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The Nexus between the Leadership Question and the Poverty Trap in Africa

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the nexus between leadership question and the increasingly persistent poverty incidence in Africa, taking into consideration the effects of globalization. It argues that the dearth of an authentic knowledge leadership that is infused with patriotism, conscience, knowledge and transformational interest with Africa as centre of its foreign policies has been the bane of socio-economic development in Africa. The paper investigates this submission by examining the issues of how Africa got into the poverty trap, the leadership challenges in relation to globalization and poverty trap. It suggests how the challenges could effect a transformation out of this poverty trap. The development of knowledge leadership, Afro-centric foreign policies, diversification of the economy, industrial entrepreneurship revolution and internal generation of development funds are some of the recommendations out of this poverty trap.

Key words: Knowledge leadership, Development funds, Poverty trap, Globalization, Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty has not only been associated with Africa, it has remained an increasingly persistent obstacle in the socio – economic development of the continent for the past decades now. Africa and indeed the countries of the global South have benefited copiously from international development co-operations. The assertive assumption is that the poor countries of the global South cannot develop and extricate themselves from the effects of hunger, poverty, disease and insecurity if they are not assisted with monies and development funds from the rich and industrialized North. Consequently a development partnership between the North and the South came into existent. In order to sustain this development partnership, the rich and developed countries have, since the past 37 years now, made it mandatory to allocate about 0.7% of their gross national income (GNI) to official development assistance (ODA) of these poor countries of the South (Martens, 2007; Iheriohanma, 2009). This has remained till date.

Recent developments and observations indicate that this 'partnership' is carefully grafted and couched in profiteering terms and could best be described as paternalistic donor – recipient relationship since under-development, hunger, disease, poverty and insecurity dramatize the characteristics of these recipient countries (Iheriohanma, 2009). Efforts at eradicating poverty by the United Nations, other international development organizations and the recommended internally generated institutional structures for these poor countries for development rather appear to be a farce. This has not raised any conscious doubt. Rather it has generated broad consensus among the developed countries, political leaders, scholars, civil society organizations, network initiatives surrogate African leaders, development organizations etc. who argue that a dramatic increase in external resources is indeed what is required in these countries of the South to eradicate disease and hunger and to particularly extricate Africa from the poverty trap. Most scholars believe that poverty is endogenous to Africa (Martens, 2007; Shepherd, 2007). This notion and the need to assist informed The United Nations Millennium Project which estimated in its report, 'Investing in Development', that to realize the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), official development assistance (ODA) needs to increase to USS195 billion by 2015 (UN Millennium Project, 2005). This unsolicited assistance needs a critical re-appraisal.

To an impressionistic observer, these efforts and projects are welcome and should be encouraged. The issue is rather whether this observer has ever stopped awhile to question why, in spite of the resources and efforts at development, poverty in these countries of the South continues to escalate. The rationale for attributing the cause of poverty and its incidences in Africa to some endogenous rather than exogenous and 'need – assistance nexus' factors challenge the investigation of the paternalistic donor – recipient relationships that exist as well as the subsequent gap between these few rich (developed) countries and majority of the countries of the South. If the current official development assistance (ODA) from the North does not appear to bridge the financial gap in this development polar divide, and if the articulated models and approaches such as the Structural Adjustment, the Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS), liberalization, removal of subsidies, de-regulation, etc. are not doing the magic either, then there is need for a re-appraisal. Essentially, there is need for a re-examination of why the resources, especially monies for developing the global South are not endogenously generated and invested. Paradoxically, evidences abound that these poor countries are abundantly endowed (King, 2007; Martens, 2007).

This paper investigates the interconnectivity linking leadership challenges, globalization effects and poverty trap in Africa. It explores the contending issues and processes of poverty entrapment in Africa, the intricacies of leadership and poverty questions in Africa in relation to globalization and the ways of overcoming this poverty trap. The questions are why the development assistance? Why is there no significant improvement in the lives and welfare of the people of the South despite the numerous external investment expenditures in this regard? Are there structural issues that have constituted an attenuated strain of the virus? Have the roles of leadership in Africa *vis-à-vis* globalization constituted structural complicities to the extent that poverty eradication has remained enigmatic? Responses to these issues are expected to open up avenues for escape from this entrapment. While this investigation benefits more from library research, it is explorative and analytical.

Africa and the Contending Theoretical Issues on Poverty Trap

Poverty has been seen from different perspectives. It refers to a state in which the necessary resources for life are lacking. The necessities usually include material but sometimes cultural resources. In absolute terms, poverty refers to a state in which the individual or group lacks the resources that are necessary for subsistence or where income is only for unpredictable access to the means of subsistence. In relative terms, an individual's or group's lack of necessities or resources is compared with that of other members of the society (Marshall, 1998). In countries that have low income, poverty is very high. This is where African and Third World countries' situation becomes pitiable. It is not only that there is a subjective feeling of poverty but the consequences of poverty expose the relative conditions of these countries in an interdependent global economy. Poverty trap considers a state or situation low – income individuals, families or groups may face when taking up paid employment or securing higher earnings or accepting a comparatively alternative income earning.

