GLOBAL INEQUALITY AND CHALLENGES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

One of the major challenges facing most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa is inequality and underdevelopment. Inequality in this context is the disparity which exists between the developed and undeveloped countries of the world. The aim of this study is to explore the extent to which these disparities contribute to the underdevelopment of Sub-Saharan African states with specific focus on Nigeria. Data for the study were sourced from secondary sources which includes textbooks, journals, internet materials etc, while the theory of Unequal Exchange was adopted as the framework of analysis. The paper found out that the long period of colonial rule through control of the political, economic, social and cultural lives of Sub Saharan African states by the colonial masters created inequality between these African states and the Western world and these consequently contributed to the underdevelopment of the countries in Sub Saharan Africa. The paper recommends that African countries should develop closer cooperation among themselves rather than relying on help from the Western countries. Also, Sub-Saharan African nations should learn to do away with wars, aggression and conflict as a means of settling disputes, because wars and conflicts contribute to underdevelopment.

keywords: Inequality, Development, Underdevelopment, Sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The inequality between the North and South or Rich and poor nations, is a socio-economic and political division that exist between the wealthy developed countries, known collectively as “the North”, and the underdeveloped/developing countries otherwise termed “the South” (Aja, 2001). Almost all nations comprising the North (industrialized) are in fact located in the Northern hemisphere, with a notable exception of Australia and New Zealand. Though it may appear bullish to identify the Northern/industrial nations into the rich and the Southern developing states with the poor as in both the North and the South, there exist notable economic disparities (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, 1997).

This inequality that has been created is not wholly defined by geography as the south represent the non-industrialized and emerging industrializing countries found in the southern hemisphere. Nevertheless, the architecture of the North is economic strength, it is a zone of plenty and affluence. It is the technology workshop of the entire world. In contrast, the architecture of the South is economic weakness as well as a zone of poverty and underdevelopment. The South is a scene of widespread deprivation, poverty, frustration, disease, poor quality of life and lack of infrastructure. Technologically, the
South is weak and dependent largely on the north, lack in capital and development infrastructure, has weak market economy and are generally referred to as the 3rd world nations (Rourke, 1991). The North is home to central North America and European countries which mostly governs the West and first worlds, with much of second worlds. The South comprises of Africa, Asia and Latin America with about 77% of the world’s population, they produce only 15% of global Gross National Product (GNP). The 23% of the world’s population that lives in the North commands 85% of the world’s wealth. Conclusively while the North is heavily productive, the south is largely consuming. (Aja, 1998; Aja, 2001).

Underdevelopment is not natural to any country or region in the world system”. (Aja, 1998:166), but due to historical process involving Europe and the rest of the world, a onetime barbarian Europe became the industrialized workshop of the world. The core issue was the industrial revolution in Europe in the 18thCentury. In the 19th Century, it resulted in industrialized capitalism (Aja, 2001). The decay and collapse of feudalism shifted the measurement of wealth from land to factories. This altered all relations, land released a large army of peasants who became factory workers or the working class. (Popou, 1984). The principles of division of labour ensured that workers engaged productivity in the area which there are specialized in, and their abilities best fitted. In the process, technology was effectively applied in the production system. The result of the development so far was industrial revolution and mass production beyond the consumption of Europe.

Nevertheless, industrial revolution occurred when earlier known civilizations in Africa, Asia and the 19th century’s Latin America were capitalized (non-industrialized) economies. Industrial revolution soon became an export phenomenon itself. It got first to North America (Aja: 2001). To this end, industrialization brought the North wealth and technology. Industrial revolution was not just the production of food items, clothing and other basic needs; it pictured the application of technology as the production of anything to achieve greater height and happiness in life. Different firms were developed for the manufacture of different goods and services. Some which were for the production of sophisticated navigation aids weapon that were necessary for overpowering and subjugating the more premature and unarmed south.

