

# AN APPRAISAL OF DEVELOPMENTAL CRISES IN AFRICA: LESSONS FROM THE ASIAN TIGERS

By

**Abdulrasheed Abdulyakeen**

Department of Political Science,

Al-Qalam University, Katsina. Katsina State.

Email: abdulrasheedabdulyakeen90@gmail.com; 08033628063

And

**Bashir Ibrahim Aminu**

Department of Political Science,

Federal University, Dutsin-ma. Katsina State.

Email: Politicalbash6@gmail.com; 08034550552

## Abstract

*This study compares Africa's developmental crises with those of Asian 'Tigers' success economic story, and how it can serve as a lesson for Africa, still trudging on development. The work observes, contrary to all pretenses that Africa, in spite of her much publicized theoretical ambition for development, is still caught in the web of under-development. It examines the various obstacles to Africa's development and identified them as systemic pathological defects. The paper argues Asian Tigers that shared similar experiences with Africa have moved away from under-development and poverty to rival the levels of prosperity in the Global North. Using data generated from secondary sources and comparative method of analysis, the paper articulates that; Africa's developmental challenges such as bribery and corruption, bad governance, weak political institutions and undemocratic values are serious, real and many but could be meet through improvement on governance. The paper noted that today, African leaders still excusably blame the failure of the region on its colonial past. While these features cannot be said to be the libel of Asia Tigers. Interesting, they are now in revolt against bondages of the past, against poverty, ignorance disease, under-development and dependency syndrome. In light of the above finding, a major institutional reform is needed to achieve sustainable development in Africa.*

**Keywords:** Colonialism, Developmental Crises, Asian 'Tigers' Africa

## Introduction

As recently as the early 1960s South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong (the "Asian Tigers") were considered to be a part of the third world: Harvey and Lee (2002) rather unkindly refer to it as "economic backwardness". Since the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, praise of the "Asian Miracle" has dwindled in academia (Bhattacharjea, 2008). After the Asian tigers showcased rapid industrialization, development economists and political economists started devoting a great deal of attention to studying the factors of success for industrialization in East Asia. A perspective that

has become influential highlights how successful industrialization in East Asia was contingent on specific features of the state, which later has become known as features of ‘developmental states’.

In short, this literature attributes the following characteristics to the East Asian developmental states: (1) they were states that successfully conjoined private ownership with heavy state intervention; (2) although they were states that did not gain legitimacy through parliamentary elections (for the most part), they did so through their record in economic development; (3) they were states that gave high policy priority to economic development, economic development was to be achieved over anything else and this was to be done through industrialization; and (4) they were states that had a professional bureaucracy that kept its distance from everyday politics and from the lure of the private sector, but at the same time was a partner with the private sector, sharing the goal of industrial transformation (Sims & Pandian, 2003) (Chang, 2006).

Reda Cherif and Fuad Hasanov highlight three key principles behind the success of the Asian tigers: (1) the support of domestic producers in sophisticated industries, beyond the initial comparative advantage; (2) export-orientation; and (3) the pursuit of fierce competition with strict accountability. Chang (2006).

The Asian tigers provide us with an interesting alternative to the developmental strategies most commonly seen in state building exercises, with their emphasis on liberal values like democracy and market-led growth. Replication of their successes may well be possible, though it will require a dramatic rethinking of our approaches to development economics and our conception of the relationship between a regime’s legitimacy and security. This paper will critically discuss whether there are lessons to be learnt from these Asian economies arguing that the main reason for their success is a strong political/ state leadership. Furthermore, the argument will state that the political leadership of these Asian states has adopted long term development strategies with the use of these different tools: Education, technology, cheap Labor, natural resources, infant industries, trade, geography and the allocation of aid. Each of these areas will be explored and often highlighted when discussing the lesson learn. The paper will also examine the missing link and main key to success found within these East Asian cases that hasn’t been witnessed in other regions that have failed in their own adoptions of state lead growth.

The post-independent African states has undergone several political and economic reforms, yet there is little development to shows for its. African by far, one of the richest continents endowed with natural and mineral resources in the world, but among the poorest in the world (Nduku, 2014). African faces lot of development huddles which are real and many, but could be met via vibrant civil society and strong political commitment. These among many others are serious issues lacking in Africa. Today, however, it is widely recognized that Africans live in abject poverty conditions. Why? Basically, it is the failure of government in the promotion of the

common good, resource distribution, lack of transparency and accountability and independent judiciary system that works for all.

The African state over the years have sailed liked a troubled and sinking ship on a turbulent sea being tossed up and down insight of no shore to anchor. To mitigate the heightened tension in such a sinking ship have adopted the posture of suffering and smiling, praying and hoping that the ship will one day anchor and offer them some respite. For many decades Africa has been seen by many critical observers as a collapsed state which though not in a state of war is a nursery bed for impunity and lawlessness. The situation of the continent paints a picture of a jungle state where everything goes where plundering and looting of the public wealth is allowed and even considered a blessing and the life of its citizens are worthless and the destruction of its inconsequential. This may not be far from the truth. After all, the Rwandan genocide in which nearly a million people lost their lives, the Liberian, Sierra Leone and Congolese civil wars just two decades ago with their unholy contraption know as child soldiers provide veritable material with which to substantiate these kinds of portrays (Igezundia,1990),(Barkindo,2006), (Ibrahim and Cheri, 2013).

In Africa for example, powerful cabals with strong presence in government circle influences contract with huge cut backs, a practice which has spiraled the costs of public contracts and encouraged fiscal indiscipline. While post-colonial states in Latin American and Asia have broken the mold of underdevelopment with Brazil, the Asian Tigers, and the Tiger Club Economies: Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Thailand, have all chart their path to development in spite of their colonial past, African leaders still excusably blame the failure of the region on its colonial past. Such narrative is no longer tenable as there are indigenous culprits in the underdevelopment crises the region since independence than by civilians. But yet, there is no evidence of leadership performance to differentiate civilian leaders from military rulers. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. Why has Africa failed to develop in spite of all efforts towards transforming the region?
- ii. What endogenous factors have contributed to the underdevelopment of Africa?
- iii. How can the crisis of underdevelopment in Africa be surmounted?
- iv. Suggest ways of strengthening the influence of ethics in the public sector.

