

DILEMMA OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY DEBILITY IN NIGERIA: A MARRIAGE OF INCONVENIENCES

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Abstract

Youth unemployment and poverty have become cancerous phenomena in Nigerian democratic era. It stems from the fact that the control of power is now the fastest means of amassing wealth. This study therefore argues that youth unemployment and poverty have brought about national underdevelopment, violence and economic instability in Nigeria and African continent by extension. Review and trends analysis was adopted as the research design, and as such, the study discovered that youth employment; poverty alleviation and economic development are compromised, and these have relatively underdeveloped Nigeria. The implication of these findings is that Nigerian youths are not only frustrated but also criminally prone and impoverished. The paper conclusively submits that Nigerian youth's unemployment and the problem of poverty have emanated from internal because of de-industrialization and de-agriculturalization. Among other suggestions, the paper therefore recommends that Nigerian policy packages of G8 countries whose transformations are almost non-existent or painfully slow as their ideological basis for economic analysis and development in Nigeria should be put to an end. It is only when Nigerians come to full realization that they can use what they have to development themselves that we will begin to expect light in the long awaited dark tunnel.

Keywords: Youth, unemployment, National Development, Poverty, economy.

Introduction

Over the years, youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria have been a serious course for concern. Youth restiveness and unemployment have increasingly become a recurrent issue in the Nigerian polity. In this paper, the writer is poised to ask "what is the problem with Nigeria, just as the Netherlands historian and a diplomat, VanDerVen (2005) asked in his work titled "what went wrong with Africa". Like other recent post-modernist scholars, VanDerVen (2005) linked African's widespread poverty and woes in the midst of plenty to include misrule, corruption, inequalities, insecurity, instability, lack of scientific and technological development and stagnation resulting from infrastructural decay and perpetual conflicts and crises. Going by the past history for instance, Nigerian economy is unable to sustain productivity and without productivity, job cannot be created, hence unemployment will increase, leading to poverty and underdevelopment. Incontrovertibly, the fact that there is mass unemployment and poverty among youth, to drive the economy would be very difficult (Idiris, 2008). Thus, unemployment will grow and poverty will increase. Nations that create new ideas and knowledge are producing wealth while nations who consume wealth are producing poverty and unemployment. As a consuming nation, therefore Nigerian youth are perhaps may to be poor and unemployed. Nigeria became a consuming nation after the oil boom of 1970's. This paper interrogate the variety of assumptions about poverty and unemployment in Africa using Nigeria as a focus country with the inclination that economic and polices of globalization is responsible for the spate of poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment, violence and crises in Nigeria.

Literature/Conceptual Framework

An attempt to subject poverty to concise scientific definition through conceptualization is sometime difficult. This is because of the variety and complexity of the term and its fluidity over time. For instance, poverty varies from society to society and from nation to nation. However contemporary concepts of poverty indicate that it is an economic condition in which people lack sufficient income to obtain minimal levels of health services, food, housing, clothing and education generally reorganized as necessary to ensure an adequate standard of living. What is considered adequate depends on the average standard of living on a particular society in view of the fact that poverty is a relative term (Kassimir, 2008). In advanced economies for instance, estimating poverty on the basis of income may be inadequate, as people without access to education and health may be considered poor even if they have adequate food. Much of the world's impoverished nations show a low level of economic development because of widespread unemployment has actually created poverty. Unlike other parts of the world, poverty is more clearly defined in Africa (Nigeria inclusive). The irony is that many of those who even have jobs in Africa continues to work but see the values of their work income declining. People are poor because they can hardly afford food, quality education, health services, proper clothing and housing. We do not need any instrument to generate data to measure the rate of poverty in Nigeria. One only needs to look at people generally, not the elite, but the toiling masses, and one will see that there is poverty and despair. No wonder, in 1997, in Kenya a poor man was required to define what he understands by poverty and he has this to say:

Don't ask me what poverty is because you have met it outside my house. Look at the house and count the number of holes, look at my utensils and cloths that I am wearing. Look at everything and write what you see. What you see is poverty (Narayam, 2000).