The forceful integration of the South into international and unequal exchange relations went through a number of shapes. Walter Rodney (1972), among others such as Andre Gunder Frank, Galtung John and Wallenstein Immannel are of the view that the modern world system is informed enough to declare that underdevelopment was not a natural phenomenon but a dependency structure generated by the contact of the advanced industrial economies of Europe with the weak pre-industrial economies of the South (Ebaye, 2016). To this end, this study is aimed at examining the pattern of inequality which exists between the North and the South, and the extent to which it has created inequality and underdevelopment of countries of Sub-Saharan Africa such as Nigeria.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

2.1 Inequality

Earlier understandings of inequality evolved from the traditional outcome-oriented view, whereby income is used as a proxy for well-being. The opportunity-oriented perspective acknowledges that circumstances of birth are essential to life outcomes and that equality of opportunity requires a fair starting point for all. According to Sen (1999), inequality refers to how economic variables are distributed among individuals in a group, among groups in a population, or among countries. Inequality can be seen as the state of not being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities, it is a concept very much at the heart of social justice theories.

Economic inequality means “income inequality”, “monetary inequality” or, more broadly, inequality in “living conditions”. Others further distinguish a rights-based, legalistic approach to inequality, inequality of rights and associated obligations (e.g. when people are not equal before the law, or when people have unequal political power) (Stewart, 2002). Concerning economic inequality, much of the discussion has boiled down to two views. One is chiefly concerned with the inequality of outcomes in the material dimensions of well-being and that may be the result of circumstances beyond one’s control (ethnicity, family background, gender, and so on) as well as talent and effort. This view takes an ex-post or achievement-oriented perspective. The second view is concerned with the inequality of opportunities, that is, it focuses only in the circumstances beyond one’s control, that affect one’s potential outcomes. This is an ex-ante or potential achievement perspective (Stewart, 2002).
2.2 Underdevelopment

Underdevelopment has been misconceived and misinterpreted and thus according to some Marxist scholars does not connote backwardness, primitivity or lack of development. To the radical scholars, underdevelopment is a man-made process and a manifestation of the long period of economic and political relationships between the poor (Third World) countries and the advanced industrialized parts of the world. This was aptly captured by Gunder Frank (1969) thus;

“Underdevelopment is not simply non-development, but is a unique type of socio-economic structure brought about by the integration of the society concerned into the sphere of the advanced capitalist countries” (Frank, 1969).

Liberal scholars captured the meaning of underdevelopment in terms of backwardness and primitivity. To them underdevelopment can be defined as a natural state of social, psychological, political and economic backwardness occasioned by natural and internal milieu. Underdevelopment is therefore the systematic exploitation and discapitalization of the third world countries through centuries of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. The term underdevelopment also refers to that state of an economy where levels of living of masses are extremely low due to very low levels of per capita income resulting from low levels of productivity and high growth rates of population. Underdeveloped countries are now known as ‘developing countries’ signifying that such nations are capable of and are indeed making serious efforts to overcome their problems of poverty and low income(Gupta, 1976). According to the United Nations (1997), an underdeveloped country is one which has a real per capita income that is lower in relation to the real per capita income of the USA, Canada, Australia and Western Europe. Emphasis here is on the low income level relative to the advanced countries and lack of any perceptible success in making substantial improvements in quality of life of the masses. In simple words, an underdeveloped country is just another name by which a poor backward country is known.

Underdevelopment, relating to international development, reflects a broad condition or phenomena defined and critiqued by theorists in fields such as economics, development studies, and postcolonial studies. It is used primarily to distinguish states along benchmarks concerning human development—such as macro-economic growth, health, education, and standards of living—an "underdeveloped" state is framed as the antithesis of a "developed", modern, or industrialized state. Popularized, dominant images of underdeveloped states include those that have less stable economies, less democratic political regimes, greater poverty, malnutrition, and poorer public health and education systems (www.wikipedia.com).

3. THEORETICAL NEXUS

This study is anchored on the theory of Unequal Exchange. This theory was espoused by Arghiri Emmanuel and Samir Amin (1976), (Roxoborough, 1979). Emmanuel’s major thesis is that the underdeveloped countries are exploited through the process of unequal exchange. In the realm of international trade, when the underdeveloped nations sell their commodities below value and at the same time buy commodities above value from the advanced countries of the West, this provides a veritable means of underdevelopment. He further contends that exchange is unequal between the rich and the poor countries due to lower wages as well as lower rate of profit in poor countries.