### **Terminological Conceptualizations**

In the words of Jamesclement (2014), any scholarly work, idea or knowledge not subject to critical evaluation should be disposed into the waste-bin of historical embarrassment. In line with this, this paper for the purpose of comprehensive clarification and understanding attempts a succinct scholarly review of terminological concepts and elicited an operational stance of these concepts within the context of this discourse. The concepts reviewed and operationalized include:

### **Development**

Different authors have given meaning and definition to the phrase economic development, but the exact and acceptable definition of an individual depends on each person stand point of view. Some equated it with economic growth, simply put, an increase in real national income, but development to this belief, peace, justice and social change cannot take place if there is war and conflict (Adekanye, 2010). Economic property and social progress necessarily go hand in hand and that a society that develops involves both “economic” and “non-economic” elements interacting organically with improvement in the citizen’s level of living, including their quality of education, employment, social status, social mobility and even the environmental condition as well as their moral and spiritual lives” This give a clear light to the basic of this environmental condition, moral standard, spiritual love and the mental stability are part of those things to be experience in an economic developed society and what brought all these are based on the level of peace and justice such nation operates upon.

The World Bank (1997) and most economic literature in early post-World War II, defined development as a rapid and sustained rise in real output per head and attendant shift in the technological, economic and demographic characteristics of a society. This definition has been broadened decades after by development economists and other economic institutions (Dudley Seer (1977) sees development to mean not only capital accumulation and economic growth but also the condition in which people in a country have adequate food and job and the income inequality among them is greatly reduced. It is the process of bringing about fundamental and sustainable changes in the society. It encompasses growth, embraces such aspects of the quality of life as social justice, equality of opportunity for all citizens, equitable distribution of income and the democratization of the development process.

Development is all about the capacity of members of the society to actualize them by participating actively in the social engineering of their life and destiny. It entails the ability of the individuals to influence and manipulate the forces of nature for their betterment and that of humanity”. According to Seers (1971), the following questions should indicate whether there exists development or not, what is happening to poverty? What is happening to unemployment? What is happening to inequality? Similarly, Todaro (1979) suggested that development has three dimensions.

- (a) Raising peoples living levels-their income and consumption levels of food, medical services, education etc. through relevant economic processes.
- (b) Creating conditions conducive to the growth of people’s self-esteem through the establishment of social, political, and economic systems and institutions which promote human dignity and respect.
- (c) Increasing people’s freedom to choose by enlarging the range of their choice variables e.g. increasing varieties of consumer goods and services.

Improvement in GNP and income per capital without a corresponding improvement in the moral life of the citizens is not true development; many countries including Nigeria are not developed not due to lack of development plans, resources and strategies but, because of leaders, citizens, men and women who lack proven transparent character. In recapitulation, beyond “economic and non-economic element” of economic development, developed reference to a situation of increasing the productivity and standard of living in the society, life expectance, mere adequate diet, good education, adequate medical facilities, better housing, adequate employment opportunities, equity in distribution of national resource. However, it go beyond industrialization, economic development is not solely grow on its own rather it has to depend on other factors, every institution has its own part to play has its own part to play towards the development. The government, family institution and organizational leaders religious and school should psychologically enhance economic development with moral acceptable justice emulate of worthy in the society

Rodney (1972) sees beyond the individual or people’s perception of development and conceived development whether economic, political or social to imply both increase in output and changes in the technical and institutional arrangement by which it is produced. In other words and more importantly, development is a multi-dimensional concept and in spite of the various conceptions, development is basically about the process of changes which lies around the spheres of societal life.

Kuznets (1971) identified six characteristics of structural changes in economic development, among are: High rate of per capita output growth and population; High rate of increase in total factor productivity; High rate of structural transformation of the economy in the form of changing sectorial share of the economy; High rate of social and ideological transformation in the form of change in attitude, evolution from superstitious beliefs to rational and scientific explanations of events, greater social justice and equalization of economic opportunities, growing education, literacy and skills acquisition etc.; and exports and growing participation in international markets. From the standpoint of political economy, development is the sustained increase in economic, social and political spheres of a nation.

### **Asian Tigers**

Also known as the Asian Dragons, the countries that make up the Four Asian Tigers share common characteristics, including a sharp focus on exports, an educated populace, and high savings rates. The economies of the Four Tigers have proven resilient enough to withstand local crises such as the Asian financial crisis of 1997 and global shocks like the credit crunch of 2008. Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea are among the most productive and profitable in the world. Following World War II, all four Asian Tiger countries existed in a state of relative poverty. They each emerged from imperial Japanese occupation, which imposed radical changes to their existing sociopolitical systems. Foreign influence and aid in these countries continued in the years following the war. Some fared better than others in the postwar period. South Korea

endured the Korean War and faced several revolutions following it. Taiwan, on the other hand, was blessed with the entire gold reserves of mainland China and experienced professionals brought by the Kuomintang government.

By 1965, Taiwan no longer required American aid as it had established a solid financial base. Singapore's postwar period consisted of a slowly emerging separation from the British rule and increased racial tensions among its citizens of Chinese and Malaysian descent. Hong Kong experienced a large inflow of immigrants from mainland China and businesses from Shanghai, and remained under British rule until 1997. This vast pool of cheap labor and economic resources is credited to have aided Hong Kong's growth. In all, the nations could be ranked by economic and political success in the postwar period (roughly up to 1965) as follows: Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea. From 1965 onwards, all nations grew in global stature and economy (Ezra, 1991).

In the early 1960s, the global economy was just starting to recover after the traumas of the Second World War and the Korean War of 1950-1953. Tentative world peace combined with major advances in air travel and telecommunication meant that borders were opening up around the world, and the four 'tigers' were perfectly positioned to benefit. All four countries boasted long-established ports and developed trade economies, highly educated economies, highly educated populations, as well as robust post-colonial infrastructure (as a result of the British influence in Hong Kong and Singapore, the Chinese in Taiwan, and the American in South Korea). By the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, these economies had developed into high-income economies, specializing in areas of competitive advantage. Hong Kong and Singapore have become leading international financial centers, whereas South Korea and Taiwan are leaders in manufacturing electronic success have served as role models for many developing countries, especially the Tiger Cub Economies of Southeast Asia. Rodrik, Dani; Grossman, Gene; Norman, Victor (1995). (Chang, 2006).