IpsO- facto, the aggressive opinion of Narayam (2000) summarized poverty concept. Unlike other parts of the world poverty is more clearly defined in Nigeria. Youth can be simply described as the state or time of being young, a stage of being physically and economically active. According to the Nigerian Youth Service Scheme, youth is defined as anybody between the ages of 18 years to 30 years. To such schemes, youth is measured by age. However, youth can be summarized to mean anybody that is physically fit, youthful, agile, and smart whose age fall between the age bracket of 18 years and 40 years. On the other hand according to Nkwede (2008), a situation where people (Youth) who are willing, eager and zealous to work but are not working or engaged by any agency or establishment for any economic activities cannot be better described in other term than unemployment. It is quite evident that multinational corporation distorts the economy of developing nations by crowding out national firms, raising unemployment through the use of capital intensive technology and a marked loss of political sovereignty through the institution of I.M.F and World Bank. The harsh conditions imposed by these policies such as budget cut, high interest rate, and increased foreign debts have led to a decrease in amount of money spend on education and health but created high levels of unemployment and lowered the level of economic growth.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts eclectic theoretical approach by anchoring the study on two theories. The first theory, is the Fei-ranis' theory of unemployment. The theory was developed by John Fei and Gustav Ranis in 1961 in their study titled: Economic development analysis and transition process. The theory placed emphasis on economic model of unemployment and underdevelopment process which an underdeveloped

economy, country or nation hopes to move from a condition of stagnation to one of the self-sustained growth. The theory is an improved theory derived from the theory of development of a dual economy previously developed by the authors (Jhingan, 1997). The substance of the theory that makes it relevant to this study is the fact that it emphasizes unemployment and an underdeveloped labour-surplus and resource-poor economy in which the vast majority of the population is not engaged in agriculture amidst of widespread unemployment and high rate of population growth. According to the authors, the agrarian economy is stagnated while poverty is on the high increase. Non-agricultural pursuits exist among the youth but they are characterized by the modest use of capital. Importantly, Fei and Ranis (1961) made the following theoretical assumptions:

- a. There is a dual economy divided into a traditional and stagnant agricultural sector and non-active industrial sector which breeds unemployment cum poverty in the nation.
- b. It is assumed that the marginal productivity of labour becomes zero at a point where population exceeds the quantity at which the marginal productivity of labour zero and it leads to unemployment.
- c. The output of the industrial sector is a function of capital and labour alone.
- d. It is also assumed that population growth is taken as exogenous phenomenon.
- e. Workers in either sector consume only agricultural products.

Thus, based on these assumptions, the theory is applied on this study on two ground pillars. First are the disguised unemployed youths in the Nigerian nation who is not adding to either the agricultural or industrial sector of the economy. These set of choose to remain idle because of laziness. Again the youth in this category prefer not to work even when there is job. Second, is the set of youth who tends to be working but they are producing nothing as an output. According to the Fei and Ranis theory, this is apparently rampant in Nigerian civil and public service. Therefore, the overall effects of the theoretical underpins in the rampant and widespread poverty in the country and the high level of unemployment ravaging active youth in the country.

The second theory adopted by the study is economic theory of poverty. The theory was developed by Rowntree in 1901 in his study called 'circle of poverty'. The theory was first applied by Philip Davis and Miguel Sanchez-Martinez. The theory advocates that there are two major aspects of poverty-relative poverty and absolute poverty. It is argued that in national development, poverty plays a disconcerting role. Rowntree further argues that most poor people or poor nations are largely responsible for their destiny; that each one chooses to be poor or rich depending on the quality of your imaginable thought. However, whichever sides of the coin, poverty breeds deficiency in individual who is a victim and underdevelopment to a nation who fall prey of poverty. For the purpose of this study, neoclassical theories are of the view that poverty is beyond individual control because of government actors such that poverty rears lack of social assets, market failure, poor education, crime, poor health and unemployment. The substance of economic theory of poverty that makes it very germane in this study is the idea of underdevelopment and unemployment. The theory assumes that (1) Poverty brings social exclusion (2) Weak foundation for economic prosperity (3) Income inequality (4) Poor infrastructure among others (Rowntree, 1901 cited in Harrington, 1962). These two theories basically strike a balance in this current study as they showed an insight on both unemployment and poverty as the subject matter of the study.