Kay (1979), while elaborating Emmanuel’s position further observes that, the exploitation of producers in the underdeveloped world has two moments. Firstly, they are exploited by their own capitalists and secondly, through the mechanisms of unequal exchange by the capitalists of the advanced countries. Emmanuel concludes that the improved living of the working class in the advanced industrialized countries is paid for by the underdeveloped countries. Put differently, the high wages of workers in advanced countries are, in part, as a result of low wages of workers in the periphery. Their situation, he notes has a serious implications for the interests of the working classes in the exploited countries of the periphery.

Samir Amin (1976), on his part argues that the world capitalist system is a division of labour which ultimately leads to unequal exchange. This is because division of labour restricts the underdeveloped countries to the production of primary products while leading the developed and advanced countries to the production of industrial goods. This unequal relationship
according to him has serious implications for the underdeveloped nations of the periphery. This is so because, “the immediate advantage derived from specialization will determine the direction of development as between the two countries in such a way that the one that agreed to specialized in the less dynamic branches of production will lose by doing so in the long run.

The theory helps in explaining that labour is rewarded unequally in different parts of the world and that is to say that similar commodities may embody different amounts socially with necessary labour time. The by-product of this perceived inequality of exchange as the thesis of Emmanuel and Amin rightly observed is that it works to the great disadvantage of the underdeveloped countries and as such creates severe underdevelopment to these countries. It stresses further to justify the assertion that the integration of the peripheral states into the main stream of world capitalism and the attendant unilateral transfer of the economic surpluses from the developing to the developed parts of the world, in no small measure led to the development of underdevelopment.

3.1 Features of Underdevelopment in Sub-Saharan Africa

According to Rourke (1991), an underdeveloped economy is known for its low level of Income. Underdeveloped countries are maintaining a very low level of income in comparison to that of developed countries. The per capita incomes of these groups of countries are extremely low if we compared with that of developed countries. Moreover, inequality in the distribution of income along with this low level of income worsens the situation in these economies to a disastrous level.

Also, underdeveloped economies have the existence of chronic mass poverty. This problem of poverty arises not due to any temporary economic maladjustment but arises mainly due to existence of orthodox methods of production and social institutions. The degree of poverty in these economies gradually increases due to increase in its size of population, growing inequality in income and increasing price level. Nearly 76.8 per cent of the world populations are living in those underdeveloped or developing countries of the world, enjoying only 15.6 per cent of total world GNP (Rourke, 1991).

While stressing further on the features of underdeveloped economies Poopu (1984) , posits that developing or underdeveloped countries of the world are suffering from poor rate of capital formation. As the level of per capita income in these countries is very low thus their volume and rate of savings are also very poor. This has resulted to lack of capital formation and which is again responsible for low rate of investment in these countries. As for example, the rate of investment in Sub-Saharan Africa is lower than even 10 per cent but on the other hand, the same rate is ranging between 15 to 30 per cent in developed countries like U.S.A., Canada etc. Thus this poor rate of capital formation is one of the major obstacles towards the path of development of these underdeveloped countries of the world.

Unlike the developed countries, the underdeveloped countries are also characterized by heavy population pressure. The natural growth rate of population in these countries is very high due to its prevailing high birth rate and falling death rate. This excessive population pressure has been creating the problem of low standard of living and reduction in the average size of holding. This has also resulted in low rate of capital formation in these countries. The population in these countries is increasing by 2 to 3 per cent per annum which has created various problems like scarcity of agricultural land, small size of holding, problem of unemployment, food crisis, poverty etc (Ebaye, 2016).

More so, the underdeveloped countries are also suffering from agricultural backwardness. Although being the most important sector, agricultural sector in these countries remains totally underdeveloped. But what is more peculiar is that these countries are depending too much on this agricultural sector. Nearly 60 to 70 per cent of the total population of these countries is depending on agriculture and about 30 to 40 per cent of the total GNP of these countries is generated from agricultural production. Agricultural productivity in these countries remained still very poor in spite of its great importance. In these underdeveloped countries, agriculturists are still following traditional methods and are applying modernized techniques on a very limited scale (Rostow, ).

Excessive population pressure and lack of alternative occupations have resulted in huge unemployment and underemployment problem in these underdeveloped countries. In the absence of growth of alternative occupations both in the secondary and tertiary sector of these countries, this increasing number of population is being thrown on land to eke out
their living from agricultural sector. This sort of increasing dependence on agricultural sector leads to disguised unemployment or under-employment in these economies to a large scale. Moreover, problem of educated unemployment in these economies is also increasing gradually day by day due to lack of industrial development (Osberg, 2015).

