
Impact of the Dependency Character of the Nigerian State on Development

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Abstract

This paper discussed the dependency character of the Nigeria state on the developed countries. This dependent posture has placed great limitations to her development. The paper's findings show that through three vital areas of economic dependence, namely, through foreign trade, provision of capital and transfer of technology; Nigerian economy has been underdeveloped. To break this ugly trend, the paper recommended a total break from the international finance capitalist states and encouraged indigenous production of her economic resources. The paper concluded that Nigeria can only develop if her economic linkages with developed countries are at the lowest ebb.

Introduction

Development as a concept is being fought at two levels in Nigeria. First, the force and domination of the international capital played a significant role on her underdevelopment. Secondly, internally, the character of the socio-economic and political formation of Nigerian society has greatly hindered its development.

It is pertinent to ask here: what is development? The reason for this is simply because, a thorough understanding of the term development is important to enable us properly situate the imperative for development and the dependency character of the Nigerian State.

The concept development defies an easy or one sentence definition (Iyoha, 1999, Iyoha and Aiya, 2003). From certain perspectives, a developed society is one in which the Gross National Product or per capita income experiences sustained growth. Other definitions stress the ability of the people to lead a modern or civilized existence through access to such facilities as good roads, health, water and education. This has been termed the Basic Needs Approach. For other scholars, development implies equitable distribution of goods and services, labeled the redistribution with growth theory by Hollis, Chenery et al in their book *Redistribution With Growth* (Chenery, 1976).

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According to Seers (1969:6), “development is attained only when the following challenges are resolved: poverty, unemployment, and inequality”. Seers’ analysis of development is important in its emphasis on equality as well as growth. Seers suggested that the state of development can be assessed by asking: “What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality?” (Seers, 1977).

Offiong (1980:21) sees development as “people frontal attack on the oppression, poverty, and exploitation that are meted out of them by the dominant classes and their system”.

Development

To Rogers (1969:8-9), development is “a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capital income and levels of living through more modern production methods and improve social organization”.

Supporting the above view point, Todaro, (1985:85) as quoted by Imhanlahimhim (2002:8-11) posits that looking at development from holistic basis, as encompassing all aspects of a nation’s life. As he (Todaro, 1985:85) asserts:

Development must, therefore, be conceived of as a multi-dimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty. Development, in its essence, must represent the whole gamut of changes by which an entire social system, tuned to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within that system, moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory and towards a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better.

Esman (1972:8-10) sees development “as a major societal transformation, a change of systems states along the continuum from present and pastoral to industrial organization”. He maintains that the assimilation and institutionalization of modern physical and social technology are fundamental requirements. These changes affect values, behaviour, social structure, economic organization and political process”.

Cockroft, Frank and Johnson (1972:12) perceived development as “the coincidence of structural change and liberation of men from exploitation and oppression perpetuated by international capitalist bourgeoisie and their collaborators”. Another definition from these same authors (1972:16) is that “real development involves a structural transformation of economy, society, polity and culture of the self-generating and self perpetuating use and development of the people’s potentials”.

Oronsanye (2000:3) believes that in measuring the development of a country, one should take into account the standard of living affianced by the poorest section for the population. This is because the satisfaction of the material needs of the population in terms of per capita (head) goods and services, available at a given time, goes along

way in determining the developmental level of the society. This is why some have looked at development as a phenomenon suggestive of economic growth and industrialization. For others it means nation building and modernization of state power and defence. Sometimes, development is even associated with democracy and social justice. However, growth, industrialization modernization, nation building, democratization and social justice e.t.cs are all indices or signs of development. This implies that, development has many dimensions. These enumeration and many more therefore constitute consequences of development not its essence.

Development is an amalgamation of all these features. The essence of development, according to Riggs (1970:58), involves increasing ability to make collective decisions, especially decisions that involve long-term environmental changes. Such decision might include the provision of irrigation, fertilizers and improved seed stock, to increase the production of food, the establishment of schools and adult education programmes to enhances capabilities and duality of life of a population, the adaptation of technology and saving for investment so as to increase a society's productivity.

We can therefore define development as advancement which makes life more meaningful in all its entirety or ramifications, including the economic, administrative, legal, political, social, cultural, religious, political and personal aspect. Development is, therefore, incomplete with only economic growth, or political, social or cultural growth respectively. Defining development from the holistic point of view is therefore, more representative of the concept.