It's should be noted that Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia are sometimes referred to as the "Tiger Cub Economies," because while they have developed more slowly than the Four Asian Tigers in the decades since the 1950s, they have nonetheless grown at a steady rate.

## **Methodology**

The method adopted for this study is essentially the content analysis. That is, the study relied on secondary sourced data from various textbooks, journals, pamphlets, government documents, internet and newspapers. The data gathered were subjected into descriptive analysis and deducing conclusion from the results.

## **An Appraisal of Developmental Crises in Africa**

### **Absence of development- oriented leadership**

Many observers of the development and governance crisis in Africa since independence agree that poor leadership has been a major factor. The leadership issue was a central issue in the thesis of Claude Ake, particularly so in relation to the issue of development of the region. Ake was tempted to ask the question as thus: Why is it that the underdevelopment status and development crisis is still a dominant feature of African socio- economic formations (Ake, 1981, p.73). Ake remarked in response to the above question that: The answer lies squarely on the nature of the quality and character of the leadership that emerged to champion Africans independence.

Political independence was championed by the petit bourgeois leadership that emerged out of the contradiction of colonial capitalist socio economic formation (Ake, 1981, p.73). Ake contends that post-colonial African states have failed to advance genuine developmental programs because the states are ruled by self-centered political class ...he adds that that post-colonial African states adopted statism system as their economic development, thus the state appears in all facets of the society thereby making the states the center of attraction to all classes of people attracting charlatans to plunder the society via the state (Ake, 1981).

Political leadership in the Africa sub region is characterized by disregard of the yearnings of the people and a violation of the constitution they swear to protect. In the quest to remain in power at all cost, all forms of manipulations are employed. This may include manipulation of ethnic differences, religious and political yearnings. In pursuance of selfish agenda, nothing is spared as long as the aim is achieved. The art of self-succession is the name of the game in the sub region except for some isolated cases (Ibrahim & Cheri, 2013).

For Professor Lumumba (a Kenyan Professor of Law) who unequivocally lamented in his speech, his submission was candid (Lumumba, 2018). He puts it thus:“ When I look at Africa, many questions comes to mind, if Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Emilie Lumumba were to rise up and see what is happening they will be confronted with an Africa where the Democratic Republic of Congo is unsettled, they will be confronted with an Africa that is at war with themselves, an Africa which statisticians and Romantic economist says it is growing while it is indeed stagnating, an Africa which does not know herself, an Africa whose young men and women are constantly humiliated at the embassies of European countries and the United States as they seek the almighty green card, an Africa whose young men and women from Niger, Nigeria, Mauritania, Guinea drawn in the Mediterranean as they seek to be enslaved in Europe, an Africa which does not tell her story whose story is told by Europe and America the CNN, Radio France.

Professor Wole Soyinka, alluding to the dearth of good leadership in Africa, says: “Africa will only rise when the man in us awakes”. African men are asleep as mounting crises beset their society waiting for the west and blame everything on their colonial past, losing sight of the fact that Brazil, Singapore and the Asian Tigers were at one time or the other colonized.

### **Electoral malpractices challenges**

Peaceful power succession has been described as the highest index of human development and civilization. Whereas it takes a simple process to institute, elect or replace a leader in the developed nations of the world. Some commentators have noted that the notion of political “opposition” is synonymous with war by various ethnic or social groups in most African cultures. In most African countries elections became anchored in politicians mobilizing support along blood lines. In Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Kenya there have existed explosive elements of ruling groups totally rejecting the transfer of power to other groups that win in ‘free and fair elections’.

The notion of “free and fair elections” has become increasingly infiltrated by external support for a party whose victory would favor preferred policy options desired by such outside interest but which is perceived as “political suicide” by incumbents. Such processes require guns and tanks in many underdeveloped countries. For example, In Kenya, the flawed elections conducted in 2007 left a trail of disaster which manifested itself through ethnic clashes, leading to the death of over 1000 people. In Zimbabwe, the 2008 elections were a watershed and an eye-opener of what transpires when political leaders sense defeat (Masunungure, 2009:154). Politically motivated violence that characterized these elections led to about 500 confirmed deaths and numerous displacements. The institutionalization of violence and the politicization of the administration led to delayed release of election results, with George Chiweshe - former head of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission simply sitting on results once it emerged that President Mugabe was losing the vote in 2008) (Mapuva, 2010; Makumbe, 2009).

This problem has become a popular phenomenon in African politics. As a matter of fact, an average Nigerian believes that elections cannot be won except it is rigged. Yes, this is an extent at which our electoral system has deteriorated. Today, Tanzania, Uganda, Cote devoire, Equatorial Guinea the lamentation is still the same. Electoral malpractice is not a recent phenomenon; in fact, it has been existing since independence and has continued to exist, even, in a modernized fashion. Our leaders are the architect of electoral fraud, for instance, in the first republic; the leadership of various political parties were accused and alleged of election rigging. Post-independence elections were characterized by open harassment of opposition, citizens and candidates. In all regions especially in the northern and western regions. The 1964 federal elections and the 1965 western regional elections were equally characterized and marred by violence that resulted into overheated political atmosphere.

The violence persisted until 1966 when the first republic was brought to a traumatic end in a military coup and counter coup. Edo (2003). The same happened in the second republic. And forth republic was also not different. If by now, our leaders, the so called politicians are not ready to face free and fair election I doubt if good governance can be entrenched by these same set of people who are so desperate in their bid to clinch to power at all cost. Electoral malpractice is undoubtedly an impediment to the democratization process. This is especially true in countries that have scaled the hurdle of transitioning from authoritarian to democratic regimes and are navigating the political contour of transitioning to a consolidated democracy.