Furthermore, for maintaining a rapid pace of economic growth in these underdeveloped countries, possession of different types of natural resources in sufficient quantity and its utilization are very important. But under-developed countries are either suffering from scarcity of raw materials or from un-exploited natural resources of its own. As Ebaye (2016), notes, a look at the endowment position of these countries reveals that some underdeveloped countries are have natural resources like land, water, minerals, forest etc. in sufficient quantity but these resources remain largely under-utilized or even untapped due to various difficulties faced by these countries. These difficulties include inaccessibility of the region, shortage of capital, lack of proper attention, primitive technology, transport bottlenecks and small extent of the market. Thus, by utilizing its natural resources, underdeveloped countries can develop their economies with minimum initiative of their own (Ebaye, 2016).

Underdeveloped countries are facing low level of technology and acute shortage of skilled manpower. Poor technology and lower skills are responsible for inefficient and insufficient production which leads to poverty of masses. The pace of economic growth in these countries is very slow due to application of poor technologies. But the application of modern sophisticated technology both in agricultural and industrial sector is of utmost need in these countries. This requires sufficient amount of capital, technological advancement and training (Poopu, 1984).

As Sen (1999), noted, lack of infrastructural development is a common feature of underdeveloped countries. In respect of transportation, communication, generation and distribution of electricity, credit facilities, social overheads etc. these countries are very much backward than most of the developed countries. Thus due to inadequate infrastructural facilities, the pace of economic development in these countries are very slow.

Rostow (1960), asserts that, underdeveloped countries are characterized by lack of industrial development. The pace of industrialization in these countries is very slow due to lack of capital formation, paucity in the supply of machinery and tools and also due to lack of initiative and enterprise on the part of people of these countries. In spite of having huge potential for industrial development, these countries could not develop the industrial sector on a sound footing. Moreover, whatever industrial development that has been achieved by these countries are very much restricted only to some limited areas.

Underdeveloped countries are also suffering from lack of properly developed market. Whatever market these countries have developed, these are suffering from number of limitations viz. lack of market information, lack of diversification, lack of proper relation or connection between markets, lack of adequate demand etc. also, underdeveloped countries are mostly characterized by the existence of mass illiteracy. Due to illiteracy the people in these countries are very much superstitious and conservative which is again responsible for lack of initiative and enterprise on the part of people of these countries (O’ Brien and William, 2010).

Underdeveloped countries are also suffering from totally poor socio-economic conditions. The path of economic development in these countries is being obstructed by various socio-economic factors like joint family system, universal marriage, costly social customs and the law of inheritance (Ebaye, 2016). To Warren (1970), underdeveloped countries are also suffering from its existing inefficient administrative set up. In the absence of efficient and sound administrative set up, these countries are suffering from lack of proper economic organization, lack of investments and lack of appropriate decisions leading to total mismanagement of these economies.

3.2 Causes of Underdevelopment in Sub-Saharan Africa

There are factors that cause underdevelopment in Sub Saharan Africa. Some of these factors are succinctly discussed as follows;

3.2.1 Slave trade
One of the major causes of African underdevelopment is slave trade. The present state of underdevelopment in Africa dates back to the era of Atlantic slave trade. In 1934, the Portuguese explorers discovered Africa, captured and enslaved the Samaja who were sold into slavery in Portugal. When the Portuguese saw that slave trade was more lucrative than mere geographical discoveries, they occasionally visited the court of the Oba of Benin and allegedly returned to Europe with African converts, but such converts were sold to slavery (Okereke and Ekpe, 2002). The rediscovery of America in 1492, added a new dimension to African slave trade. In 1562, a notorious pirate, John Hockings obtained 300 African slaves from the coast of Guinea and sailed across the Atlantic where he exchanged his human cargos for commodities. Soon the African slave trade became a joint venture by Britain, France, Portugal, Spain and Dutch. The European slave dealers invaded the coastal state of Africa or alternatively provided intoxicating weapons and fire arms to African potent and middlemen who declared fratricidal wars among themselves for the purpose of capturing African tribes’ men who were sold in slave to Europe and America. The significance of slave trade is that it reduced Africans to marketable commodities.