Methodology

In this study, qualitative research design anchored on decriptive phenomenological method was adopted. The justification for this design is aptly due to the study's theoretical approach and the nature of the data utilized in the study. Meanwhile, the data employed in the study is secondary data; generally sourced from the Nigerian Bureau of statistics. Additionally, trend analysis was used to analyze the data collected on the unemployment rate and the poverty level in Nigeria. The structure of the data is very simple as the data on poverty were classified into geopolitical zones (South-south, South-east, South-west, North- west, North-central and North-east), the data on poverty were classified into state according to the level of poverty in the 36 states including Federal Capital Territory. Both the data on unemployment and poverty are in absolute figures in annual basis which makes it best for trend analysis.

Trends and Statistical Analysis of Poverty Level in Nigeria

According to Mkamdaware (2005), there are few general explanations for instability, violence and conflict, but much violence and conflict may be related to poverty and unemployment, although the links between poverty, unemployment, inequalities and extreme aspects of social disintegration beg for better understanding and explanation. However, recent analyses points to relations between poverty, unemployment, violence and conflict in Nigeria involving complex links with reduced growth and development. There is also a clear correlation between inequalities, alienation, dysfunctional nation states and lack of opportunities, brain drain and the phenomenon of underdevelopment, in the extreme cases of inequalities especially the so-called horizontal inequalities between cultural groups and regions, the probability of relapsing into civil war increases with poverty. It is clear that over the past three decades, income growth in Nigeria has barely kept pace with population growth. Slow and erratic growth has been accompanied by regressive income distribution trends. The drop in income among youth and others generally do not allow for the development of domestic resources needed for rapid growth, thus the number of the poor rose by 77% between 19781-2001. The proportion of the population living below poverty line has increased since the late 1969s, rising from an average of 55% in 1965 to 64.9% in 1999. See tables 1 to 3 below

Table 1: Spread and Trend in Poverty Levels in Nigeria

Level	1980	1985	1992	1994	2008
NATIONAL	27.2	46.3	42.7	65.6	54.4
Urban	17.2	37.8	37.5	58.2	43.2
Rural	28.3	51.4	46.0	69.3	63.3
ZONE					
South-South	13.2	45.7	40.8	58.2	35.1
South-East	12.9	30.4	41.0	53.5	26.7
South-West	13.4	38.6	43.1	60.9	43.0
North-central	32.2	50.8	46.0	64.7	67.0
North-East	35.6	54.9	54.0	70.1	72.2
North-West	37.7	52.1	36.5	77.2	71.2

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (Nigeria)

Table 2: Mean Household Income by State

Kwara	4,380.6	3,536.2	3,876.1
Lagos	7,634.6	6,200.3	7,524.3
Nassarawa	-	-	-
Niger	5,325.4	5,877.9	5,824.4
Ogun	3,243.2	3,387.8	3,327.9
Ondo	3,981.2	3,512.1	3,327.9
Osun	3,219.5	3,512.1	3,158.5
Oyo	1,028.9	3,089.4	9,250.5
Plateau	6,793.1	6,758.0	6,434.2
Rivers	7,959	6,359.0	-
Sokoto	3,543.5	8,820.1	2,587.3
Taraba	5,022.9	2,523.9	4,294.6
Yobe	4,133.2	4,281.1	3,210.2
Zamfara	-	-	-
FCT	2,002.6	7,061.8	1,517.4
TOTAL	6,349.2	4,819.6	5,149.8

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (Nigeria)

Table 3: Distribution of State by Poverty Headcount using Self-Rated lines

STATE	POOR	NON-POOR	STATE	POOR	NON-POOR
Abia	82.4	17.54	Ebonyi	87.22	12.78
Adamawa	6.18	23.82	Edo	83.09	16.66
Akwa-ibom	65.36	34.64	Ekiti	96.53	3.47
Anambara	71.07	28.93	Enugu	80.77	19.23
Bauchi	88.30	11.70	Gombe	73.20	26.80
Bayelsa	95.57	47.43	Imo	77.78	22.22
Benue	80.85	19.15	Jigawa	59.44	40.56
Borno	87.81	12.19	Kaduna	74.77	25.23
Cross River	81.16	18.84	Kano	73.11	26.89
Delta	84.25	15.75	Ogun	81.25	18.75
Kastina	76.03	23.97	Ondo	80.13	19.87
Kebbi	73.55	26.45	Osun	65.10	34.90
Kogi	82.12	17.88	Oyo	62.53	37.4
Kastina	76.03	23.97	Plateau	81.25	18.75
Kebbi	73.55	26.45	Rivers	72.60	27.40
Kogi	82.12	17.88	Sokoto	75.66	24.34
Kwara	88.68	11.32	Taraba	80.47	19.53
Lagos	70.24	29.76	Yobe	87.36	12.64
Nassarawa	77.48	22.52	Zamfara	76.47	23.53
Niger	75.28	24.72	FACT/Abuja	82.32	17.68
Ogun	81.25	18.75			
Ondo	80.13	19.87			

