be replenished naturally. Inherently the concept of sustainable development is intertwined with the concept of carrying capacity. Theoretically, the long-term result of environmental degradation is the inability to sustain human life. Such degradation on a global scale would imply an increase in human death rate which is considered a natural culling process until population falls to what the degraded environment can support. It is thus believed that if the degradation of the natural environment and its resources continue beyond a certain tipping point or critical threshold it would lead to eventual extinction for humanity.

Some scholars such as: Allen (2007), Lynn et al (2014) and Shaker (2015) have suggested that because of rural poverty and overexploitation, environmental resources should be treated as important economic assets, called natural capital. Economic development has traditionally required a growth in the gross domestic product. This model of unlimited personal and GDP growth may be over. Sustainable development thus involves improvements in the quality of life for many but may necessitate a decrease in resource consumption. According to the ecological economist Fabert (2008), ecological economics is defined by its focus on nature, justice, and time. Issues of intergenerational equity, irreversibility of environmental change, uncertainty of long-term outcomes, and sustainable development should guide ecological economic analysis and valuation.

According to the World Commission on Environment and development (1987), Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts: The concept of 'needs', in particular, the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs. As countries around the world continue to advance economically, they put a strain on the ability of the natural environment to absorb the high level of pollutants that are created as a part of this economic growth. Therefore, solutions need to be found so that the economies of the world can continue to grow, but not at the expense of the public good. In the world of economics the amount of environmental quality must be considered as limited in supply and therefore is treated as a scarce resource. There is need to re-generate these resources to support humanity.

Khan, Inamullah and Shams, (2009) suggest that this inter-generational justice would be impossible to achieve in the absence of present-day social justice if the economic activities of some groups of people continue to jeopardize the wellbeing of people belonging to other groups or living in other parts of the world. They cite examples such as excessive emission of greenhouse gases generated by industrialized nations which produces global warming in their process of production which leads to severe flooding of low lying islands thus displacing peoples in other parts of the world. While these advanced nations will be celebrating economic success, the low lying nations will be lamenting destruction and extinction. In this context, social justice should be defined as equality of opportunities for wellbeing both within and among generations of people and must focus on economic, social and environment. Only the development that manages to balance these three group of objectives can be considered sustainable. Ignoring anyone will be threatening the overall economic growth and the entire development process.

Some scholars of sustainable development such as Faber (2008), Shaker (2015) argue that it should not make present generation demand too much of the available resource stock to be used up without conservation for the future. Adebayo (2012) maintains that sustainable development include efforts of improving the environment or natural resources for the purpose of improving the quality of human life in a manner that the needs of future generations are not jeopardized. To be sure, sustainable development is the ability to preserve the existing resource base of nations for the collective use of the citizens while conscious efforts are made to conserve the resource for the use of future generations. Other scholars such as Ukaga (2010) hold the view that a common definition for the term sustainable development is often hard as different individuals see its basic underlying frame from different perspectives. However, deep below all these different views are issues that are common to all the various standpoints of what sustainable development really is. According to him, sustainable development revolve around core issues such as meeting the basic human needs fairly and efficiently and preserving options for both present and future generations to meet their own. According to UNEP (2009). *Mainstreaming Sustainable Consumption and Production and Resource Efficiency into Development Planning* they do also involve promoting community wellbeing based on broad participation, maintaining a diversity and productivity provided by nature. Humans must also be able to manage and utilize resources with prudence and precaution by linking the various aspects of sustainability such as economic, ecological and social fabric and at the same time ensuring accountability for all. Humanity should strive to avoid or at least minimize resource wastage by maintaining a long term view of existence by fostering cooperation and shared responsibility.

There is no questioning the fact that mankind has made enormous progress in terms of improving his living standards through innovations that has enhanced productivity, incidentally, such have most often been done without recourse to the negativity of his actions to the natural resource base. Economic growth and environmental protection are conflicting: as nations make progress economically through increases in the tempo of economic activities, the environment is degraded. This conflict leads to a dislocation of the social and economic balance that could threaten human existence. There is therefore a need to delicately balance the scale of resource utilization so as create an atmosphere for the regeneration of the natural base to sustain the present and the future. This is what sustainable development entails. UNDP-UNEP (2009).