The potential labour force was not engaged in farming and industries, but in an economically negative and destructive work of waging wars. Apart from the brutality involved in the traffic, it was estimated that more than 50 million Africans were sold into slavery in Europe and America (Roxoborough, 1979). Out of this number, more than 15 million Africans reached America and the Caribbean islands while others died or were ruthlessly tortured to death (Brien, 1975). African empires and kingdoms disintegrated because of the fratricidal wars occasioned by slave trade, the Ashanti, Akan, Kisi, Gar etc were nearly wiped out. The ruthless activities of the dealers and their middlemen reduced African society to the Hobessian state of nature, in which there was war by all against all. The disintegration brought about by slave trade did not conduce to the formation of African state system, therefore new colonies were established as the base for investing surplus capital from Europe and America (Okereke and Ekpe, 2002).

3.2.2 Colonialism

Another cause of underdevelopment in Sub Saharan Africa is colonization. Colonialism is a system of unequal relationship of production, exchange and distribution of goods and services between the capitalist producer nations and the colonies, in which the people and the wealth are controlled and exploited for the benefit of the colonialists state. This is exemplified by the master-servant interplay between Europe and Africa in which Africa is the horse and Europe is the rider. In contrast to the ethnocentric idea of a civilizing mission to Dark Continent of Africa, the aim of imperialism in Africa was more of economic phenomenon than social. It therefore became very clear that the 18th century European nationalism set the stage for revolution and implosion which tended to destroy the foundations of the old order in Europe. But the impending catastrophe was averted through acquisition of overseas colonies in Africa. Colonialization was neither an act of civilization nor a desire to civilize, but an act of force motivated by interest. As the French colonial secretary rightly said, the origin of colonization is nothing but an enterprise of individual interest – a one sided and egoistical imposition of the strong upon the weak.

Colonial penetration in Africa was ostensibly disguised as philanthropist scheme of cooperation under the international African association with a set objective to civilize Africans and conceal the intentions to dominate and exploit Africans. Europe’s colonization of Africa started with the establishment of two colonies of Siera lone and Liberia for the resettlement of freed slaves, but when king Leopold II of Belgium finally let loose the atmosphere for scramble, almost all European countries of importance, big or small engaged in territorial expansion in Africa. What began as a sporadic attempt to carve out spheres of influence for new markets and raw-materials systematically developed into organized colonization and overseas expansion in Africa. The keenness of the compensation for African colonies brought the colonized area into heated controversy and increased the risk of wars as the Europeans acquisitively scrambled for territories (Okereke and Ekpe, 2002).

Transport and infrastructure that was built during the colonial period were unevenly distributed in most colonies. This led to regional imbalanced development which is still reflected by post-colonial Africa. Secondly, colonialism led to retardation of technological and industrial development due to neglect of industrialization. Thirdly, the concentration on the production of a few cash crops led to neglect of food production thereby making Africans to “produce what they did not consume and consume what they did not produce”. This has led to food shortages in Africa up to date (Nalianya, 2013).
3.2.3 Legal aspects of land acquisition

At the wake of the scramble for Africa, the self-acclaimed messengers of Christ kingdom embarked on their self-imposed mission of evangelization and redemption of the misconstrued dark continent of cannibals, African chiefs welcomed them with great magnanimity by giving them land to settle down and establish their missionary station. The missionary stations formed the bases of colonial annexation as events later proved that the missionaries were just harbingers of imperialism and disguised agents of colonization who concluded treaties or agreement. African lands were appropriated through the use of force, indiction and bribes as well as fraud.

Africans were completely disposed of their lands through gradual penetration of missionaries and through conquest to clear the population for European settlement. Africans were robbed of their most fertile lands through legal and extra-legal means while the native Africans were pushed to the unfertile and often times unproductive areas. In the West, the private land ownership replaced the communal land ownership system. In South Africa, the native land act of 1913 set aside certain areas in which only Africans might buy land while they were forbidden to buy lands from areas not already owned by them. In East, Central and South Africa, the best lands were appropriated for the European use without proper regard for the interest and needs of African people.

