

INTERROGATING POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT: INTER-RELATIONS IN NIGERIA

Ngozi P. Omeje
Department of Public Administration
Ebonyi State University Abakaliki
Ngoziomeje33@gmail.com 08066754027

Njoku Mercy Chimee
Department of Public Administration.
Ebonyi State University Abakaliki, 07065692643

ABSTRACT

This paper is anchored on the nexus between population growth and development in developing and underdeveloped countries. The objective of the study is to explore the vagaries of development Vis-airs the exponential population growth in 3rd World countries of which Nigeria is a focal point. The method of data collection is qualitative survey/content analytical approach. It was discovered that the development strides of Nigeria are not commensurate to the exponential population growth therein, consequently the citizens suffer untold hardship socially and economically despite the enormous human and material resources at her disposal. The paper recommends that there should be a corresponding socio-economic and structural development in the country that will strike a balance in the Citizens' basic needs and standard of living.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The nexus between population growth and national development can never be over-looked in recent time. It is an interaction between fertility, population increase and other societal dynamics

such as health, education, agriculture, economic growth and national security (National Population Commission, {2011}). This is reflected in the tremendous development and innovations in education, health care delivery, technology and infrastructure that has been experienced at the global level. Buttressing on the above notion, Uzuegbunam (2019) opined that more than two billion people still live in poverty, meaning that these people are still left out of this innovation. Suffice to say that this justifies the reasons why world leaders are currently faced with the challenges of curbing poverty in bid to achieved improved standard of her citizenry. These leaders in pursuit of improving the lives of people's wellbeing in contemporary era remain mindful of the environmental implications for future generation. Similarly, it is right to point out that the world population grows consistently along with increase in development (World Bank, 2018). The growth rate is more than eighty million per year and takes place in most developing countries like Nigeria. However, the United Nations medium projection of population growth was estimated 8.6 billion by 2050 to 2100. By implication, the world 's population which started growing slowly and was only 1.6 billion people at the beginning of the 20th century has grown to more than 7.1 billion with 110 years (World Population Review,2022).

Thereof, global and national leaders around the world (Nigeria inclusive) are worried as well as doubling their efforts in order to reduce the consequences of this rapid exponential population growth on health, education, agriculture, security, wellbeing and economic developments (United State Agency for International Development {USAID,2011}). In Nigeria, population growth has gathered momentum despite efforts by governments and organizations in family planning and development. According to Uzuegbunam (2019), Nigeria population can double within twenty-four years. As exemplified, the 1991 census figure shows that Nigeria was populated by 89 million people with a projected growth rate of 2.82 per cent per annum. In actual sense, from then to 2006; the population grew to 140,003, 542 (one hundred and forty million, three - thousand, five hundred and forty-two) people with the growth rate of 3.02 (National Bureau of Statistic {NBS, 2008}). Again, United Nation (2009) estimated Nigeria's population to be 151,030,400 (one hundred and fifty-one million, thirty thousand and four hundred). Furthermore, according the World Population Review {WPR ,2022}), it is predicted that Nigeria's population has hit 206 million in 2020 and as such, it is expected to hit 264 million in the year 2030 as well as crossing the 300 million thresholds around 2036. More so, the population of Nigeria will surpass that of the United States in 2047, when the population of Nigeria will reach 379.25 million. With those numbers, Nigeria will become the third most populated country in the world. As pointed out in the above report, some of the major contributors to Nigeria's population growth are early marriages, high birth rates and family planning access. The birth rate in Nigeria is about 37 births per 1000 people (WPR, 2022). Sequel to the above scenario, Nigeria is rated as the most populous nation in Africa, amongst the world's black nations and the seventh among the world largest countries (Uzuegbunam, 2019).

Consequently, with the continued high rate of population growth in Nigeria; it is exigent for government at all levels to intensify their efforts in fulfilling their commitment towards improving the quality of life and standard of living of most Nigerians. By implication, if nothing is done, Nigerian population is likely to double; thereby impeding every ability to attain sustainable development. This assignment attempts to explore the concept of population and development, nexus between population and development, factors affecting population distribution in twenty-first century, strategies for effective inter-relation between population and national development.