Firstly, electoral malpractices tend to accelerate the level of voter apathy in a population. People refrain from voting in subsequent elections if previous or current polls are 'won' through vile means like rigging, false declaration of losers as winners, and bribing of electoral officials. Second, in a country like Nigeria that is democratizing, Elected political office-holders who won elections through rigging will, for instance, be lethargic about accountability to the electorate or voters (Lewis, 2003). No doubt, there has been concerted grumbling among Nigerians voicing their dissatisfaction with the performance of their elected public office-holders, as evident in 9 January 2012 mass agitation to protest the hike in fuel prices by the administration led by President Jonathan and 10th October, 2020 in Lagos, Plateau, Kano and all Southern state by then administration led by President Buhari.

### **Political Instability in African Countries**

It is not a deniable fact that, in terms of political instability and its attendant's consequences, the African countries had some difficult moments during the last fifty years or so. In this context most of the third world countries have seen its freedom heroes turn into dictators, while plunder of natural resources, politics of exclusion and deprivation to run the balance of power continues to dominate the public sphere. Political instability and crisis in the African countries may be as a result of both internal and external factors. However, the penetration of both internal and external factors especially the geo-political and economic interests of the international community constantly plays a significant role in undermining the very process and institutions that are expected to nurture democracy and to instill a sense of stability for societal development in the African countries (Ibrahim and Cheri, 2013). The African political instability and other related crisis is a consequence of its leadership problems. Internally most of the African countries are governed in ways that have been regarded as far from the modern western state systems upon which they are modeled (Tutu, 2004 & Otieno, 2008).

Africa has historically experienced much ethnic conflict; militants from religious and ethnic groups have become markedly more violent. Though the form and context varies from country to country, evident are in Uganda, Nigeria (2003, 2007 and 2011), Kenya (1999), Zimbabwe, Sudan (2010), Rwanda, DR Congo, among others (Ibrahim and Cheri, 2013). In respect to crises, the African Nations suffer a lot of setback particularly the situation where both political and social crisis thwart the developmental path of the nations. Instances of skirmishes and full blown wars abound in the continents, prominent among which is the crisis in Sudan (Darfur, Janjaweed and Sudan Liberation Army), Rwanda (Tutsi and Hutu), Ivory Coast, Chad, Niger (coup by the military), Madagascar, Nigeria (Religious and ethnic crisis in Jos, Kaduna, Borno and Yobe states), Somalia (Al-Shabbab and the fragile government backed by the AU), etc. (Ibrahim and Cheri, 2013).

Furthermore, the trauma of repeated subjection to arbitrary and coercive rule has turned African societies into hostile force to be feared, evaded, cheated and defeated as circumstances

permit. They turn their loyalty from the all-embracing level of the state and localize it in community groups, kinship groups, ethnic associations, or even religious organizations. So many homes, farmlands, crops and properties in affected locations worth billions of dollars were destroyed. This places the continent's economic development on sad not since the man hour lost from this process, the resources deployed in raising the economic infrastructure to where they were, and then sustain further development efforts, are impliedly wasted. Terrorism has left an indelible mark of under developing the economy in where such acts have prevailed. Truly this has overall implication for the slow pace of development process and its economic transformation will have to undergo. However, it is argued that, where there has been more respect for democratic practices (however minimal), higher rates of growth and more successful models of accumulation have been ensured along with better terms of the peasant producers (Bates, 1981, and Ake, 1990).

## **Corruption**

Corruption has continued to pose a formidable obstacle to the development and sustenance of the democratic project in Africa. Corruption is worse in countries where institutions, such as the legislature and the judiciary are weak, where rule of law and adherence to formal rules are not rigorously observed, where political patronage is standard practice, where the independence and professionalism of the public sector has been eroded and where civil society lacks the means to bring public pressure to bear. Once corruption becomes entrenched, its negative effects multiply. It induces cynicism, because people begin to regard it as the norm. It undermines social values because people find it easier and more lucrative to engage in corruption than to seek legitimate employment. It erodes governmental legitimacy because it hampers the effective delivery of public goods and services. It limits economic growth because it reduces the amount of public resources, discourages private investment and saving and impedes the efficient use of government revenue and development assistance funds (Policy Forum, 1997).

In the political realm, corruption undermines democracy and good governance by flouting or even subverting formal processes. Corruption in legislative bodies reduces accountability and distorts representation in policy making; corruption in the judiciary compromises the rule of law; and corruption in public administration results in the unequal distribution of services. More generally, corruption erodes the institutional capacity of government as procedures are disregarded, resources are siphoned off, and public offices are bought and sold. At the extreme, unbridled corruption can lead to state fragility and destructive conflict, and plunge a state into remitting cycle of institutional anarchy and violence. E.g. Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Bakassi peninsula etc (Theobald, 1990, Atuobi, 2007).

There is increasing evidence that the social and economic cost of corruption disproportionately affects the poor, who not only suffer from the lack of services and efficient government, but who are also powerless to resist the demands of corrupt officials. Different arguments have been put forward to explain the pervasiveness of corruption in Africa these include

poverty, the personalization of public office, the political culture and the inability of leaders to overcome their colonial mentality in respect of their perception of public office. To these end the fortunes of some African heads of state were published by French weekly (May, 1997) as presented by (George Ayittey, 2002) are as follows: - General Sani Abacha of Nigeria \$20billion. President H. Boigny of Ivory Coast \$6 billion. General Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria \$5billion. President Mobutu of Zaire \$4billion. President Mouza Traore of Mali \$2billion. President Henri Bedie of Ivory Coast \$300million. President Denis N'gnesso of Congo \$200million. President Omar Bongo of Gabon \$80million. President Paul Biya of Cameroon \$70million. President Haite Mariam of Ethiopia \$30million. President Hissene Habre of Chad \$3million. To mention but a few.

Acheoah (2018) notes that African states have largely vindicated the Marxian argument and dismay for the state, as well, rationalizes anarchist disdain for the state as they have at best served not only as arenas for looting and primitive accumulation but a source of violent repression against the people whom the state historically emerged from the pre-political societies to protect through a social contract.

The effects of corruption in Africa can be analyzed from three main perspectives. The political, economic and socio-cultural. From the political view point, corruption has the capacity of engendering political instability, breakdown of law and order, brain drain, inefficiency of the public service among others. Viewed from the economic perspective, corruption is no doubt an enemy of economic development in the international scene, as it gives the continent a poor image in the international scene and it gives the continent poor image in interpersonal and business relationships. Mores, a nation that condones corruption is often besieged with a lot of economic and social vices. Economic and social infrastructural facilities are vandalized to create room for unnecessary replacement and purchases or conversion to personal use.