3.2.4 Invincible Multinational firms or Trans-national corporations

These firms have contributed immensely to the economic underdevelopment of most African countries. These are big corporations which manipulate politics and often times subvert sovereign states behind the scene in the wealthy countries. They employ the great power of these nations to seek markets for their finished products and source of raw-materials in African states. The capitalist monopolies and multi-national firms of industrial economies of Europe have spread all over Africa like wild fire in the harmattan in other to use the purchasing power of the Africans to drain the excess production of industrialized Europe. The multinational firms achieve this by maintaining significant control over the economic and political fortunes of weak African countries. They manipulate the consumption patterns of the people through mass media to induce them to purchase goods from them, even if such goods costs more or are of lower standards and also take advantage of the cheap labour. Local initiatives are discouraged as the western based firms are given free hands to operate without regulation, taxation or any form of interference with their operations. The corporations use their home government to suppress any local reform movement aimed at altering the status quo. The investments made by the multi-national firms help to perpetuate the industry’s control of the factors of production in Africa by ensuring that all local production institutions are geared towards export trade. Local savings and investments remain small because of the workers inability to raise their share of the surplus and because of the inability of the government to tax them. The multi-national firms with their trans-national linkages in Africa have become more formidable since the second world war especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. The emergence of the new phenomenon of the multi-national firms can be looked at as the international capitalist struggle. Investment in African states take the form of establishment of branches and subsidaries of these firms. Some African states have connections to these firms like the Caltex, Mobile, Esso, Shell BP, Coca-cola, UAC among others (Warren, 1970).

3.2.5 Foreign Aids

This can equally be seen as development assistance and an important instrument of foreign policy. Such aids are usually extended to African leaders who have little concern with the economic and social well-being of their people. The nature of the aid depends on the situation; the assistance could be technological, military or economic with strings attached. The donor countries use these aids to maintain influence in the less developed African countries and to contain the influence of every other power or hostile ideologies in such states. Aids can also be given as rent for military bases and maintained in countries by the donors such to gain allegiance of such country’s leadership. About 83% of British aids go to the Common-wealth countries, the French aids go to the Francophone African states, but such aids are primarily a function of their desire to maintain cultural, political and economic ties with their ex-colonies (Warren, 1970). Aids are often tied to the procurement of goods and services from the donor countries, the value of aids received is drastically reduced because when the aids recipient are forced to spend their aids on the donor countries, the forces of market competition are adversely affected because firms from the donor countries benefit from monopoly pricing. If credit is given to the recipient country on the
condition that certain goods or machines will be bought, the prices of such goods be manufactured will be reduced considerably. And on the final analysis, the prices paid will be above world market prices of the same commodities concerned. If goods are to be supplied by a monopolist company in the donor country, prices are raised because the recipient countries have no choice. Aid finance purchases from donor countries must be transported to the recipient countries by the donor countries and that is usually done through their shipping companies who raise the charges above normal price level required for shipping such consignment (Okereke and Ekpe, 2002).

In the case of loan of loans, the recipient countries undertake to service these loans with a great percentage, interests alone cover the initial capital in case of long term loans, whereas the recipients still start to repay the debts as and when due. Aids received are often less than the payments which they have to make annually on their debts to rich countries. To the poor countries, the debt service charges represents an increasing burden as they pay with their export receipts which are required to cover the debts service charges (O’ Brein, 1975).

3.2.6 Neo-colonialism

This is a situation in which a country is in theory independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty, but in reality its economic system as well as political policy is directed from the outside (Nkrumah, 1995). The neo-colonial states are controlled by the colonial powers that ruled the territory in question. In spite of the claim of independence, the neo-colonial economy is characterized by expatriate domination of investment opportunities, made possible by access to credit, technology and managerial skills necessary for industrial production. This situation inhibits the accumulation and re-investment of capital by indigenous entrepreneurs who lack the resources necessary to compete favourably with vertically integrated Multi-national corporations. This incapacitation culminated in the reduction of indigenous entrepreneurs to compradors. In other words, the indigenous entrepreneurs became agents and/or intermediaries between foreign interest and the indigenous polity and economy, just as they turned to the state for capital and contracts (Okereke and Ekpe, 2002).