1.1. Exploration of key concepts

There is no general consensus on what social science concepts entail, as it is often approached from diverse scholarly as well as ideological orientations, perspectives or inclinations. Despite the variations about ideas of concepts amongst scholars and practitioners; its' central theses or assumptions still remains the same.

Population: The concept of population has been approached from diverse perspective such as biology, ecology, and demographic studies/economics amongst others. From the evolutionary dimension, population connotes the starting point for the study of living organism as well as the study of the processes through which it is produced (Sathyanarayana, Dinesh and Vishal, 2007)). As exemplified by him, in biology; there is what is termed the Mendelian population {particularly in genetic studies}; which signifies group of individuals that sexually reproduce amongst themselves. It is right to point out that the human species can be considered as a large population divided into many Mendalian population. In general ecology several populations are considered together as complex rather than singly; they represent different species, animals and plant that depend on each other, sharing the same environment with the view to forming a living community. On the other hand, in demographic view point; the term population is often used in a more constricted sense because it is used to denote a pre-established limits (which may be administrative or political) that informs a conventional phenomenon such as urban population, provincial population, student population and so on. Even in anthropology, population is often used to connote reproductive community. That is to say, it involves the analysis of biological differences as well as the interpretation of the processes of its emergent over time and space. In nutshell, population entails the total number of people living within a political or geographical area such as town or country over a given period of time.

Development: Development is a multifaceted concept. By this, it simply connotes that development has so many dimensions. No wonder, some scholars, practitioners and international organizations like the United Nation divided the epochs of development to include political development, structural/economic development, social development, human development, millennium development and sustainable development (Uzuegbunam, 2019). No wonder, Todaro in Onah (2012) conceived development to mean a multi-dimensional process that deals with re-orientation and re-organization of an entire economic and social systems. Thus, it simply connotes a whole gamut of changes. Furthermore, Todaro viewed the three core values of any development to include life sustenance, self-esteem and freedom. Similarly, Dudley Seer in Uzuegbunam (2019, p.16) opined that there are basically three fundamental questions to be asked relating to the concept of development in any clime. These questions are:

What is happening to poverty? What is happening to unemployment? And what is happening to inequality?

Thereof, it is only when these three questions are addressed and evaluated that one can access a country's development. Suffice to say, that based on the above three questions; Nigeria's development could be said to be in a deplorable state. In spite of her enormous human and material resources, the indicators of poverty, unemployment and inequality still remains high (United Nation Development Programme [UNDP] 2019).

1.2 Nexus between Population and Development

The linkage between population and development is quite enormous. The first study links it to Thomas Malthus' writings from the 1790s, when he predicted that population growth would be geometric while food productivity growth would be arithmetic. Malthus predicted that the strain of an expanding population would quickly overtake the food supply (Uzuegbunam, 2019). The available diet would then drop below the point of subsistence, and population growth would continue until a high death rate stopped it. Only temporarily could living standards rise before they sparked even faster population growth. Paul Ehrlich's influential book "The Population Bomb," which opens with the words "The battle...is over," reinforced Malthusian ideas in 1968. Hundreds of millions of people will starve to death in the 1970s. More thorough studies conducted shortly after this book came to the same conclusion that population growth would have a negative overall impact.

While this pessimistic theory was founded on the idea that population growth limits economic growth, another optimistic school of thought emerged in the 1980s that saw population growth as an economic asset and supported their claims with data. The group noted that demographic theory started to look to the intermediate and long-term, where the short-term effects of population growth were likely to have at least partially smoothed out, and economic theory had started to give increasing importance to technology and human capital accumulation rather than to the old key growth factor of physical capital (Rosero, 2011).