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (Nigeria)

From tables 1 to 3 above, the spread and trends of poverty in Nigeria is alarming, as there have been continuous increase in poverty levels in Nigeria since 1980 to date in spite of numerous government and non-governmental agencies on poverty related projects and the like. From the tables, it is axiomatic that no matter the dimension one measures the level of poverty ranging from national (urban and rural) and zonal, the size of household and education level, all vindicate that poverty level in Nigeria has absolutely gone below the line leaving the North West and North East on the extreme. A close look at table 2 will show the mean of household incomes by state in Nigeria, a situation where other countries' incomes are increasing astronomically. Today, Nigeria real income per capita income is about \$250 nearly the same as it was in 1960. Recall that in 1960s, Nigerian per capita income was 5 times of Malaysia, but today, Malaysia per capita income is 15 times that of Nigeria (NUCTAD, 2002). This is unimaginable and a clear evidence that over the years, real wages have fallen and income inequality has risen as adjustment policies have hallowed out the nescient youth and middle class in Nigeria. On the other hand, tables 4 below shows the unemployment conditions in Nigeria:

Table 4: National Unemployment Rates in Nigeria

SURVEY	COMPOSITE	URBAN	
1999	3.4	6.1	2.8
2000	3.2	6.0	2.6
2001	3.2	4.9	2.8
2002	3.1	5.8	2.5
2003	4.7	7.2	3.7
2004	4.2	<i>Nkwede & Nkwede</i> 4.8	3.9
2005	3.0	3.8	2.7
2006	2.9	3.2	2.7
2007	2.8	3.3	2.6

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (Nigeria)

Another side of the same coin of impoverishment is the unemployment rate in Nigeria. In about 140 million Nigeria populations, it is documented that 84 million, which translate to 60% are youths. But the data below vindicate that the unemployment rate in Nigeria from a close survey since 1998 have rather been on the high increase, (a percentage increase of 36% yearly). In 2004, the unemployment even increased to about 50% in 2007. The worse hit of this crisis of unemployment engulfing Nigerian youths are in the urban areas where over 50% are unemployed. Meanwhile the crises are so problematic to the extent that many Nigerian youths are frustrated. The story is the same when it is assessed from rural perspective. The whole gamut of the unemployment status in Nigeria has made the youths to resort to criminalism and sharp practice to make both ends meet. However, the crisis is better imagined than described when one sees the number of graduate turn-out of bachelor's degrees yearly in Nigeria. See tables 5 and 6 for instance.

Table 5: Graduate Turnout of Bachelor's Degree by Discipline (Nigeria)

DISCIP LINE	2003		2004		2005		2006		2007	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Admi.	3295	2298	4727	3413	6380	5321	4089	3201	2521	1843
Agric.	1086	604	1381	705	1366	873	1368	828	299	167
Arts	2732	2351	2938		2982	3672	3963	2706	2746	1687
Educ.	4129	4117	3221	3248	3560	3391	2361	3008	2352	2095
Eng	4194	581	4558	679	5425	800	4181	689	1061	1116
Env. Sc.	932	375	1079		395	1201	560	940	368	643
Law	1558	990	2112	1781	2846	2664	1901	1461	1007	626
Med.	1200	568	1538		613	1489	903	1219	721	359
Pha.	242	375	312	138	186	144	320	235	12	10
Scie.	4743	990	4461	2840	5839	4347	4390	2581	2190	1379
Soc.Sc	5021	568	8459		4996	8197	5658	6017	4220	2893
Dent.	0	0	45	22	67	30	48	21	0	0
Ven.Med	68	19	99	47	155	54	47	21	30	6
Others.	583	311	1059		457	879	401	617	214	278
Total	29782	18009	3589	22316	41252	29109	30105	20314	15327	10715
Grad Total	47791	58305	70361	50419	26042					