3.2.7 Lack of official ideology

Most African countries lack official ideology. An ideology is a set of ideas that defines a country’s political, economic and socio-cultural structures and development strategy. Lack of ideology therefore has led to a lot of confusion in developing states. Even where such ideologies exist, political actors rarely understand the correlation between ideology and development. We have many parties in existence like in the case of Congo, Uganda and Kenya but they are not ideologically driven. Instead, focus is placed on the personalities behind the political parties (Nalianya, 2013).

3.2.8 Political uncertainty and civil wars

African states are characterized by massive corruption and widespread abuses of human rights that provides a germinating ground for political unrest. Civil wars are as a result of conflict over the limited resources, for example border disputes and land disputes (Nalianya, 2013).

3.2.9 High level of illiteracy

A high populace of Africans are illiterate and even those that are learned have undergone an inappropriate education system. This is because the education systems do not equip learners with technological skills required to enhance industrial growth. This greatly hampers participation of the masses in development process (Nalianya, 2013).

3.2.10 Decision making process

This means that decisions made are highly reflective of the ruling class interests and the masses are therefore forced to accept what has been decided elsewhere. The masses may also not understand what is required of them and the significance of their efforts in promoting the welfare of the nation as a whole (Nalianya, 2013).
4. INEQUALITY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

The rate at which the colonial masters drained virtually both the human and material capitals in most third world countries like Nigeria has them wallowing in abject poverty and deprivation. Inequality exists in Nigeria today even after the end of an era of colonialism as the era of neo-colonialism took the centre stage where the Nigerian bourgeoisie have become agent of underdevelopment to their own people in which case, “Africans started under developing Africans”. Several areas of inequality with its consequent challenges to development in Nigeria exist.

The issue of Import-substitution which was first started in Latin America where development theorizing took early lead as the continent provided readymade laboratory for such theorizing. According to Okereke and Ekpe (2002), import substitution was a strategy aimed at the replacement of some imported products with goods manufactured locally in order to reduce the dependence on imports, especially of consumer items. By adopting this policy it was hoped that the structural obstacles to the expansion of the domestic market would be removed but this did not occur as the perceived inequality which existed between Nigeria and the western countries gave room for more exploitation of the country. Notwithstanding the advantages of import substitution its disadvantages to Nigeria became more alarming as rightly captured by Roxobourough (2012), that import substitution industrialization programme did not break the dependence of Nigeria on the export of primary goods which was one of the primary aim of the policy. The policy did not as well lessen the need for imports; rather the type of import changed from consumer goods to manufactured goods.

The need to ensure the success of the import substitution meant that tariff on manufactured imports were raised as a means of discouraging imports by making it more expensive, but in Nigeria it is evident that most import substitution industries were owned by foreign investors. For instance, Okereke and Ekpe, (2002), pointed out that out of 970 industrial enterprises which were in actual operation and employing between 10 to 20,000 workers in 1965, over 340 of them were owned wholly or partly by foreigners. These private foreign investments or enterprises were mainly multi-national corporations. Asante (1995), as cited in Okereke and Ekpe (2002), equally argues that the programme was import-extensive and required both intermediate and capital goods from abroad to sustain production.

The indigenization strategy which was an attempt to increase local control of the economy and thus reducing foreign dominance and control of these was pursued by Nigeria through the promulgation of the Nigeria Enterprises Decree of 1972 with several objectives. The indigenization programme became another strategy to further under develop Nigeria. Ekpe (2001), argues that the general opinion appears to be that the Act... achieved very little in terms of indigenizing any substantial part of Nigeria industry. Ake (1989), argues further that the programme contributed very little to the primary aim of turning over the economy of Nigeria to Nigerians. Nigerians who benefited from the programme were fronts of their foreign masters and partners. Thus, even those Nigerian who participated in the indigenization programme did so on behalf of foreign interests. This was aptly captured by Ekekwe (1986);

One of the important consequences of the Indigenization Act has been the expansion of the ranks of the comprador bourgeoisie. They are those from among the hitherto impoverished petty bourgeoisie who, because of some wealth they had accumulated or through their access to the institutions established to facilitate the implementation of the Act, were able to integrate themselves more with international capital. This process of integration of Nigerians with international capital took the forms of either buying shares in foreign enterprises or acting as fronts for such enterprises.

