

## **Poverty and Democratization Process in Nigeria: Lesson from the Fourth Republic**

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**Kareem, Alidu Olatunji**

Osun State University, Nigeria

**Lawal, Musediq Olufemi**

Osun State University, Nigeria

### **Abstract**

The desired goal(s) of any democratic experiment the world over is to make life comfortable for the generality of the citizenry through provision of food, adequate shelter, habitable housing, functional and free education, avoidable and accessible health care system, functional public/social infrastructures among others. The realization of these democratic dividends since the return of the country to democratic rule in 1999 is dampened by the existence of wide spread poverty among the citizens. Poverty has seriously impacted on the democratic process in such a way that the type of leadership that have emerged in the present republic were not people friendly as they lack patriotism, sincerity, management skills, vision, morality and political will to put in place necessary programmes that will ameliorate the already worsening situation of the masses. This paper examines the diverse ways through which poverty has negatively influence our democratic process. It argues that no meaningful dividends of democracy will come out of the present experiment until the issues underlying the continue slavery of the people are addressed. Possible suggestions to ameliorate the poverty induced pathetic conditions of the masses are suggested, these include: the need on the various tiers of government to redistribute the revenue of the state in way that benefit lower income groups; government should support hospital and schools; give aids to the families to reduces the risk of crime and political conflict since poorer families are likely to seek illegal means of earning income or to unite in protest over their living conditions; there is need to fight the menace of corruption through control mechanism, provision of job- training and job - search programmes for adults and compensatory education programmes for the children so they are better able to find well-paying job. There is serious need to change the way we do things so as to benefit the poor through altering the tax system; encouraging the creation of good jobs, reducing discrimination, and the like.

### **Keywords**

Poverty, democracy, dividends of democracy, leadership, corrupt practices, electoral process

### **Corresponding author:**

Alidu Olatunji Kareem, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria

E-mail: alidu.kareem@uniosun.edu.ng

## THE FEAR OF POVERTY

The fear of poverty paralyses the faculty of reasoning; destroys the faculty of imagination; kills off self-reliance; undermines enthusiasm; discourages initiative; leads to uncertainty of purpose; encourages procrastination; wipes out enthusiasm and makes self-control an impossibility; it takes the charm from one's personality; destroy the possibility of accurate thinking; diverts concentration of effort; it masters persistence; turn the will powers into nothingness; destroy ambition, beclouds the memory and invite failure in every conceivable form; it kills love and assassinates the finer emotions of the heart, discourage friendship and invites disaster in a hundred forms; leads to sleeplessness, misery and unhappiness. (Napoleon Hill, 1969)

## Introduction

Poverty, the social stigma that pervades human lives in both developing and developed nations of the world is eating deeply into the democratization process globally. It has seriously impacted negatively on democratic processes in developing nations of the world to the extent that the dreams, hopes and aspirations of the people become shattered. Sharing this view, Dagaci (2012) aptly put it that as many countries plagued by mass poverty and underdevelopment moved toward democratic government there seemed to be a presumption that democracy is the desideratum in the developmental process and the establishment of democratic governance, which is expected to bring about sustainable development.

Globally, democracy is central in the determination of the quality of life of the individuals and is the central element for human beings to live freely and autonomously. The essence of democracy is thus to guarantee good governance, that is, efficient and effective public administration, rational policies and sound management of all resources (Wafure, 2012). In the words of Diamond (2015), good governance is achieved when the constitution and laws are widely known, when the law is applied equally to the mighty and the weak, when everyone has reasonable access to justice, and where there are capable, independent authorities to adjudicate and enforce the law in a neutral, predictable and efficient fashion. Good governance therefore, is the ability to rule on the basis of equity and justice stemming corruption, nepotism, political violence and full application of the rule of law in the governance (Walfure, 2012).