In Babantunde and Adefade's (2016) studies which looked at the long run relationship between sustainable development and education using co integration and vector error correction, they concluded that a well-educated labour force has the capacity to positively influence economic growth through factor accumulation and the evolution of total factor productivity. Ziolkowska and Ziolkowski (2010) and Chistilin (2010) in discussing sustainable development focused on the concept of good governance that promotes the principle of minimum resource dissipation, the equation of self-organization and the law of conserving the economic potential of the social system. Each of these has its latten impact on the issue of sustainable development depending on the amount of resources available and the state of development of the society being considered.

METHODOLOGY

The study relied on an ex-post facto research design which considers events that have already taken place against the fact that the researcher has no direct control of the variables under consideration. Such research design are to produce results that offer plausible insights of the dismal performance of public policies aimed at addressing development issues and this provides a justifiable basis for the prescription of appropriate remedies.

Specifically, the study uses the auto regressive distributed bounds test based on the values of the F-statistics that has a non-standard distribution. According to Perasan and Perasan (1997), the co-integrating test gives a lower bound critical value that assumes that all variables are $I(0)$ integrated and an upper bound critical value that are $I(1)$ integrated. For an F-statistic that falls above the upper bound value, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative indicating that there is a long run relationship between the variables. On the other hand, if the F-statistic value lies below the lower bound, the null hypothesis is up held indicating that there is no long run relationship between the variables. There could also be an inconclusive result if the F-statistic lies between these two extremes.

The model is specified against the basic growth background adopting the Rostow's linear stages-of-growth model. Sustainable development is proxied by the Human capital development index, while poverty rates and unemployment are provided based the extent of poverty and unemployment over the period. Real gross domestic product stands for the rate in growth of the economy. The data used spans the period 1990 to 2016; this period is adjudged critical as the nation's growth rate and public spending have gone up significantly which should impact positively on the human development index, against the background that the human development index and rate of poverty have equally worsened ironically. The data used was transformed into logarithms which has become very popular in econometric research. This is due to the fact that many economic time series data often exhibit trends that could lead to spurious results making policy prescriptions unreliable. Taking the natural logarithms of these data values smoothen the rough edges in the data set and linearizes the exponential equation. This can produce result that are easily dependable. The model to be estimated is cast as follows:

$$\ln\text{POV} = \ln\beta_0 + \beta_1\ln\text{RGDP} + \beta_2\ln\text{HDI} + \beta_3\ln\text{UEM}$$

where **POV**- refers to the rate of poverty

RGDP- refers to the real gross domestic product

HDI-refers to the human development index

UEM-refers to the rate of unemployment

ln- refers to the natural log of the variables

The model is cast so as to evaluate the impact of growth, sustainable development on the rate of poverty of the nation. It is to analyze if there is any relationship between the variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is usually adjudged expedient to do unit root tests when dealing with times series data because they often drift away from their mean values over time and this can produce spurious result leading to appropriate policy prescriptions. This helps to remove the problem of over generalization and over aggregation which is a common feature in data collection procedures especially in developing countries such as Nigeria where the size of the underground economy can be very large. After the first differencing the data set used for the study became stable: Such outcomes should make an error correction estimate imperative, however, the linear estimation equation can equally serve purpose since they will display the appropriate signs.

Variables	ADF Statistic	5% critical value	Probability	
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LRGDP	0.008922	-2.986225	0.8222	Non Stationary
LPOV	-3.956043	-2.991878	0.0061	Stationary
LHDI	-0.273970	-2.991878	0.8092	Non Stationary
LUEM	-0.776363	-2.981038	0.1221	Non Stationary

The result presented above do suggest that not all the data set are stationary at the same level there was therefore the need to difference them. A second difference was taken to ensure stability. The second difference taken produced a stable result.