Trade and commerce cannot thrive, as investors will be unwilling to invest much trade or business in this part of the world, the overall resulting effects of all these malpractices will be increase in the rate of inflation, unemployment and decline in output, foreign reserves and deterioration in the standard of living of the people. In the socio-cultural context, corruption apart from engendering poverty has the capacity of changing the social values of a good and progressive society dramatically to nothing else than the crazy pursuit of wealth affluences, power and society recognition. People no longer appreciate the virtues of good morale, conduct and practices. Without doubt corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of the African people and the African society and it continues with the people almost permanently. Africa presents a typical case whose development and the desired change have been undermined and retarded by the menace of corrupt practices.

## **Poverty**

Poverty in Africa is the sole cause of hunger, disease, aids and squalor. One cannot talk about poverty and its effects on the African continent without taking a look at the problem.

Agriculture which holds the key to eradicating poverty within the continent is often neglected by corrupt and inept political leadership throughout the continent. Africa has some of the best farmlands in the world, and with the exception of the Sahara desert region, most other parts of Africa could be converted into great farmlands as was the case in the former Apartheid South Africa, or Colonial Zimbabwe Alkali (1997). The fact that South Africa and Zimbabwe were net exporters of food during the colonial day's only helps to illustrate the point being made here that today's poverty problems and other economic problems were the end product of the bankruptcy of the ineffective and mediocre leadership in place in most African countries (Obadan and Odusola (2008).

Nigerian economy during the first decade after independence could reasonably be described as an agricultural economy. This is seen in the words of Ogen (2003) that agriculture served as the engine of growth for the overall economy. During this period Nigeria was the world's second largest producer of cocoa, largest exporter of palm kernel and largest producer and exporter of palm oil. According to Alkali (1997), Nigeria was also a leading exporter of other major commodities such as cotton, groundnut, rubber and hides and skins. Lawal (1997) also observed that agricultural sector contributed over 60% of the GDP in the 1960s and despite the reliance of Nigerian peasant farmers on traditional tools and indigenous farming methods, these farmers produced 70% of Nigeria's exports and 95% of its food needs.

However, the agricultural sector was relegated to the background when Nigeria became an oil exporting country. This relegation was attributed to inappropriate exchange rate policy which made the prices of agricultural output too low to give farmers the incentive to produce. Every year hundreds of thousands of women and children are trafficked across borders for the purpose of exploitation. Their survival and development are threatened and the right to social and other essential services; protection from exploitation are abused and denied. Poor economic opportunities have indeed led families into more desperate measures as seen in the increasing number of women, young boys and girls and children are being trafficked from one part of the Country to another and from neighboring Countries into Nigeria and from Nigeria to other Countries for exploitation purposes (NAPTIP, 2016:12).

Poverty is very real in Africa, over the years; the quality of life of the average Africans has progressively nose-dived. It is so endemic that people have started seeing it as part of their living in life. The issue of poverty in Africa is so complex and myriad that one may consider it as equal to the whole problem of Africa. The worst part of the case is that, the rich grows richer and the poor grows poorer that is "poverty for majority and wealth for minority" The causes of poverty in Africa as said earlier are myriad: political corruption mismanagement, illiteracy, crime, poor economy, disguised faith and in equitable distribution of resources, etcetera. In fact, scores of research studies have exposed the dimensions and the extent of poverty in Africa. For example Obadan and Odusola (2001), reveal how sharply the per capita income of Nigerians slipped from a high of over 1,280 dollars in 1980 to a low dollar in 1995. Findings by Kayode and Odusola

(2000) show for example that Nigeria's per capita income of \$240 in 1990 was well below the average of over \$500 for sub-Saharan Africa. The figure for Nigeria was well below those for Botswana (\$3210), Cote d'Ivoire (\$6600), Egypt (\$1,080), South Africa (\$3,500), Mauritius (\$3,710) (Obadan and Odusola (2008), In Edoh (2003, p.69).

The vision 2010 Committee Report reveals that: 50% of Nigerians live below the poverty line; only about 40% have access to safe drinking water; about 85% of the urban population lives in single houses with more than 7 Occupants on the average; only about 62% of Nigerians have access to primary healthcare; most Nigerians take less than one-third of the minimum required protein and vitamins

### **System of Education and Unemployment in Africa**

When Western education was introduced to African countries, most African people viewed it as a form of 'civilization' African educational system is facing significant challenges amidst the rapid changes today's dynamic society. The formidable question steering the face if most Nigerians today is, whether the university education is actually fabricating graduates fully empowered to be self-reliant and employable. Are these graduates equipped with the needed skill, aptitude, competence and dexterity needed to unravel the expected national and social-economic development? Is the university education in Africa still relevant in this 21<sup>st</sup> century? Safyanu and Alimburza (2011:11) opined that graduates of tertiary institutions face the difficulty of not readily getting jobs immediately after school. Sara (2008), and Tandama (2009), researches have revealed that some years back, graduates of tertiary institutions easily got employed after they have graduated from school. Their researches revealed that the situation drastically became difficult as the number of graduates continue to soar, coupled with the shortage of vacancies.

This development, according to Sara and Tandama has forced graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria to go in search of self-employment. Longe (2017: 63) has lamented that in Africa and in Nigeria in particular, graduates unemployment is a very daunting challenge in the labour market. Balogun (2016: 63) stressed that almost half of the 10 million graduates turned- out of over 668 universities in Africa yearly do not get jobs. Safyanu and Alimburza (2011: 12) have stated that one of the reasons why graduates find it difficult to secure jobs after their graduation can be traced to inadequate curricula that their institutions have adopted.

Tonnwe et al. (2015) noted that government's interference in all aspects of higher education because it is funded by her has left many institutions hostage to the factional policies with decisions on establishment of schools, student selection, appointments and promotions, etc., made on political grounds rather than professional or academic merit. It is on basis of this that Nwadiani (2015) asserts that the way politics is played in Nigeria and translated into education is largely responsible for the paradox of our age as its manifestations are that we have more degrees and certificates but less sense; more knowledge, but less judgment; read and pray too seldom, but

watch too much television; and we desire God's love, but we hate others. What an irony? This is the bane policies in Nigerian education system.