In Nigeria, as noted by Dagaci (2012), the renaissance of democracy on May 29, 1999 raised the hope and expectation of the entire citizenry. In

contrary to the expected benefits, the scholars noted that civilian administration from 1999 to date has corruptly ravaged the Nigerian society with criminal poverty, unemployment, forcible rape, child abuse, child labour, human trafficking, prostitution, broken homes, hawking, homelessness, Almajiri syndromes, indiscriminate shameless begging, unfulfilled political promises, insecurity of lives and properties, cultism, exam malpractices, absolutisation of political differences, executive lawlessness, insensitivity, rashness, brashness, food insecurity, voodooism, electoral tricksters and fraudsters, gangsterism, social right violations (woman rights), dwindling and stagnated economy, dilapidated prisons, disarticulated and dislocated educational system, decayed infrastructures and general underdevelopment (Akindele, 2005; Omotola, 2006; Nye, 2009; Ochulo, Metuonu, and Asuo, 2011; Alo, 2015). Summarily, Dagaci (2012) aptly described the characteristics features of democracy in Nigeria as alienating and disempowering rather than empower; it is anti-people, anti-intellectual and anti-development.

A cursory look into the incident of poverty since the commencement of Nigerian Fourth Republic in 1999 revealed that there is no significant improvement in the general welfare and condition of the people. Poverty has eaten deep into the fabric of the society. The incidence of poverty and inequality are rampant and highly depicted by low Human Development Index (HDI), high illiteracy rate, low enrolment rate and low life expectancy and deteriorating social indicators. Coupled with this is the alarming rate of increment in the incidence of corruption as attested to by the Economic Crime Commission (EFCC). The amount of monies looted from the country treasuries, which runs into trillion is a testimony to this. The issue of social infrastructural decay is also on the increase, Nigerian roads remain death traps, electricity supply remains epileptic while very insignificant few (13.2 percent) are accessible to potable water (Walfure, 2012). Corroborating this situation, 2010 Global Monitoring Report (GMR) of UNESCO revealed that about 71% of the Nigerian population survives on less than \$1 daily. Out of the population that National Population Commission (2006) put at 159.29 million in Nigeria, 113.1 million are poor. From the foregoing, it is clear that democracy in Nigeria has not achieved the much expected dividends; rather it continues to improvise the majority of the citizenry. Borrowing from the words of Amadi (2007), the existing poverty was further influenced and perpetuated by politics and culture that supposed to turn the fortune of the people round for better in Nigeria. It is on the strength that this paper is examining the concepts of democracy and poverty, the links between the two and how poverty increasingly becoming a clog in the wheel of achieving sustainable democratization process and development in Nigeria.

### ***The Concept of Poverty***

There is no argument among the behavioural scholars about the existence of poverty in the society whether developing or developed, but what constitute

poverty and the causes are still subject of debate over the years. This is because poverty is seen as a social construction whose definitions and explanations vary among scholars of diverse theoretical orientation. Poverty is then, essentially a relative concept, a condition measureable only in terms of the long standards and resources of specific society at a particular time. For instance, a person seems as poor in Nigeria in 1991 will have better absolute living standards than someone who live in the Mandila Hills in Jos (Plateau State) few years back. As Galbraith (1958) says:

People are poverty stricken when their incomes, even if adequate for survival, fall markedly below those of the community. Then they cannot have what the larger community regards as the necessary minimum for decency... they are degraded for; in the integral sense, they live outside the grades or categories which the community regards as acceptable.

Barret (2003) conceived poverty as a situational syndrome which combined the following: under-consumption, malnutrition, precarious housing conditions, low educational level, bad sanitary condition, unstable participation in the production system or restriction to its more primitive strata, attitudes of discouragement and anomie, little participation in the mechanism of societal integration and possible adherence to a particular scale of values that are different to some extent from those held by the rest of the society. In another perspective, Todaro (1985) perceives poverty as the number of people living below specified minimum level of income, an imaginary international boundary nor levels of national per capital income. Lending credence to this, Brym *et al.* (2007) identified different levels of explanation of poverty; individual level, cultural level and social-organizational level. The individual level explanation focus on the attributes of people who are poor, questioning how these people differ from people who are not poor, this type of explanation focuses on causes that lie 'within the person'. Someone is poor on this logic because of personal attribute, such as low intelligence or behaviour. Some evidence suggests that individual attributes do explain a small amount of poverty, for example, people with physical disability or schizophrenia live in poverty (Brym *et al.* 2007; Amadi, 2007; Shakar Rao, 2011); they have high risk of living in poverty than others. It was further noted that not all people who have physical disabilities or schizophrenia live in poverty, the vast majority of people living in poverty have neither disabilities nor schizophrenia. The implication of this is that, for the most part, poverty is not a consequence of individual attributes, even though these are important in some cases.