Source: National Universities Commission

Table 6: Graduate Turnout of Masters Degree

DISCIP LINE	2003		2004		2005		2006		2007	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Fema
Admi.	3470	1241	2879	987	5326	992	2334	1212	-	768
Agric.	138	38	418	142	368	136	324	94	20	259
Arts	681	304	1074	365	568	189	637		310	280
Educ.	723	736	1406	962	1061	854	1043	849	328	317
Eng	296	23	539		97	409	162		416	71
Env. Sci.	252	39	127	39	154	56	220	81	296	122
Law	218	137	253	91	250	132	329	183	33	12
Med.	95	25	279	125	219	98	517	129	66	36
Pha.	23	7	25	15	58	27	105	39	11	3
Scie.	393	165	820	322	557	145	566	239	2586	106
Soc.Scie	1327	362	3096	996	1719	500	1987	733	688	412
Dent.	29	1212	1	0	9	12	0			
Vent. Med	16	2	38	4	28	9	22	6	12	6
Others	53	15	39	12	31	8	20	166	2	
Total	7714	3106	10994	4157	10748	3308	8529	3963	6352	2033
Grad Total	8385	10820	15151	14056	12492					

Source: National Universities Commission (Nigeria)

Tables 5 and 6 show that Nigeria produce 50,584 graduates (Bachelors Degree) and 12,181(Masters Degree) on average yearly. It is unimaginable that these large numbers of graduates have no corresponding job opportunities. However, it is possible to note with great concern the gradual but steady de-industrialization in Nigeria due to globalization. As such, de-industrialization has led to the ongoing resource conflict in Nigeria that has been fueled by such foreign interest in the country's natural resources especially in the volatile Niger delta region. While a set of intense debate have been going on around the relative weight of grievance in explaining the Niger-delta conflict, the role of external interest have established as constitutive components of the origins and especially the sustenance of the conflict. Globalization also prematurely exposed our industries to further global competition from mature industries, causing forced de-industrialization and further unemployment, under-development and poverty. This is simply because; the share of manufacturing in GDP has drastically fallen. The decline in youth factor productivity and by extension labour productivity and by extension labour productivity can thus be attributed to the de-industrialization. Some African's scholars have strengthened the argument that from the onset. It is thus, not surprising that Nigeria agriculture production and economic capacities have been undermined by economic contraction and neglect, and structural adjustments have caused severe deterioration of infrastructures leading to further export collapse. In comparison, the Southeast Asian high performing economies have been the major agriculture exporters helping to set offset problems associated with the mineral exports of Malaysia and Indonesia in sharp contrast to Nigeria, ensuring employment, and development and poverty reduction. Increase in de-industrialization and de-agriculturalization in Nigeria has further exacerbated the consequences of inequalities. Measures of unemployment are not deemed to be meaning, not only because of the limited statistical capacities of government but also because employment is rarely an option for survival since there is no social benefits to the unemployed. The vast majority of unemployment youth are unemployed due to limited resources for productive self-employment (Kwame, 2006). Many Nigerian youth have migrated to urban centers, seeking and adopting different survival in the face of limited employment opportunities and harsh economic climate.

The Challenges

Nigeria has a formidable and attractive profit of what it takes to be a major player in the global arena. Endowed with enormous human and material resources and the advantage of a large domestic market, yet Nigerians are poor. In November 2007, the United Nations Development Programmer (UNDP) released the 2017/08 Human Development Index (HDI), which is designed to highlight the relative achievements in rating poverty, Educational achievement, life expectancy and real income indices among Nations. Nigeria ranked 158th out of 177 countries. This means that Nigeria has grown poorer in the last 25 years, with declining productivity rate and outdated infrastructures worse than what they were in 1960s (Iya, 2007). From the foregoing it is worth pointing out that in the 1950s and 60s Nigeria, India, Malaysia, Korea and most East Asian countries were more or less at the same level of development. It is on record that Malaysia came to Nigerian institute for oil palm research to learn the technology of oil palm farming and processing. Today, Malaysia is a major exporter of vegetable oil to the rest of the world including Nigeria (Ldiris, 2008). In the 1960s, agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries employed a lot of youth with a share of contribution to GDP at 70%. Today the share to GDP is a mere 30%. Cocoa was also the employer of youth labour in Nigeria; then Nigeria was the largest exporter of cocoa farming in Nigeria. As matter of fact, poverty has increased while farming remains subsistent and the mouths to feed have