According to empirical research by Simon Kuznets, Julian Simon, Boserup, and others, rapid population growth may actually have beneficial effects on economic growth. The Green Revolution, which nearly quadrupled global food production, is one of the traditional examples given. While rejecting the worrying pessimistic theory, optimists were not dogmatic about the advantages of population growth. Instead, they adopted a more expansive perspective and proposed that a variety of external factors were accountable for the effects of population growth. As a result of the expansion of the population growth debate, population neutralism which holds that there is no significant correlation between population growth and economic growth became the prevailing viewpoint in the demographic discussion (Caldwell, Caldwell, MacDonald and Schindlmayr, 2006).

The Neutralist held that while populations with rapid growth tended to have slower-growing economies, this negative correlation typically vanished once other factors like country size, trade openness, population education levels, and the caliber of civil and political institutions were taken into consideration. Therefore, they were uncertain as to whether population growth hinders or encourages economic growth. Although there were some differences within the neutralist school, one group came to the general conclusion that slower population growth would be advantageous to economic development in developing countries, in contrast to the suggestions of many World Bank economists who believed that in some places, larger populations could promote economic growth. Overall, Kelly outlined three major areas of research natural resources, savings, and resource diversification that had an impact on population neutralism in the 1980s. He believed that the depletion of natural resources was not significantly impacted by population growth, that studies had not demonstrated a negative impact of population growth on savings, and that the depletion of resources from the formation of physical capital to the creation of social capital had not occurred to a significant degree (Jonathan et. al, 2004). Nevertheless, the World

Population Conference in Bucharest in 1974, where the catchphrase "Development is the best contraception" was released, first acknowledged the necessity of incorporating population variables into developmental planning. Numerous organizations and researchers also looked into the fundamental idea underlying population activities in the 1970s. Numerous initiatives to incorporate population concerns in development planning have been made as a result of this analysis. For instance, the Foreign Assistance Act was amended by the US Congress in 1976 to add Section 104(d) that read as follows:

“Assistance under this chapter shall be administered so as to give particular attention to the interrelationship between population growth and development and overall improvement in living standards in developing countries, and to the impact of all programmes, projects and activities on population growth” (United Nations, 1981).

However, the term "integration" was used to denote the explicit recognition and inclusion of population variables into developmental planning, and two different types of the integrated planning process, namely population responsive development planning and population influencing developmental planning, were recognized. Population variables like size, composition, fertility, mortality, migration, and growth rates were regarded in the first process as exogenous or external to the system and changed independently of the development process. The development-planning strategy, nonetheless, took into account the nature of changes in these population variables and appropriately chose to plan and invest resources in various sectors, including agriculture, education, public health, water supply, housing, etc. The impact of various developmental programs on population variables was taken into account in the integrated planning process' second component. Despite the importance and complexity of such endogenizing population variables in the planning process, it has rarely been considered by policy makers. (United Nations 2015).

Moreso, the endogenizing component was reiterated at the Mexico Conference in 1984 and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994. The ICPD conference went above and beyond by paying particular attention to women's health, infant survival, women's empowerment, and the education of girls. It also provided comprehensive reproductive health services to help couples achieve their reproductive goals. It placed the greatest emphasis on men's role in women's reproductive health. If implemented, this set of social policies and services was thought to be able to accomplish the twin goals of promoting greater social equity and slowing population growth. (Srinivasan, 1989).

In 2001–2002, the Technical Support Division of UNFPA's Reproductive Health Branch undertook a comprehensive exercise to shed light on the intricate connection between Reproductive Health and Poverty. They made an effort to disseminate the body of information currently available on the connections between reproductive health and poverty in their discussion note on Promoting Reproductive Health as a Poverty Reduction Strategy (Demographic Theory, 2018). They have evaluated the relative importance of reproductive health within the context of the global disease burden as well as the contribution of different categories of intervention to the alleviation of poverty. The definition of development as a whole, which stated that it was multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral and the relationship between poverty and income was just one among them, served as the basis for the discussion. Given the close ties between the social and economic facets of poverty, addressing the underlying social causes may help some individuals

escape income poverty. Therefore, development was a process built on a variety of social interventions rather than just macroeconomic measures to promote growth and employment.