A related form of explanation focuses on the attitudes of individuals' and not on attributes that are inherited but on attributes or stigmas that are required. A social psychological type of explanation emphasizes low self-esteem, lack of

achievement, lack of motivation, and an inability to delay gratification. On the logic, poverty is perpetuated because poor families employ inadequate child rearing practices that enhance bad attitudes. A related version of this argument stresses a 'culture of poverty', a way of following and acting shared by poor families. This culture reinforces and perpetuates itself through poor upbringing and ill-formed personalities.

However, sociologists often dismissed this type of reasoning as 'blaming the victim'. One is poor on the reasoning because he/she has a poor work ethic, shoddy morals, no aspirations, no discipline, no fortitude and so forth. Various objections underline these types of explanation. First, there is a cause and effect, or chicken and egg, people who are poor may develop 'bad attitudes' but these may result from poverty and not be causes of poverty (Brym *et al.*, 2007; Shakar Rao, 2011 and Ake, 1994). The culture of poverty might provide inadequate description of some circumstances but it is not an adequate explanation in general. Put differently, descriptions of poverty stressing a culture of depression, lack of hope and fatalism may be accurate, but these effects of poverty ought not to be confused with the causes of poverty (Diamond, 2005; Brym *et al.*, 2007; Shakar Rao, 2011).

Secondly, many people who are poor do work, they are religious, didn't smoke or drink and so on. Therefore, evidence that supports explanations founded on personal deficits is often lacking. Another form of explanation with greater currency in sociology stresses the social organization of society, or subsystem in society as explanation of poverty; that organization of our economy for example, affects poverty. Capitalist economy features cyclical booms and bursts, period of low unemployment and high profits, followed by high unemployment and low profits. When unemployment rate rises, so do the number of families forced to live on reduced earnings, which for many means living in poverty. The right of employer to refuse to renew work contracts is an accepted part of our economic system. The reductions in income that result can hardly be attributed to changes in individual motivation. Low wage jobs are also a part of the economy and some people in low-skill; non-unionized, part-year jobs will not earn enough to escape poverty. As Krahn and Loure (1998) summarises the situation, a weak work-ethic and lack of effort are seldom the explanation for individual poverty, 'more often the problem is one of not enough good jobs'.

Other analysis stress social policy as a factor affecting poverty levels (Brym *et al.*, 2007; Shakar Rao, 2011). For example, if one receives the minimum hourly wage while working full time, full year, you will still be poor, especially if you had children to support. In this sense minimum wage legislation is a social policy that created group of working poor. The social world is not quite so simple, of course, and if minimum wages were to rise, so too might the level of employment because some employers might not be able to afford to pay higher wages. Debate over these issues continues, but the point is that our social policies affect the well-being of the people and understanding the consequences of policies is critical.

The system of tax collection and tax allocation illustrate another way that social policies affect poverty (Todaro, 1956; Omodi, 2007; Ojo, 2006). A progressive taxation is one in which a greater proportion of income is paid in tax as income rises. For example, those who earn N100, 000 pay a larger percentage of their income as tax than those who earn N50, 000. Although income tax system in Nigeria is progressive, the overall tax system is neutral. Most Nigerian families pay about the same percentage of their total income. This occurs because two inter-related factors undermine the 'Robin Hood' effect of progressive income taxes. First, other taxes such as Value Added Tax and Poll tax are flat or neutral. They are not based on the income of the tax payer. And some lower income families typically spend higher proportions of their income on consumption; such taxes are somewhat regressive in impact. Secondly, those who earn more are able to shield much of their income from taxation (e.g. in registered education saving plans, in registered retirement saving plans, through capital gains tax exemptions, and so forth). The net effect as was discussed above, is a system that does little to actually redistribute income and therefore relatively little to erode poverty.