The daily Trust Newspaper (2018) reported that "securing employment can only be guaranteed if you are highly connected". Those that have people in positions of authority stand a better chance of being gainfully employed in the labour market. In other words, corruption is one of factors of graduate's unemployment in Nigeria. In Malaysia, Sirat and Shuaib (2012) and Noor (2011) as quoted by Longe (2017: 65) have found out that job mis-match, English proficiency, misguided educational qualification and lack of employable skills were held as factors responsible for university graduates unemployment. The reason given by Madoui (2015) as responsible for graduate's unemployment in Algeria is the disconnection between university education system and the world of work.

Madoui maintained that the skills that are gotten from the higher institutions appeared to be dysfunctional and not relevant. Some university graduates therefore found themselves in problems as a result of the gap in the skills they got from the university and skills demanded by employers of labour in Algeria. Naong (2011) has asserted that many of the graduates in South Africa often battle to get employment because of the wrong field of study chosen by them. This, in-addition to the high rate of graduate turn-out often lead to unemployment of graduates in South Africa. It may be correct to say "that South Africa, Greece and Nigeria are the countries where you have the highest rate of graduate unemployment in the world". In Nigeria, the unemployment rate as reported by the National Bureau of Statistics increased from 20.10% in 2010 to 23.90% in 2011.

Safyanu and Alimburza (2011), Longe (2017) adduced that "one of the present problems of Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is youth unemployment which appears to be shooting up to the stay". The problem is exacerbated yearly as a motley of graduates are churned out of over 114 universities in Nigeria resulting in an up-soaring unemployment figure and culminating in a stiff contests of the survival of the fittest as these graduates armed to the teeth with the needed credentials; which has become the VISA into the world of work in Nigeria, move from one office to the other searching for job. Alas!!! Many of these hungry, desperate and simmering graduates are confronted with the revulsive notice "NO VACANCY" at the entrance of most organizations. They recede in frustration and discontentment. Anyebe and Onjefu (2007) adduce some of the consequences or emphasizing credentials in Nigeria. (a) Escalated levels of bribery and corruption (b) increased promiscuity and moral decadence (c) declining standard of education (e) exams tailored lectures (f) explication of Non-entrepreneurial graduates (g) increased youth restiveness (g) thuggery and violence.

We need to look at education in a comprehensive way from family, nursery, secondary to tertiary education; we need to provide the basic educational foundation upon which science and technology education can be build. This means that Nigeria must ensure that children are literate

in mother tongue in early education as the mother tongue is the foundation for basic concepts, values and imagination; which provide for subsequent studies in math, physics and engineering which may be taught on other languages. Value systems, discipline, perseverance, objectivity, integrity and appreciation for rational and logical thinking should characterize the educational process from childhood to adulthood.

### **Lessons from the Asian ‘Tigers’**

The section highlighted the obstacles and challenges to Africa and her troubled journey to development, and argues that they are not insurmountable, going by the Asian ‘Tigers’ success, which she shares many similar colonial experiences. It itemized the various approaches used by the ‘Asian Tigers’ for their success story in development and argues that Africa can use them as a benchmark for her development, still at tutelage.

Firstly, East Asian countries, in particular Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan focus heavily on promoting local content, between roughly 1960 and 1990, they meticulously designed industrial policies to create backward linkages from foreign investors to domestic supplier firms, increase local content and transfer technology from foreign firms to the domestic economy. They did so largely through the mechanisms tying financial incentives to firms with economic performance and local development targets. For example, in the beginning of the 1970s, the Taiwanese government applied a slightly stricter stance toward foreign investors. FDI in labour intensive production came to be discouraged, it was faced with higher export requirements and local content requirements, and limits were placed on the extent to which foreign firms could capitalize on their technology typically demanding that technology could not be valued more than 15% of the firm’s equity contribution in the case of joint ventures. (Chang, 2006) Foreign investors did not always comply with the tough bargaining.

For example, the Japanese automotive manufacturer Toyota withdrew from a joint venture in 1984 after concluding that the Taiwanese government insisted on too stringent local content requirements and export requirements. Within eight years, 50% of cars were to be exported and local content was to rise to 90% (Chang, 2006). Generally, local content policies in Taiwan have been successful, and the strategy of linking foreign firms with local suppliers where assisted by proactive industry association TEAMA aggressively recruited members from both foreign and local firms and, with the support of the government, actively promoted the ‘local content program. Chia, (2000) Mukhopadhyaya et al (2011). Local producers wanted to take advantage of the technology, management skills and sales networks of transnational corporations. Foreign producers stood to benefit from the local content program because it reduced labour costs and lead-times as long as local suppliers met quality standards.

In the same vein, in South Korea, to develop a synthetic fiber industry, the government forced firms to use domestically produced fibers, which initially were more expensive and of poorer quality than imported fibers. In return, they gave fibers -using textile firms credit subsidies

and subsidized their purchase of inputs. If the firms met certain export targets, these subsidies became more generous. In Singapore, investment incentives designed for foreign firms were often tied to the introduction of higher value added operations, training of local staff and dispatching of Singaporean engineers to the headquarters of transnational corporations to acquire new technical skills (Sims & Pandian). Another good example of the balancing act that Taiwan mastered between welcoming foreign investors and bargaining with them is the polyethylene plant built in the early 1960s by the National Distiller and Chemical Corporation (a US based firm).

To attract the company, the Taiwanese government offered a five-year tax holiday, restrictions on imports of polyethylene for three years from start-up, guaranteed supplies of ethylene (an input that goes into making polyethylene) and unlimited repatriation of profits. The Taiwanese government, in return, required that National Distiller should export any surplus over domestic needs, not establish production facilities in downstream sectors and transfer 50% of shares to Chinese nationals after five years.