How the Dependent Character of Nigerian State Affects Development

There are three major areas where the dependent character of the Nigerian state is anchored and had contributed to the country's perpetual underdevelopment. These areas include, the field of technology, the area of foreign trade and the sphere of aid or assistance (Ake, 1981 and Adutifa, 1982). With out going into details of these areas, it may only suffice to outline their basic features as shown below in table 1 and 11 in the field of technology, for instance, the critical point that must be borne in mind is not so much the problem of technological dependence of Nigeria on the industrialized capitalist countries as the complete dependence of their powers. This situation makes any attempt at any breakthrough impossible. Every manufacturing factory and firm in the country is basically tied to the technological apron hardware and production in one industrialized capitalist country or the other.

The ultimate goal of the global capitalist system is to convert underdeveloped countries, such as Nigeria, into an adjunct of gigantic assembly lines of international capitalist production. Thus, technology dependence is not just a special occurrence, but also both a system and a consequence of the general dependence of Nigeria on the advanced capitalist states. This is vicious circle in which lack of technology creates dependence and dependence creates exploitation and underdevelopment and hence further dependence. See table 1 below:

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Table 1: Some Basic Indices of Nigerians Economic Dependence 1960

1	Foreign trade as percentage of GDP	41.1
2	Percentage of three leading primary exports	65.9
3	Percentage of dependence of government revenue on foreign trade	67.0
4	Percentage of foreign personnel to total high level manpower	30.0
5	Gross capital formation as percentage of GDP	15.4

Source: Bassey Atte, 1987:37

Table 11: Technological Indicators Showing the Position of Third World Countries vis-à-vis Industrialized Countries in 1975.

A. Science & Technology	Industrialized Countries			
		Africa	Asia	Latin America
i. Ratio to total stock of scientists and engineer per 10,000 population	112.0	5.8	22.0	69.0
ii. Ratio of technicians per 10,000 population	42.3	8.3	23.4	72.2
iii. Scientists & engineers engaged in R &D per 10,000 population	10.4	0.4	1.6	1.4
iv. Technicians engaged in R&D per 10,000 population	8.2	0.4	0.6	1.4
v. v. Expenditure in R&D as percentage of population	1.2	1.6	0.3	0.2
B. High Level Manpower				
i. Professional and technicians as % of economically action population	11.1	1	2.7	5.7
ii. Percentage of the economically population employed in manufacturing sector	25.1	3.5	10.5	14.1
iii. Literacy rate percent (%)	96	20	32	77
iv. Ratio of primary and secondary enrolment to school age population	92	32	56	78

Source: Adufiga, O.A. 1982: 11-12

As Ake (1981) rightly put it: “because of their immense technological dependence, which tends to perpetrate itself, it is hard for Nigeria to make much progress in the fight against development because (of its) dependence on the industrialized countries and on the peculiar monopolistic character of the world technology market, it will be harder yet for (Nigeria) to deviate form the capitalist path of development.”

It is also evident from table III and IV that the bulk of Nigeria foreign trade since independence has been with the leading industrialized capitalist countries of the

world. Nigerians trade with the socialist countries as table III shows. Samuel Ojishola As Frank (1980) observed, “most critical sectors for most underdeveloped countries over the longest period of their history is that of foreign trade. And this is precisely the sector most under foreign control” (Popov, 1984: 174-177).

It has been estimated that the advanced capitalist countries receive between \$60-80 billions a year from their trade with third world countries, while the net between \$ 40-50 billion a year in the 1980s only from their exploitation of the third world petroleum resources, inspite of marked increase by OPEC. (Popov, 1984).

Table 111: Nigerians Foreign Trade 1966 and 1974 (N Million)

	1966	1974
Western Europe		
Imports	328.8	1,1191
Exports	442.2	3,056.2
United States of America		
Imports	33.0	213.2
Exports	44.6	1,589.9
Eastern Europe		
Imports	11.6	47.9
Exports	6.6	77.4
China		
Imports	10.0	30.4
Exports	---	3.6

Source: Claude Ake, 1981: 105-110

Infact, when it’s remembered that Nigeria is a leading of OPEC and that, as pointed out in the preceding discussion, all the wherewithal of petroleum industry is owned and controlled by international capital, then the real picture of the extent of the exploitation of the resources of Nigeria since independence begins to engage. Again, capitalist countries especially through their monopolies earn between \$ 7-10 billion a year on the industrial enterprises and the transfer of technology (i.e. brain drain) of third world countries including Nigeria (Popov, 1984).