All said and done, negative images of various groups on the issue of poverty has lead to undervaluing of the ways of life of some people, such as first nature and people with disabilities. Undervaluing of talents and identities leads to less success in finding jobs. Even when employment is found, the work is often unsteady and low paying. In the words of Wright (1956); Giddens (1990) and Brym *et al.* (2007), the idea of rugged individualism implies that our personal future ought to rest on our own shoulders. Those who work hard, who persevere, who make wise decisions supposedly deserve rewards like Robison Crusoe while those who are lazy and universal deserve less.

A contrasting idea, that is, the idea of collective responsibility implies that as members of a community we ought to look out for one another. In this view, 'to each according to his or her need' ought to be supreme principle. Those who have should share. The interests of the many should come before the riches of a few. Coming back home, the unequal distribution of income in Nigeria and the high salaries of political appointees, chief executive officers of large corporations and government agencies are consistent with the theme of 'rugged individualism'. The much orchestrated free education and health care flouted by some states government illustrates the theme of collective responsibility. Both of these themes represent contrasting social policies where one focused on the 'supremacy of individual rights', the other emphasizing 'collective responsibility and the common good'. In summary, sociological explanation looks not to the personal qualities of the poor but to the organization of society as a way of explaining why some people are poor and why poverty persists.

### ***Democracy Overview***

Like many of the concepts in behavioral science, democracy is variously defined by scholars and political activists. Democracy as a political system is often said to be the best and the most civilized form of political system. Brym *et al.* (2007) see democracy as a word with many meanings and some emotional colouration. They further reveal that it almost literally meant all things to all men. Ake (1994) defined democracy a political system in which the eligible people in the polity participate actively not only in determining the kind of people that govern them, but also participate actively in shaping the policy of government. According to Diamond (2005), democracy is a system of government in which the people chose their leaders and representatives, and can replace them, in regular, free and fair elections. The choice of leaders through an election periodically and in a free and fair contest (election) is what Diamond conceived as democracy.

In another development Ikeotuanye (2000) conceived democracy to mean license to engage in strange thoughts and behaviours including freedom to kill and maim fellow human beings and freedom to destroy property. Osaghae (2010) also defined democracy as “a process of continuous struggle and engagement to make the state (democracy) more responsible and accountable to the citizenry which in fact makes the institutional requisites and processes more purposive and meaningful”. He further maintained that the implications of the definition above are twofold. First is that, democracy cannot be separated (divorced) from democratization (process of establishing and consolidating a democratic regime where it already existed). Secondly, it means that democratization of the state is at the core of democracy. Another scholar noted define democracy as a complex of social, economic, political factors, affecting the relationship of the state of the individual, guarantee essential freedoms, personal liberty, and freedom of expression, of organization and of governing activities (Shakar Rao, 2011).

Abraham Lincoln equally said that democracy is a ‘government of the people by the people and for the people’. For Aristotle democracy was a ‘perverted’ form of popular rule. In classifying the nature of democracy in the world, the civilized democracies are distinguished by the nature of the social practice and dynamic of such societies. The first types of democracy is known as the ‘bourgeois democracy’ with predominant capitalist ideology while the second is the ‘liberal democracy’ with a western oriented concept while the most acceptable form of democracy is the ‘socialist democracy’ which is people included and participating (Wilmot, 2005).

Shakar Rao (2011) identified two forms of democracy; direct and indirect. Direct democracy is also known as *pure democracy* and *simple democracy*. A direct democracy is one in which the people themselves take direct part in the affairs of the state in passing laws and executing them. Here, people exercise power directly. This kind of democracy can exist and function only in small states with limited population, where all the people can conveniently assemble

at a given place and pass laws. This kind of democracy existed in the ancient city states of Greece, but it survives in some of the small cantons in Switzerland. It cannot be put into practice in modern complex societies.