They therefore came to the conclusion that sound economic policies go hand in hand with addressing the various social needs of the poor so they can take part in growing labor markets. Among them, meeting the health needs of the poor must take center stage in order to establish a positive feedback loop where poverty reduction and improvements in the health of the poor reinforce one another.

2.1 Factors affecting the world population in the twenty-century

The following major categories can be used to broadly classify the factors influencing population distribution (Khaleej Times, 2017; Touropia.com, 2017; United Nations; 2015; Wears, 2013):

1. Physical factors
2. Socio-economic factors
3. Demographic factors and
4. Political factors

2.2 Physical Factors affecting distribution of population

Climate, landforms, topography, soil, energy and mineral resources, accessibility in terms of distance from the coast, natural harbors, navigable rivers or canals, etc. are the primary physical factors. Man chooses to shape space in accordance with his cultural values, and as a result, habitations vary in response to environmental cues (Touropia, 2017). Through settlements, which are the actual physical manifestations of an ideal environment, he interacts with the natural environment. Some of the physical factors are explained below:

➤ **Climate:** One of the most significant natural phenomena is this. It determines the type of flora in the area and has an impact on agriculture. The species of animals native to the area are also influenced by the climate. Humans look for a climate that is hospitable in the areas where they plan to settle. The belts of climate are the primary spheres of the majority of human activity. The distribution of the world's population makes it clear that the majority of the world's most populous nations are found in tropical areas. A pleasant, warm climate draws people. Such climates offer favorable conditions for a wide variety of fauna to flourish, supporting the local life systems. The ability to feed large populations is made possible by agriculture and animal husbandry. On the other hand, regions with harsh climatic conditions are typically sparsely populated because it is challenging to maintain human life there. Additionally, densely populated are nations in the temperate zones.

➤ **Water:** A human being needs water to survive. The world's prehistoric civilizations thrived in areas close to rivers and the coast. On their banks, the Nile, Amazon, and Ganges River systems supported wealthy civilizations. A place's suitability for habitation is determined by the support that adequate rainfall gives to agriculture and vegetation. Large swaths of desert are uninhabited due to a lack of water. The rain-shadow side of a hill or mountain has less population for the same reason; however, the leeward side is frequently densely populated. As a result, population tends to be concentrated in coastal plains and well-watered river valleys.

➤ **Topography:** More people live in navigable areas than in undeveloped ones. A lack of arable land makes mountains less desirable. Additionally, these areas have much higher costs for

agriculture, construction, and transportation. High altitudes generally have a physiological impact on people's ability to adapt. Reduced atmospheric pressure and low oxygen levels are to blame for this. As a result, population and growth are not favored by higher altitudes. Coastal regions and low-lying plains are more favorable for human settlement. While the Ganges valley is one of the world's densely populated regions, the Himalayas are sparsely populated. The world's major cities are primarily found in coastal regions due to the advantages of ocean-going trade and transportation.

2.3 Socio-economic factors affecting population distribution

Cultural traits, economic activity types, technology (including farming practices), and social structure are all socioeconomic factors that affect population. The decision to settle is typically influenced by natural processes. But over time, man has been able to modify and partially regulate natural processes. As a result, factors other than natural factors are now considered when deciding where to settle. As human society evolved and needs changed, social and economic perspectives grew more important. Employment opportunities can be determined by economic activity (Khaleej Times, 2017). The majority of rural residents rely on agriculture for their livelihood. They may decide to migrate to cities if the land is unable to support the rural population or because urban areas offer more opportunities. The concentration of people in cities is a result of the wide range of economic opportunities and means of subsistence that cities provide. In contrast to villages where there are fewer options, there is typically work for nearly everyone in cities. As a result, urban and suburban populations are generally denser than those in rural areas, and this trend is expected to continue. Cities by their very nature offer a variety of employment opportunities in both the formal and unofficial sectors. Industries have long attracted inexpensive labor because they are a significant source of employment. Settlements grow as a result of the influx of labor, frequently on otherwise uninhabitable land. Similarly, people are encouraged to move around and settle in newer places by the social organization of communities in those areas. Being a social animal, man finds it necessary to establish a community and establish a comfortable home base. People who relocate tend to settle in areas (or subsets of areas) where there are others who share their language, culture, eating preferences, and other habits. Cities frequently have residential neighborhoods with a communal feel (Wears, 2013).