Today, Africans have ignored their identities for the alien ones. Their youths have failed to be bubbling with the physical and intellectual zeal to achieve the best. They either want to copy western nature or be in the western society. They are no longer brought up in an African way, and cannot speak their mother tongue fluently. Whenever they fail to speak in Euro-American languages or dress in Euro-American ways, they are referred or regarded as illiterate or uncivilized persons. They appreciate western languages, fashion, colour, food and culture than theirs, or refer as primitive or unhygienic human being. They have ignored their cultural norms and values for the western social practices, and fail to take the advantage of cultural determination of being capable of exerting positive influence on the children. Everything Africans, ranging from religion, music, medicine, science, technology, general education, etc. are condemned. Africans have forgotten their long time foundation of sound culture and dynamic education that were laid before the advent of colonialisation and globalization practices. Colonialisation and globalization systems see their culture backward and heathen. Held, & Graw (2003), Chant, & Cathy (2009), (Kukah, 2007).

Secondly, The Asian Tigers are guided by the principles of community concern, order and harmony, general freedom, secularism, emphasis on thrift, hardworking, respect for constituted authority, collaboration with government and family loyalty. These principles enabled the Asian Tigers and others to grow in a manner that defies conventional wisdom of western models. The recent boom of Asian economy gives a serious course of worry for the western nations. They express panic over what to make out of the Asian huge success. For example, in 2018, the combined economy of the Four Asian Tigers constituted 3.46% of the world's economy with a total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 2,932 billion US dollars.

The GDP in Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan was worth 363.03 billion, 361.1 billion, 1,619.42 billion and 589.39 billion US dollars respectively in 2018, which represented 0.428%, 0.426%, 1.911% and 0.696% of the world economy. Together, their

combined economy surpassed the United Kingdom's GDP of 3.34% of the world's economy sometime in the mid-2010s. World Bank (2018). Unlike Africans today who was as heap of loose sand, without the cement of patriotism, to bind its people into social cohesion, needed for nation-building and progress.

Thirdly, on educational advancement, The Asian “Tigers” discovered the relevance of education to development and economic growth. They patterned their school system toward problem solving and pragmatism. Such advancement was created by sound, disciplined, result oriented public school system. Their products are as skilled and proficient as those of Europe and America, and sometimes better. The levels of education enrollment in the Four Asian Tigers were higher than predicted given their level of income. By 1965, all four nations had achieved universal primary education. South Korea in particular had achieved a secondary education enrollment rate of 88% by 1987. There was also a notable decrease in the gap between male and female enrollments during the Asian miracle. Overall these advances in education allowed for high levels of literacy and cognitive skills (Schenk, 2008; Chant, & Cathy, 2009).

In relation to secondary / higher level educations; there are many prestigious colleges as in most developed countries. Notable schools include the National Taiwan University, Seoul National University, National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University and University of Hong Kong, Faculty of Dentistry, which as of 2017, was ranked as one of the top dental schools in the world. All four countries have become leading financial centers and such, from multiple policies which focus on education. The success of these four countries shows the importance of focusing on a strong education system and technology and sciences research system (All News-Media, 2016) (Top Dental Schools, 2017).

Most of the colonial policies on education had the shortcoming of not taking into account our local peculiarities and not involving Africans in their formation. This however formed the frame work for subsequent policies that emerged in the educational sector. The emphasis on the white man’s job or the desire for white collar jobs by the natives created a wrong impression for student about the place of Vocational education which today accounts for the deteriorating state or unemployment in Nigeria. Students have a bias attitude against technical education (Damachi, 2001). A large number of job seekers lack practical skills that could enhance self-employment, that is why rather than provide jobs for others, the graduate unemployed keep depending on government and the non-vibrant private sector for jobs for others and for job placement. Ozuronye (1999).

Fourthly, all the four Tigers had a strong central leadership able to effectively steer the direction of the economy without significant internal challenges, an indication that all enjoyed considerable legitimacy. Most governments today derived their legitimacy from democratic elections, when Trump administration makes a decision; the decision is made by the people and for the people. Older forms of government have derived their legitimacy from the Divine Right of

kings or from Hobbes Leviathan, to name a few examples. But from where did the leaders of the Tigers derive their legitimacy? In all four cases, to varying degrees, the legitimacy (and continued survival) of the leadership rested in some way on the continual economic success that they were able to provide to the people. This meant that the leaders of all four of these countries had considerable motivation to aggressively seek sustainable development, and the fact that legitimacy was based on neither democracy (which can lead to instability and lack of long-term planning) or ideology (as in the Communist states, binding development to a prescribed course with no room for adaptation) allowed them to pursue this sustained development with stability and flexibility, explaining their particular success.

The unity and legitimacy of Korean leadership was based on “forced unity” against the ideological foe of the North (Chang, 2006). The division was based on ideological grounds, with leaders of both North and South claiming to represent the ideology that was in the people’s interests, and so the success of either leadership could best be gauged by their subjects by how much better off they appeared to be when compared to their neighbor’s. The relationship between the economic development of Singapore and Hong Kong and the interests of their respective leaderships is an even more pressing issue of survival: given their tiny size, they simply didn’t have the agricultural basis to survive as independent countries. If they had not industrialized and maintained a position of economic necessity within the region (as trading ports and later as financial centers) then they would not have been able to feed their population. The legitimacy of the leadership here is based simply on continued economic survival of the state, partly mitigated in Hong Kong’s case by its colony status.

The legitimacy of its leadership was also tied to its status as a Crown property and it might ultimately have relied on Britain to support it should it have failed to develop successfully, this would account for it being the most *laissez-faire* of the Tigers. Singapore, sandwiched between its economic rivals of Malaysia and China, had no such fallback and the leadership’s continued rule rested solely on their ability to deliver the economic goods. The Tiger approach to development is perhaps best characterized then as “success due to coherent and flexible policies, effective implementation by the state...and political capacity to insulate economic planning from competing interest” (Sims & Pandian, 2003).

The biggest issue facing developing states is that in too many cases the leadership rests its legitimacy not on the economic benefits that it can bring to its subjects but rather on the military forces that it commands and with which it can suppress any dissent (Sims and Pansian, 2003). A good number of these states likely face a not-unrelated issue that with their position secured by some form of legitimacy leadership is more concerned with the benefits that its position can provide for itself than to the country at large, they might be stable government not bound to inflexible ideologies, but without the motivation of legitimization they are happy to focus their attention on patronage rather than enacting development policies.