Indirect or representative democracy is practiced in modern states which are generally very large in size and population. Hence direct democracy cannot function in these states. Modern democracy is mostly *indirect democracy*. In indirect democracy the government is run by the representatives who are elected periodically by the people. Giddens (1990) and Wright (1956) defined indirect democracy as one in 'which the whole people or some numerous portion of them, exercise the governing power through deputies periodically elected by them'. The people judge the representatives by their deeds, if they are found to be efficient they are re-elected, otherwise, new members are elected. Still the people do not have direct control over the representatives once they are elected. They may fail to perform their duties properly, some states have introduced various direct democratic checks like referendum, recall etc.

From the review of literature certain basic principles or characteristics of democracy emerged; such as freedom of speech, tolerance, Liberty, equality and fraternity, sovereignty of the people, rule by the majority with full safeguards for the right of minority, universal adult suffrage, Persuasion as opposed to the use of coercive methods. These basic principles are meant to achieve democratic values which include: upholding the dignity of human personality, guarantees fundamental human right to its citizens, right to freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, constitutionality, justice and welfare of all citizens,

In summary, a democratic society is one in which the spirit of equality and fraternally prevails. Such a society does not necessarily imply a democratic state or democratic governments. As Brym *et al.* (2007) observe, democracy is an ideal society of equals in the sense that each is an integral and irreplaceable part of the whole. A democratic society is a society of free, equal, active and intelligent citizens, in which each man chooses his own way of life himself and wishing that others should choose theirs.

### ***Poverty and Democratisation Processes***

There is agreement among the scholars that poverty has greatly affected Nigeria attempted democracy since its inception in May 1999; however its extent and consequences are still shrouded in controversy. It is evident from literature that poverty has eaten deeply into the democratization process in Nigeria; the starting point is the leadership of political associations in the country which are controlled by the 'well to do members' of these political parties.

From the wards level to the national executive of these parties, leadership is characterized by men and women who lack ideas, integrity, honesty, self-

confidence, intelligence and knowledge, and lack in organizational capability and ability to lead successfully. This is manifested in the endless crises plague many of the parties. The only qualification these people have is money or support of godfathers who are rich enough to influence their selection or election. The ineptitude of these leaders manifested in the quality of representation they produce at governmental levels (legislative and executive arms of government). These party leaders are controlled by the godfathers who put them in the office as the popular dictum says 'he who pays for the pipers dictates the tune'.

Related to the above is the representation these parties put up at the local, state and federal levels of administration. Poverty has shut doors against people of high intellect and integrity. Studies (Akindele, 2005; Omodi, 2007; Ochulo, 2012) have shown that the three tiers of government in Nigeria are centers of rots, loots, cheats and decay. Nye (2009) and Omotola (2013) described the 36 states and the federal territory as 'mere administration parliament of illusion, theocrats, hypocrites, confusionists, anti-people, rumor peddlers, mediocre, militias, parochialism, cheap popularity, petty compradonism, myopism and unbridled elite- hooliganism'

Furthermore, poverty has made the seats of government both at the legislative, executive and judiciary fertile ground' for corruption and personal enrichment at the expense of the country (Nye, 2009; Ochulo, Methomu and Asuo, 2011; Otusanya, 2013 and Asaolu, 2015). Cases of corruption of 'highest order' are being reported on daily basis by both the electronic and print media. According to Khean (2005), Aliu and Zakariyau (2013), Otusanya (2013), Alo (2015) and Asaolu (2015), corruption takes place in the form of bribery, kickbacks, commissions, or other benefits without leaving any trace in the official records. It also includes frauds, undue benefit by bypassing some controls or bending some rules, extortion and embezzlement (Sefe, 2007; Theobald, 1997), acceptance of money and other rewards for awarding contracts, diversion of public resources for private use, tax collection and tax assessment frauds, perversion of intellectual responsibilities degenerately or not, for personal gains at the expense of the system (Dagaci, 2012; Iro, 2012; Aliu, 2013; Alo, 2015; Asaolu, 2015). In short, poverty has enthroned corruption in our body politics; it has become a serious threat to sustainable democracy and socio-economic development of Nigeria.