Furthermore, the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which was a programme aimed at saving the economies of the countries of the Third World that were experiencing economic problems by correcting some of the structural imbalances inherent in their economies further deepened the problem of underdevelopment in Nigeria. As pointed out by Okereke and Ekpe (2002), SAP led to the generation of social and political tensions and sometimes even political instability arising from the economic hardship occasioned by the programme. This is because, according to one of the conditionalities
of SAP is that countries should reduce public expenditure through reduction of public service workforce, it therefore means that SAP caused unemployment (Okereke and Ekpe, 2002).

Technological transfer is another area where inequality is evident and consequently caused underdevelopment in Nigeria. Transfer of technology was supposed to be a civilizing mission which was sustained by the colonial or neo-colonial structure of dependency of the centre-periphery type (Okereke and Ekpe, 2002). Technology is an embodiment of culture as well as the level of development of any society. Its transfer will logically amount to the transfer of people’s culture into another environment without minding whether the new environment is suitable for such alien culture. It therefore suggests that the technological transfer has in no small measure aided the drain of native culture that has been in place in Nigeria and has been replaced by the western culture which does not tally with the environment. Ikoku (1981), while stressing further on this argued thus;

*The West retains the know-how, know-where, know-when, know-what; and by the grace of i-the West, the rest of us retain the no-how, no-where, no-when, no-what, and no-whom. Patents and industrial secrets are the powerful tools the West uses to sustain such a monopoly; the perverse effects are immeasurable.*

4.1 What should be done?

This paper has examined the nature of inequalities between the developed countries and the undeveloped countries and its challenges to the underdevelopment of Sub-Saharan Africa. The study found out that several factors are responsible for the underdevelopment of Sub Saharan Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. These includes the colonial legacies and the activities of the elites who are engaged in primitive accumulation to the detriment of the development of their state. It becomes imperative to offer policy recommendations if followed may break the jinx of underdevelopment and inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Nigeria in Particular.

Nigeria should try as much as possible to curtail the high rate of foreign aids it receives from the Western countries. The donor countries which gives out aids do not necessary do some because of their magnanimity. Instead they do so because of the gains which are usually incurred as a result of giving out such aids. The recipient countries are often bound by those aids that in cases where they have ideas that will help alleviate their plight; they will do so based on the advice of the donor countries. The free hand to operation given to most multi-national corporations should be reviewed. This is to ensure that they operate within the ambit of the rules and regulations that guide business organizations in Nigeria and as well help in the protection of local industries. Most of the multinational corporations operating in Nigeria are just branches of their head offices in the developed countries who keep under developing Nigeria with their product.

The Nigerian government should engage in research oriented ventures. They should explore the Western developed countries in search of ideas and strategies for the development of the country without the aid and assistance of foreign bodies. There is need for proper funding of research institutes in other to find solutions to the problems of development in Nigeria.

Third world nations should develop cooperation amongst themselves than rely on help from the North. Incidentally, the South generally has the developed, developing and underdeveloped countries. “The developed South is politically more disposed to helping the underdeveloped in capital, trade, investment and market offering (Aja, 2001). Less attention should be paid to western reform programs. Though, advocates of such reforms will swear that they were designed to stimulate economic recovery and spur growth, in practice, such reforms have no developmental value than the promotion of regimes that spread hunger, political and economic quagmire triggered by global and multilateral forces. Such reforms introduced into Sub-Saharan Africa by the North are conceptually flawed, as they fail to take into cognizance the complexities of the African environment. South-South cooperation would be a good medium as Nigeria is already exploring trade and technical cooperation with countries like Japan, China, South Korea, Malaysia, India, South Africa etc. China has in recent years expanded her trade and technical cooperation with a merger of sub-Saharan African countries. Nigeria must aim at becoming technologically self reliant. This way, she would become truly independent thus overcoming the dependency
syndrome that has limited her creativity and innovativeness. To achieve this, there is the need for diversification of the economy. The mono economy which Nigeria has practiced over the years like most African countries has limited it operation and has made Nigerian economy plausible to oil price fluctuations. Import substitution is another policy recommendation which Nigeria need to follow so as to break the barrier of inequality which has continued to result in underdevelopment in Nigeria. The Nigerian state should also avoid wars, aggression, ethnic jingoism and chauvinism as a means of settling disputes. From the experiences of many African countries, war retards development.

5. REFERENCES