2.4 Demographic factors affecting population distribution

The characteristics of the population known as "demographic factors" have a significant impact on settlement patterns and population distribution. These include migration, mortality, and fertility trends. Together, fertility and mortality have an impact on a region's natural population growth. Population density and distribution change over time as a result of the different growth rates caused by fertility and mortality. The distribution of the population is greatly impacted by migration. People are frequently inspired to relocate to newer areas by push factors, or unfavorable conditions, in their native communities (United Nations, 2015). Furthermore, migration is encouraged by better opportunities in distant lands. People may decide to relocate due to a lack of available land, a lack of employment in their current location, inadequate pay or salaries, insufficient educational and medical resources, etc. The primary motivators of migration from rural to urban areas are frequently expectations of a higher standard of living. The migration process enables population redistribution, but it also places pressure on the destination area and raises population density there.

Natural increase is another factor that affects population distribution in Nigeria. The distribution of the population is greatly impacted by migration. People are frequently inspired to relocate to newer areas by push factors, or unfavorable conditions, in their native communities.

Furthermore, migration is encouraged by better opportunities in distant lands (Uzuegbunam, 2010). People may decide to relocate due to a lack of available land, a lack of employment in their current location, inadequate pay or salaries, insufficient educational and medical resources, etc. The primary motivators of migration from rural to urban areas are frequently expectations of a higher standard of living. The migration process enables population redistribution, but it also places pressure on the destination area and raises population density there.

2.5 Political factors affecting population distribution

Political factors include things like political boundaries, political stability (or unrest), disturbances, restrictions on immigration and trade, governmental regulations, and transportation infrastructure. Conflict, political unrest, war, and poor governance all have a negative impact on population distribution. Human lives are severely sacrificed in war and political conflicts. People are compelled to leave their homes in search of safety because of the high death rates. Mortality rates reach their peak, and emigration takes over. The influx of migrants causes a sizable population growth in safer areas. This also applies to areas close to the borders of nations with which there are tense relations (Uzuegbunam, 2019). Even when there is no conflict, people move out of fear, leaving these areas to be the least populated. Furthermore, it is right to point out that discrimination and political unrest are harmful to population growth. Conflicts between members of various political parties or religious groups have frequently led to population declines in the affected area. Before making a permanent move, the migrant population looks for a place that offers not only economic opportunities but also a secure and wholesome environment for living. Both of these conditions cannot be met in a politically unstable region, which deters not only the incoming migrant population but also the local population, who may be compelled to leave the area in search of peaceful places to settlement. Similarly, immigration is discouraged by the discrimination that migrants experience due to their race, language, cuisine, culture, etc. As a result, both newer settlements and population growth have decreased. More so, population growth in the destination region has frequently been a result of policies that promote migration (Uzuegbunam, 2010). International labor movements occur in countries with lax regulations governing cross-border migration. Population redistribution is aided by migration. Policies that encourage reduced fertility rates, the outlawing of infanticide, etc. also have an impact on population growth. For instance, China's one-child policy, which was strictly enforced, was successful in reducing fertility rates and managing population growth.

2.6 Strategies for effective inter-relation between population and national development in Nigeria

The complex inter-relationships between population, resources, environment and development (socio-economic) requires a clear consideration and recognition of the mission and vision of the Nigerian nation (Uzuegbunam, 2010; Uzuegbunam, 2019). Thus, the strategies for implementing population policies should focus on population related issues as well as on many other societal concerns, for the achievement of sustainable development. These strategies are discussed under the following heading:

i. Conduct of effective National Census: Information on head count aids the nation to produce adequate and effective projection of population growth for sustainable development. Consequently, the following measures could be taken to actualize the above purpose:

- Regular head-count at ten (10) years interval should be enforced to enhance planning for national development.
- Mobilization of the populace on the importance and conduct of census to avoid misunderstanding and consequent malpractice during the census and result release.
- Adequate training of the personnel to conduct the head count.
- Adequate provision of census materials and outfits.
- Effective monitoring, supervision and regular assessment of the progress of the census.
- Appropriate remuneration for good performance and discipline for bad performance.
- Discourage of the politicization of national census as means of resource allocation and consequent falsification of census data to favor certain sections of the country.

ii. Interrelationships between population, environment and development: Population and environment are pillars of sustainable development. Consequently, for increased understanding and awareness of the complex interrelationship among them, the following measures need to be taken:

- Development of mutually acceptable guidelines and frameworks by the government in partnership with non-governmental organizations, bilateral and multi-lateral organizations that will promote the understanding of the interrelationships.
- Integration of population, environment and development inter-relationships matters into the national leadership training programmes.
- Incorporation of development and development related issues into population education curricula.
- Inclusion of key messages about sustainable development inter-relationships into population advocacy, information, education and communication programmes.
- Promotion of media partnerships with population programme for expansion of understanding about the population-environment development relationship (Uzegbunam, 2019).

iii. Population, family planning, fertility management and development

It has been suggested that the required high level of family planning needs in Nigeria are yet to be attained. The availability and use of modern contraceptive is quite low (Muttarak and Wilde, 2021). There, the following measures should be taken to improve on this aspect of national development strategy:

- Family planning campaigns should be expanded at all levels of the society to ensure a wider reach to all concerned.
- Choice of programme activities shall be provided.
- Increased utilization of family planning methods, like child spacing and fertility related control services should be made available at all levels.
- Protection and support of the family and other marriage institutions should be appropriately enhanced.

iv. Population, reproductive and sexual health and development

The strategies for high quality reproductive and sexual health require the creation of a supportive environment to include the following:

- Broadening of the content and range of reproduction and sexual health services.
- Making health services more accessible.

- Strengthening community participation.
- Improving of management of health services.

The above strategies are to be carried out at all levels of the national health system, collaborating with all the relevant sectors with emphasis on integrated approach to planning and implementation of programmes.

v. Child health, survival and development

The timing of child birth, the spacing and determination of the number of births should be linked to the effective reproductive health of the mother since infantile mortality leads to high fertility and frequency of the child bearing. Furthermore, diseases like diarrhea, acute respiratory infections, malaria and other vaccine preventable diseases like polio, measles, whooping cough amongst others constitute major causes to childhood mortality and morbidity. The strategies to reduce child morbidity and mortality are:

- Encouraging mothers to breast feed their babies
- Adequate provision of nutrition, clean water, basic sanitation, immunization, oral rehydration therapy and family planning services.
- Improvement of children's access to appropriate and quality health-care services at all levels.
- Improvement of quality, accessibility, equity and affordability of educational opportunities from early children and
- Promoting efforts towards early detection and appropriate management of genetic disorders and development and developmental abnormalities in children.

vi. Women's health, safe motherhood and development

Not only do maternal and mortality have serious implications on women of child bearing age, they also pose serious implications on family welfare and national development. Health hazards and tragic loss of life constitute a force as a result of maternal morbidity and mortality.

Thus, combined effort of all concerned is needed for promotion of women's health and safe motherhood assurance in the following ways:

- Collation of data on women's special health needs to ensure that their health and nutrition needs are always met.
- Promotion of effective antenatal, delivery and post-natal care programmes.
- Improvement of health promotion and nutritional programmes at all levels, to raise the levels of women's health and nutrition status.
- Training of skilled staff for effective management of maternal and anti-natal cases to prevent deaths.
- Effective enhancement of the health programmes and institutions.
- Availability of obstetric emergency care (EMOC) to reduce maternal and pre-natal death risk.

3. CONCLUSION

The field of population and development is at an impasse. There are probably important relationships between the size and characteristics of human populations and economic, political, and social features of societies. But these relationships are very hard to pin down because population factors are intertwined with so many other macros level features that are part of complex structures and processes.

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