Poverty has also impacted negatively on election process in Nigeria. In relation to this, Momoh (2005) documented various sharp practices which threaten sustainable democracy in Nigeria. These include: multiple voters registration, hoarding of voters cards, impersonation, buying and selling of voters card deliberately carried out by the electorate for monetary gains to ameliorate their poor conditions. The electoral institution, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is also affected by poverty as both ad hoc and permanent staff, due to poor background and 'uncontrolled appetite' for money engaged in electoral malpractices which include: block recruitment of agents, poor training of ad hoc staff, bribery, inflation of accredited figures,

intimidation of voters, falsification of election results, supply of poor election materials, disfranchisement of eligible voters among others (Ayoade, 2008; Walfure, 2012; Iro, 2012).

Nigeria political landscape is equally characterized by thuggery, intimidation of electoral officials, hijacking of and vandalisation of electoral evidence, selection of wrong people to wrong political position instead of election. Majority of State Governors in Nigeria are guilty of this, as they refused to conduct local government election in their respective states, instead, they continue to appoint their cronies to run affairs of Local Government administrations, deliberate and unnecessary time wasting at the election tribunals (Omodi, 2007; Omotola, 2008; Otusanya, 2013). All these criminal activities were noted as greatly being induced by poverty and 'fear of unknown' (Walfure, 2012; Chipkin, 2013; Ali and Zakariyau, 2013).

The dispensation of justice in respect of disputes arising from election petitions was not spared of this menace. First, economically weak candidate with no god-father may find it difficult to challenge his/her electoral injustice at the court, hence he loses out to the 'victorious' candidate who might have been declared by the election umpire (INEC) in a suspicious manner. Secondly, if the 'defeated' candidate summoned courage to go to court, to obtain justice from the electoral tribunal is a difficult task, evidence from election tribunals in Nigeria have shown that money is being used to pervert the course of justice. We have witnessed a situation where similar cases were judged differently for frivolous and illogical reasons. There were many cases of judges being accused of bribery, many of them had been taken to the National Judicial Commission (NJC) for delivering 'suspected judgment in favour of their candidate who might have paid for his/her victory. The controversy that trailed most of such judgment continues to rock the judiciary up till today. Thirdly, poverty in a way is responsible for the type of witnesses that appeared in election tribunal to give witness in election petitions. Many witnesses were brought to court after they must have received money from either of the parties in the electoral contest. These were evident in the way these witnesses behave in the tribunal. Some of them were subject of ridicule and embarrassment as they found it difficult to give 'admissible evidences' before the tribunal.

The selection process of candidates for various political positions by different political parties was essentially influenced by poverty, as only candidate with financial muscles usually emerged as party candidates for elections. Success at the parties primary election is thus a product of amount of money candidates could give to the delegates who voted during such primaries. Also there are cases in which candidates' success at the primary elections was upturned to pave way for the money bag politicians who might have paid heavily to the 'power that be' within the parties to influence such change. This has led to litigations, when the parties failed to resolve the issue until the eve of

the election. The resultant effect of this unwholesome and undemocratic behaviour had led the parties involved to lose the deserving victory at the polls.