The Auto Regressive Distributive Arch result are presented below

Dependent Variable: POV

Method: ML - ARCH (Marquardt) - Normal distribution

Date: 03/04/18 Time: 23:21

Sample: 1990 2016

Included observations: 27

Convergence achieved after 56 iterations

Presample variance: backcast (parameter = 0.7)

$$\text{GARCH} = C(4) + C(5) * \text{RESID}(-1) ^ 2 + C(6) * \text{GARCH}(-1)$$

Variable	Coefficien			
	t	Std. Error	z-Statistic	Prob.
RGDP	0.268765	0.056697	4.740359	0.0000
HDI	-4.722577	1.729238	-2.731016	0.0063
UEM	-0.174699	0.042911	-4.071179	0.0000

Source: Author's compilation from the Regression output 2018 Using E-views 9

The result above show that both the human development index (HDI) and the rate of unemployment (UEM) have significant negative impact on the rate of poverty in Nigeria. Real gross domestic product (RGDP) on the other hand has only a marginal positive impact on the rate of poverty reduction. The implication could be that growth has remain weak in pushing the people out of the scourge of poverty. One is quick to ask if the several pro-poor programmes pursued in the country over the years have been real or just a hoax against the fact that huge funds have been expended on these programmes producing only dismal results. The result presented support the view expressed by the World Bank (2016) that the human development index of most developing nations is extremely poor and Nigeria is one of such nations. The variable displayed a significant value at the 5 per cent level. Nigeria is ranked 152nd in the 2016 report of the African Human

Development Index. The implication is that the nation has not been able to developed its human capacity to address development issues that can meaningfully impact on the growth of the country.

The descriptive statistics relating to the nature of the data used are given below. The Pearsonian coefficient of skewness of the data indicate the variables are generally closer to zero or are less than 1 meaning they are relatively symmetric. The p-value of the Jarque-Berra test are all above 5 per cent which shows that the samples are all from a normally distributed population. The import is to indicate that data used for the study were scoped from the same source. This type of relationship strengthens the result of the study by eliminating the tendency of spuriousness and unreliability.

	HDI	POV	RGDP	UEM
Mean	-0.332792	3.972616	10.41883	2.230017
Median	-0.338190	4.036009	10.36437	2.541602
Maximum	-0.261220	4.194190	11.15212	3.310543
Minimum	-0.378820	3.499533	9.862617	0.587787
Std. Dev.	0.029921	0.216030	0.472653	0.901359
Skewness	0.619360	-1.088611	0.256220	-0.489410
Kurtosis	2.844523	3.081170	1.507964	1.726863
Jarque-Bera	1.753427	5.340249	2.799863	2.901339
Probability	0.416148	0.069244	0.246614	0.234413

Pairwise Granger Causality Tests

Date: 03/04/18 Time: 23:29

Sample: 1990 2016

Lags: 2

Null Hypothesis:	Obs	F-Statistic	Prob.
POV does not Granger Cause HDI	25	2.74128	0.0887
HDI does not Granger Cause POV		0.45793	0.6391
RGDP does not Granger Cause HDI	25	0.21329	0.8097
HDI does not Granger Cause RGDP		3.61620	0.0457
UEM does not Granger Cause HDI	25	0.36854	0.6963
HDI does not Granger Cause UEM		1.84645	0.1837

RGDP does not Granger Cause POV POV does not Granger Cause RGDP	25	0.99532 1.21638	0.3872 0.3173
UEM does not Granger Cause POV POV does not Granger Cause UEM	25	0.54708 1.04411	0.5871 0.3704
UEM does not Granger Cause RGDP RGDP does not Granger Cause UEM	25	4.77726 0.65298	0.0201 0.5312