The so called financial aid or assistance from the industrialized capitalist countries to the underdeveloped third world states including Nigeria, is between \$15-20 billion a year with an increase of something like \$1 billion a year in absolute terms in the same period (Popov). When all these sets of figures are juxtaposed against one another, it becomes clear who is assisting who between the third world countries and the industrialized capitalist states. Yet it is through such so-called aid that the advanced countries also tie their third world counterparts to the apron of global capitalism.

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Table IV; Direction of Nigeria Foreign Trade with Five Top Partners 1971-73, 1976 (N Millions)

Country	Export			Import				
	1971	1972	1973	1976	1971	1972	1973	1976
USA	228	292	549	2353	151	103	126	560
UK	279	302	424	702	344	292	332	1195
W. Germany	70	63	81	444	131	135	185	826
Nether lands	176	194	299	695	37	45	49	234
France	191	199	286	582	44	58	87	383

Source; Bassey Atte, 1987:163

Table V: Public and Publicity Guaranteed External Aid by 1965 (£Million)

Donor country/agency	Amount
Public issue	16.9
IBRD and IDA	68.0
USA	16.3
UK	30.0
Italy	9.3
West Germany	6.2
Israel	2.6
Nether land	1.0
Supplier credit contractor finance and other medium term credit	76.2
Total	226.5

Source: Dean, 1972:121

The major problem with foreign aid is the conditionality attached. If the loan were granted to an advanced capitalist state, there would be no condition. As observed by Nnadozie (2004) “ most of the western aid countries and agencies if not all, tied their aid to specific projects or programmes in the plan. He also posited that four major potential aid givers namely, the UK, the USA, West Germany and Italy as shown in table 5 above, persistently tied their aid to the import of goods and services from their respective countries and in order to achieve this, they adopt the strategy of financing specified projects with import requirement which they could easily import into Nigeria from their different countries (Dean, 1972). Thus by this action, Nigerian’s economy and environment have become a dumping ground of all sorts of rejected goods that have no absolute value for use or consumption.

Conclusion

The Nigerian economy is a dependent and debt trap economy. Any debt-trapped economy is an enslaved economy for any people, such enslavement is worse than colonialism (Ayayi, 1990). In Nigeria today, such witnesses to the tragic consequences of a grossly mismanaged economy and those responsible for it [the governing class] are confused and do not know how to proceed. Everyone can see how the western powers and their international finance institutions have taken over significant functions of government approving tariff regimes, decreasing the level of social services and deciding subsidies, privatization, trade, wages level, the location of industries, the choice of consultants for the government projects etc., (Ake, 1996). The situation cannot definitely be allowed to continue.

The war against exploitations, poverty and underdevelopment, which is the second struggle for independence must therefore be waged first and foremost against the corrupt, incompetent and exploitative local governing class that has held the country prostrate since 1960. This is because this struggle the second war of independence cannot be successfully waged under the leadership that derived and benefits from the current socio-economic and political formation in the country. Due to their success and expertise in neo-colonial politics and manipulations, the members of the Nigerian governing class now occupy position of power and privilege in the inherited political economy which gave rise to and continue to reinforce underdevelopment and exploitation.

Recommendations

Although there are much in the developed countries that will be useful to Nigeria, what is required is to select suitable ones and ensure proper adaptation to the Nigerian environment (Nwankwo, 1981:104).

- i. As an alternative we recommend that the “Asian tigers” model which Malaysia, China and Japan used to develop their societies. For instance, in Malaysia, selective foreign direct investment was allowed, but proceeds from it were reinvested in agriculture to provide employment and food for the majority of the people.
- ii. Also in China, foreigners were allowed into the economy through the multi-nationals; however, stringent enforceable government policy agenda was put in place to prevent the tradition and culture of the minority oil producing states. The aforementioned strategy is known as theory z advanced by Ouch (1981) and Macmillan (1985), which placed emphasis on the development of indigenous human resources. This is certainly the model for Nigeria and other third world states, although not exhaustive but it seems that this is where the challenge of development in Nigeria is (Duru, 1999.)

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