### ***Consequences of Poverty on Sustainable Development***

It has been generally observed that poverty-infected democratic process has served as an obstacle to sustainable development in the country (Aliu and Zakariyau, 2013). Meanwhile, a democratic dispensation given the opportunities to thrive has the potential of engendering innovation and blossoming of ideas that will usher in a developmental process that is sustainable. In Nigeria, this was not permitted to happen, rather, loyalty laced with nepotism, favouritism, corruption and mediocrity was the order of the day. Poverty threatened democracy therefore brings about the question of credibility and quality of our representations at the local, the state and the national levels to the public focus. It is disturbing to note the type of leaders that 'our democracy' is throwing up; many of the leaders had been found guilty of one offence or the others which includes certificate forgery and perjury as applied to *Salisu Buhari*, financial recklessness as the case was for *Evan Enwerem* and *Chuba Okadigbo*. Also worthy of mentioning was the case of *Prof. Fabian Osuji*, *Diepreye Alamiyeseigha*, *Tafa Balogun* and *Bode George* who were convicted of stealing of public money; the bribery cases of *Lawan Farouk*, *Iyabo Obasanjo* and *Sunday Afolabi* (Aiyede, 2008; Nye, 2009; Adele, 2011; Alo, 2015).

Furthermore, poverty-induced democracy has greatly affected the livelihoods and social order in the country. The living conditions of the people are seriously threatened as hunger, lack of shelter, inadequate health facilities, insufficient money to pay children school fees, inadequate income to meet daily needs and host of others becomes the dividends of democracy. The poor are getting poorer, while the rich are becoming richer. The prevailing conditions in the country are gradually becoming unbearable for the sizeable numbers of the country men and women. All these thus serve as pointers for urgent intervention programs to stem the rate and prevalence of poverty in the country in order to achieve the much orchestrated 'sustainable socio-economic and political development. Furthermore, the principle of rule of law has not taken strong root in Nigeria's democratic endeavour. This state of affairs thus gives rise to insecurity in the country and slows down the growth of democracy and good governance.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is therefore not surprising that Nigeria found herself in the present position of backwardness and 'sustained development of underdevelopment'. The decay occasioned by this has permeated all strata of the society most especially, the security, education, judicial sectors. As a result of this, all the institutions responsible for the societal developmental projects had been corrupted as

billions of Naira meant for developmental projects had been stolen by the government at all levels and their cronies. The implication of this remains constant reproduction of poverty due to absence of 'due processes' and bastardization democracy. What then nation has in returns are poor power supply, bad roads, insecurity of lives and poverties, bad educational system, hospitals without drugs, unemployment, terrorism, non-payment of workers salary, fuel crisis among others. On this note, various tiers of government should redistribute the revenue of the state in the ways that will benefit lower income groups. They should redistribute some tax money towards ameliorating the suffering of the poor. Necessary provisions like financial autonomy should be granted to the Judiciary in order to make them independent, this will position the body to service the nation through balanced, fair and acceptable judgments that can enhance collective interest, democracy and good governance in Nigeria. Nigerian constitution should be given a thorough review in order to suit the demands of Nigerians; the issue immunity clause, which protects some top government officials from prosecution while in office, should be part of the concern of such review.

Poverty and hunger remain paramount as the one obstacle to national security, growth of democracy and good governance in Nigeria. To alleviate or reduce poverty, government must intensively put efforts in the agricultural sector, create more jobs, support medium and small-scale businesses and provide infrastructures, particularly power supply. This will no doubt significantly minimize insecurity; propagate democracy and good governance in the country. Education should get the highest amount from the budget and the fund should be used to build, equip and operate schools that can effectively produce a literate Nigerian society. An educated populace will help facilitate the actualization of good governance. Functional education will prepare the citizenry especially the youth for challenges ahead and at the same time put them in better perspectives to see futility in social vices like corruption. Government should support hospital and schools; Aids to the poor families in order to reduce the vulnerability to crime and political conflict since poorer families are likely to seek illegal means of earning income or to unite in protest over living conditions. Government and job providing agencies should help in empowering the poor by assisting in skills provision through job training and job-search programmes for adults and compensating education program for the children for them to be able to find well-paying job.

There is equally an urgent need to reexamine the existing social structure and change the way we do things so as to benefit the poor. This would involve altering the tax system, encouraging the creation of good jobs, reducing discrimination, maintaining peace and orders, protecting lives and properties among others. As Alo (2015) succinctly put it, corruption is social 'ebola' that can easily spread and be catastrophic if urgent steps are not taken specifically

from the part of government and other stakeholders to ensure that this monster is put under control for sustainable living and all-encompassing development.

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