Source: Author's compilation from the Regression output 2018

The result from the Granger causality test are quite instructive. The variables of interest relating to sustainable development and the poverty index show only a weak and uni-directional causality. For example, causality runs only from poverty to the human development index at a significant level, the same goes for human development index which runs in only one direction to real gross domestic product and this is replicated for unemployment that runs to real gross domestic product. The implication of the result is that Nigeria's economic growth has not been inclusive or at best skewed against the pro-poor. This result is further strengthened by the uni-directional causality between growth and the poverty index indication that growth has not been widespread enough or at best concentrated in a few hands. This is in spite of the huge public spending over the years that should have lifted a large proportion of the population out of the scourge of poverty. Strong bi-directionality causality between gross domestic product and poverty reduction is required to ensure growth is sustainable and inclusive so as to lift many out of the incidence of poverty. Where growth is not inclusive, it creates and entrenches the incidence of unemployment since many loose the opportunities for gainful engagement. There is no doubt that real gross domestic product in relative terms has either not been real or at best fictitious. A weak human capacity resulting from poor human development creates poor technical capacity of the individual that impacts negatively on product development for sustainability.

The co integrating result is presented below in order to further buttress the findings of the linear regression results.

Hypothesize	d	Trace	0.05 Critical	Prob.**
No. of CE(s)	Eigenvalue	Statistic	Value	

None *	0.640973	58.58789	47.85613	0.0036
At most 1	0.394730	28.88148	29.79707	0.0635
At most 2	0.272072	14.32114	15.49471	0.0745
At most 3 *	0.161616	5.112093	3.841466	0.0238

Source: Computed from the Study Data 2018 Using E-views 9

The trace test for any co integrating relationship between the variables shows that there are only two co integrating equilibrium long run relationships between the variables. These two relationships are weak and not sufficiently significant if we consider the probability values. One would expect that if growth is inclusive enough and sustainable capable of reducing poverty, it must be sustained over time such that as the nations' populations grows, those without access to the means of production can be supported in order to lift them out of the scourge of poverty incidence. This result supports the Granger causality test which shows only a uni-directional causality between the variables. Where population growth rates are far in excess of the economic growth rate as is the case with Nigeria then more people are likely to be deprived access to the means of production due to competition for the available scarce resources in strict economic terms. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2017), Nigeria's population growth rate remains high at 3.7 per cent while the economic growth rate remains weak at 0.5 per cent. Such loop sided relationship can only aggravate the incidence of poverty as more people compete for scarce limited opportunities and resources for productivity.

Hypothesize d	No. of CE(s)	Eigenvalue	Max-Eigen Statistic	0.05 Critical Value	Prob. **
None *		0.640973	29.70641	27.58434	0.0263
At most 1		0.394730	14.56034	21.13162	0.3209
At most 2		0.272072	9.209049	14.26460	0.2692
At most 3 *		0.161616	5.112093	3.841466	0.0238

Source: Computed from the Study Data 2018

The above table which presents the Max-Eigen statistic in relation to the trace test values further strengthens the conclusion reached by the co integrating equations and this outcome is also significant at the 5 per cent level. The two co-integrating relationship are weak and not significant considering the probability values. Generally, there is a weak long term relationship between the variables clearly indicating that Nigeria's growth has been non-inclusive and largely unsustainable. Such long run weak relationship between the variables mean that growth which is not inclusive will further pauperize the population since only few

people have access to the means of production. The implication is that the fight against poverty can hardly be successful if different strategies are not adopted or not strengthened. As Todaro and Smith (2012) indicated any that will be sustainable and inclusive must be in excess of 7 per cent per annum and must be pursued and sustained over a long period in order to reduce the incidence of poverty. Such actions can be entrenched through public policies where access to the means of production is guaranteed to a wide segment of the population through inclusiveness.