## **Conclusion**

It appears that Africa faces numerous challenges ranging from governance, leadership, corruption and issues of democracy. Africa's slow motion of development could be partly blame due to these challenges. These hindrances are many and real, but can be met. It is a truism that the integration of African economies into western capitalism on a weak background was at the historical root of African underdevelopment crisis, however, bad leadership and mal-administration by indigenous political elites remains one of the stumbling blocks to sustainable development in Africa.

Asian Tigers have moved away from under-development and poverty to rival the levels of prosperity in the Global North. Southern and East Asia now referred to as the Global East in World Politics have positioned themselves to compete with the Global North in economic prosperity, export of manufactured goods of all sorts, including provision of services and expertise in communication and information technology/processing. The Four Asian Tigers are the high-growth economies of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. All four economies have been fueled by exports and rapid industrialization, and have achieved high levels of economic growth since the 1960s. The countries that make up the Four Asian Tigers share common characteristics, including a sharp focus on exports, an educated populace, and high savings rates.

## **Recommendation**

1. There is also need to refined democracy in Africa. Africa should be allowed to elect their leaders. If the elected leaders do not perform, electorate should have the power to vote them out of office. In situation where the leaders are imposed on the people through riggings or any other form of malpractice; one of the strongest tools of check and balances is ruined and sabotaged. Hence leaders can come up with whatever bad policy without fear of electorates' reactions. This is very crucial in ensuring correct and right policy design and implementation. There is the need for regulatory and supervisory agencies to regularly review and as the need arises, to strengthen their oversight functions and implement same firmly in all segments of the financial system.
2. The political leaders of the region must change their perception about leadership. They must re-contextualize their notions of leadership so as to see themselves as servants to their people, societies and states. This will restore altruism in the service to fatherland and make representative democracy an effective model of governance in Sub-Saharan Africa;
3. Post-colonial African must begin to build strong, viable and enduring institutions that will reflect and serve their societies. Strong man syndrome has held the region backward for over half a century. This trend must change, African political elites must realize that they have the biggest stake in the development of their region;

4. Home-grown impediments that have also contributed to the backwardness of the region should be legislated against. This will deter the culprits within the region whose activities are not compatible with peace and development;
5. In the programs and policy menu, special attention should be paid to sectors that are catalysts to development: agriculture, science and technology, research and development, building and provision of social overheads;
6. As a policy target, Africa economies should encourage foreign direct investments while strengthening trading among themselves. This will attract investments to the region and also stabilize their currencies and further protect their economies from adverse balance of payment;
7. African countries rather than de-linking should renegotiate their trade relations in international governmental organizations (IGOs) such as: the United Nations, World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank so as to redress the skewed international trading arrangements which had shortchanged the developing nations including Africa;

## References

- Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., Robinson, J.A. (2001). 'The Colonial- Origin of Comparative Development. An Empirical Investigation', *American Economic Review*, 91(50)
- Acheoah AO (2018). *The Crisis of Underdevelopment in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Multi-Dimensional Perspective*. Department of Political Science, University of Lagos, Akoka, Nigeria.
- Ake, C. (1981). *A Political Economy of Africa*. Nigeria. Longman and Tanzania Publishing House.
- Ake, C. (1982). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Enugu, Nigeria: Ikenga Publishers.
- Akira, I., Lazzarini, E., Kopf, D., & Miller, W. et al. (1995). *The World of Asia* (2nd Ed.). Illinois, USA: Harlan Davidson.
- Andre G.F. (1972). "The Development of Underdevelopment," in James D. Cockcroft, Andre Gunder Frank, and Dale Johnson, eds., *Dependence and Underdevelopment*. Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, p. 3
- Bhattacharjea, A. (2008). "Krugman's Economics: An Introduction." *Economic and Political Weekly* 43: 49.
- Chang, H. (2006). *The East Asian Development Experience*. ISBN 9781842771419.
- Chia, S. Y. (2000). *Singapore: From the Asian crisis to the New Economy*. Asia Pacific Series, No. 18. International University of Japan Research Institute, Nigata, Japan.

- Ezra F. (1991). *The Four Little Dragons: The Spread of Industrialization in East Asia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991).
- Held, D., & Mc. Graw. (2003). "The Great Globalization Debate" in David Held and Anthony Graw (eds.) *The Global Transformation Reader*. Cambridge: polity Press.
- Holsti, K.J. (1995). *International Politics: a Framework for Analysis* (7th ed). New Jersey: prentice Hall.
- All News-Media (2017) HKU Faculty of Dentistry Ranked No.1 in the World. [www.hku.hk](http://www.hku.hk). Archived from the original on 27 June 2016. Retrieved 12 June 2017.
- Ibrahim, A., & Cheri, L. (2013). *Democracy, Political Instability and the African crisis of implications*. Technical and Industrial Research Unit. University of Zambia. Limited.
- Igezundia, A. (1990). Regime change, political instability and economic integration in West Africa: the experience of ECOWAS. *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*. 16(1), p. 90-107.
- Jamesclement, U. (2014). *The Review of Literatures: Empirical Reasons*. Owerri: Kings Printing Press
- Kukah, M.H. (2007). *Religion, Culture and the Politics of Development*. Lagos, JFR Publishers, Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization.
- Mukhopadhyaya, Bidisha; Pradhana, Rudra P.; Feridun, Mete (2011). "Finance-growth nexus revisited for some Asian countries". *Applied Economics Letters*. **18** (6):1527–1530. Doi:10.1080/13504851.2010.548771. S2CID 154797937.
- Pangarkar, N. (1998). The Asian multinational corporation: Strategies, performance and key challenges. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 15: 109–118.
- Rodrik, D, (1 April 1997). "The 'paradoxes' of the successful state". *European Economic Review*. 41 (3–5): 411–442. Doi:10.1016/S0014-2921(97)00012-3. ISSN 0014-2921.
- Sachs, J. (2005). *The end of poverty: how can we make it happen in our life time*. Penguin Books.
- Sims, A. B., & Pandian, J. R. (2003). Emerging Asian MNEs and their internationalization strategies—Case study evidence on Taiwanese and Singaporean firms. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 20: 27–50.
- Top Dental Schools (2017). Archived from the original on 6 August 2017. Retrieved 12 June 2017.