increased. Ipso-facto, it is possible that material poverty of the Nigerian youths is at the root of sporadic outburst of violence and conflict that have occurred in Nigeria in recent times. The frustration of the youth's unemployment and poverty no doubt breed underdevelopment and economic instability. Youth unemployment in Nigeria has brought about widespread poverty and woes and in most cases, it has rendered Nigeria youths restive and fidgety. The youth restiveness in Nigeria is no doubt responsible for incessant violence and crisis, unending agitations, kidnapping and terrorism in the country. As a matter of fact, Nigeria today, ranks 3rd as the most terrorized country in the world that harbors the most deadliest terrorist group after Iraq and Afghanistan in the 1st and 2nd positions respectively (Global Terrorism Index 2019). Again the spate of poverty in Nigeria arising from the impoverished unemployed youth is accountable for economic instability and economic underdevelopment in Nigeria. For instance, Nigerian GDP in the last ten years has been deviling. The Nigerian GDP at present is 13.77% according to 2019 first Quarter records; showing an annual growth rate of 2.01% but recorded as low as -13.97% in first Quarter of 2018 (Trading Economics, 2021). Other macroeconomic indicators of the economy such as inflation, exchange rate, interest rate among others have shown unimpressive signs of diminution economy.

Further, the high rate of youth unemployment has brought about political instability and volatility with weak democratic cum government institution. Most vibrant aspect of the country's population is grossly neglected. The worst circumstance of the unemployed youth in this direction is not only that the vibrant and effervescent youths are not engaged, but they are not provided with good business climate to strive in entrepreneurship. As a matter of fact, due to governance structure, the entire economy and the citizenry keep deteriorating in a geometric rate. For instance, in the human development index according to United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) for 2021, Nigeria is ranked 157 out of 189 countries. The Nigeria human development index is 0.532 and has remained in the range of 0.4 and 0.5 since 2005 (UNDP 2021).

Conclusion

Succinctly put, history has proven time without number that the quality and commitment of leadership is the most crucial ingredient to growth and development, it is clear from pandemonium that if effectively mobilized, Nigerian youths, could rival and surpass the achievement of other youth elsewhere, but this has not happened since corruption begets all encouraging dynamism and has led to the collapse of effort at fighting poverty, social injustice and destroyed employment opportunities. In view of the above Idris (2008) posit thus; Nigeria demoralization has deepened poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment, frustration and despair that has sharpened conflict and violence. It is in line with this that those are clamoring for the resolution of the national question are those who felt left out in the distribution of resources and sharing of the national cake.

That Nigerian youth are violent and criminal prone because many unemployed and impoverished youths feel that the experiment at nation building had not only failed but also had dragged them to absurdity. Like the failure of IMF and World bank imposed structural adjustment strategies and conditionality, globalization and post globalism have failed in lifting Nigerians out of mystery, frustration, despair, poverty and unemployment. It is however conceived that rather than expect some occasional financial peanut from the so-called G8 countries, whose transformation strategies are almost non-existent or painfully slow. Nigeria should strategies her own national development plan, after all, many of the advanced countries started as big time agriculture and industrial exporters. Idealistically, it is then probably, only then, we can begin to see light at the end of long and dark tunnel.

Recommendations

The policy and structural adjustment packages of the international financial institutions have been challenged if not discredited in academic circles (though SAP has some success story in some sectors of the economy). It continues to constitute the ideological basis for economic analysis and policy making in developing countries such as Nigeria. Invariably, the packages and policies are not sufficient adequate for addressing issues of underdevelopment, poverty and unemployment and are not sufficient for stimulating and sustaining economic growth and structural changes for Nigeria to catch up. Analysis strongly suggests that much of the ostensible conventional wisdom regarding Nigeria development and poverty is only wrong both often harmful. There is strong evidence to suggest that many of the economic policies and conditionality imposed on the country have reflected vested interest and prejudice. In view of the pervasive influence of such erroneous and harmful policy packages and conditionalities, it has become crucial for Nigeria to increase its policy space to be able to pursue meaningful policies forenvelopments. Nigeria needs to choose or design its own development strategies rather than depending on oil for development and needs. Its' vast agricultural resources could be exploited for development because three decades of economic stagnation, contribution, unemployment and increased poverty have taken a huge toll on the nation's economic, social and political fabrics.

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