CONCLUSION

There is a high tendency for growth that is not inclusive to be unsustainable. The uni-directionality causality in most of the variables estimated means that growth cannot be supportive of sustainable growth and development. Those who are deprived access to the means of production will most likely pose a danger to the resource base of any nation. This will occur when their striving for survival will involve the overexploitation and uncontrolled depletion of the environment. The current United Nations global agenda for development emphasizes good governance that will promote peace, justice through strong institutions that guarantees fairness to all citizens. The global goal encompasses equal access to the means of decent livelihood, protection against bad governance and the right to voice out against any form of deprivation. Where citizens lack any of these, they resort to underground activities that are most often injurious to the common good. The inability of growth to carry along a vast majority of the people and sustained over a long period exposes the poor to destructive tendencies driven by the desire to survive. Such can only be guaranteed through access to the means of production especially through pro-poor economic policies.

According to the World Bank development report for 2016, Nigeria's human development index is one of the worst amongst its contemporaries. In specific terms, Nigeria is ranked only after countries such as South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, Kenya, Swaziland, Angola and Tanzania in Africa. Considering the resource base of the nation and given the fact that it has supported many of these countries, it is regrettable that the country can only be ranked so low. Being a proxy for sustainable development, it means that sustainability in all its ramifications has eluded the nation in spite of the enormous resource base of the nation and the often loud public pronouncement made by policy makers over the years. This, added to persistent policy summersault of governments due to poor governance and political rivalry has virtually brought the nation to its knees. And this happening even against the enormous resource endowments that nature has bestowed on the nation. A recent UNDP, 2006b. report specifically alerts that poverty in Nigeria is multidimensional while the Human Development Index (HDI) for Nigeria is low (0.448), giving the country a ranking of 159th out of 177 countries

The context of economic development revolves around the need to provide for the material needs to enhance their welfare through enlarging the quantum and quality of the goods and services which they need. According to United Nations (2007), the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet the developmental and environmental needs of the present and future generations. This way, nations will not risk harming the environment beyond what it can carry. Sustainable development evaluates the carrying capacity of the environment as it relates to meeting the material needs of humanity.

There can be no sustainable development without environmental protection and this is because human beings have enormous negative influences through pollution on the environment, hard choices have to be made in the process. This position was earlier canvassed by Arifa and Gan (1996) who presented a model that considers a choice between current consumption and future growth through changes in the capital stock of societies or nations. The import of their model is that a society or nation will either grow or stagnate depending on its present rate of consumption weighed against its capital stock. On the other hand, Scutaru (2013) discusses two models: one that focuses on economic growth, consumption and pollution while the other focuses on sustainable development and offering solutions to the problem of clean and alternative energy. The first one does not consider issues such as poverty, unemployment, health, population migration and social inclusion while the second one looks at the carrying capacity of nations and proffers solutions.

Unless both the leadership and the led in all nations realize this collective failure to properly articulate and pursue consistent development policies that are especially targeted at the most vulnerable members of society, growth that is inclusive and sustainable will remain a mirage. The findings from this study is consistent with many others that allude to the fact that the nation's rate of unemployment and underemployment have accentuated over the years and this will aggravate the incidence of poverty and further worsen inequality amongst the people. Where the population is pauperized, the risk level is raised making the global objective of eliminating poverty near impossible. Most of the growth of the nation has been driven by rising exports from oil and this hinders inclusive growth while posing additional danger to the environment. Public policies must focus on reducing oil exports by shifting attention to diversification of the economy into other economic activities such as agriculture, manufacturing and services.

Deliberate and sustained effort must also be made in promoting inter-sectoral linkages so as to generate direct employment and income opportunities that can generate needed multiple impacts on the economy. This underscores what the United Nations Environment programme believes: *'pursuing sustainable consumption and production goals (SCP) remains key towards the fight against poverty'*. These goals which include addressing basic needs and decoupling

environmental degradation from development, are supportive of development aspirations of African countries in attaining sustained economic growth, poverty reduction and the MDGs. This provides a compelling basis for countries of the region to integrate sustainable consumption and production into their development policies, strategies, and programmes. For Nigeria, this is premised on the fact that the nation is just existing a crushing economic recession that has festered over the greater part of the past decade. It is reasoned that if poverty is to be reduced or eliminated, access to the means of livelihood by the greatest proportion of the population must be the focus of policy makers through their deliberate design and implementation.

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