It is observed that Africa is now regarded as a poverty stricken continent. Yet, it remained a haven for resources for Europe and America before and during the colonial era (Curtin, 1979; Eke, 1983). The slaves and raw materials that supported American plantations and industrialization came mostly from Africa. Three manifest reasons were given by the Europeans for colonizing Africa. These included the abolition of slave trade, evangelization and establishment of legitimate trade. The present resume does not accommodate analysis of these factors. However, the issue of legitimate trade indicates the existence of trade within and between African countries and the outside world before colonization. From a political economy approach, the contention on abolition of slave trade and establishment of 'legitimate' trade implies an alternative that seeks to favour the premeditated intentions of the facilitators and dominant partners in the bilateral or multilateral trade relations. This is evident from the operations and the effects of the resulting trade transactions. Evangelization was only for protection of these facilitators. Colonization *per se* opened up avenues for European political and economic hegemony and domination in Africa. It also turned Africa as a fertile soil for raw materials for industrial revolution and subsequent economic exploration, exploitation and development of the colonial masters' home industries. Not only the above, Africa became outlets and markets for finished goods, test grounds for technological innovations, military and hardware discoveries etc. This turned Africa into a dumping ground for finished goods. Consequently, African countries became consumer nations. Eke (1983) argues that the colonial interaction set Africa backward while at the same time accelerated industrial development of the home countries of the colonial masters. In various dimensions, the implications of these interactions accounted for the institutionalization of structural poverty in Africa (Eke, 1983; Ogungbamila, 2005; Iheriohanma, 2009; Sundar and Srinivasan, 2009). The interaction altered the traditional economic activities while introducing others that were service oriented.

It was the necessity of lack and or dearth of natural endowments in Europe and America that crystallized into motherhood for inventions among the nations of these continents. America was colonized like any other African country by Britain, but because abundance of resources was not as favoured as in Africa, it was granted independence earlier, though through ferocious struggles. If this argument is not tenable, why has Britain not granted Ireland independence? This necessity for improved condition of living triggered off crave for exploration, innovation, show of ingenuity, knowledge and development of ideas etc that latter metamorphosed and supported industrial revolution, economic growth and prosperity. It became the foundation for the process of the present great digital divide. It is therefore, argued that it was the lack, hunger and poverty that were the determining force that drove Europeans and Americans out to explore sources of livelihood which Africa and Third world offered and nurtured. The three manifest reasons of evangelization especially, abolition of slave trade and establishment of legitimate trade in the colonized areas became a smoke screen that deceived African traditional leaders into accepting the colonizers. Eventually, the colonizers capitalized on their exploits and through the hidden economic and political hegemonic intentions marginalized their hosts through colonization, psyching and deprivation.

The colonial interaction is instrumental to the institutionalization of European and American influence in Africa. It eroded and in some cases altered the existing traditional, economic and political institutional structures, land tenure system and religious practices (Ogungbamila, 2005; Okpe and Abu, 2009; Sundar and Srinivasan, 2009). Again, Koo (1981) argues that the contact and interaction have dislocation effects on indigenous economic activities and practices of craftsmanship, guilds and local manufacturing that sustained the economic base structure of the people and their gross national product. The dislocation has rather pushed majority of Africans into service activities such as motor cycle (*Inaga or Okada)* riding, sale of mobile telecommunications network of global services (MTN) recharge cards etc. rather than entrepreneurship and manufacture (Iheriohanma, 2007).

A theoretical exploration of Africa's poverty trap underscores the importance of the dependency theory on centre – periphery relationship that has institutionalized inequality, class structure and dependency within Africa on one hand and between African countries and others on the other. The theory posits that the expansion of international capitalist system, earlier facilitated through colonialism, brought about the dual processes of the centre – periphery polarization (Koo, 1981; Rama, 2003). Apart from polarization within countries, the most excruciating one is that involving developed, industrialized, advanced 'central northern' ones (North) on one side and the underdeveloped, poor, dependent 'periphery southern' ones (South) on the other. There arose a political and economic hegemony of interest that necessitated the creation of a bridgehead by the imperialist centre (industrialized) nations. The polarization also created structures of dependency, processes of marginalization and underdevelopment. The consequences of these were a truncation and dislocation of traditional economic activities of Africans, labour migration and pursuit of formal sector economic activities with a sandy fragile foundation. In Nigeria, examples of this dislocation involved the abandonment of the groundnut pyramids in the north, the oil palm produce in the east and the famous cocoa farms in the west. Though not scientifically proved, an indigenous Igbo cocoyam species is alleged to have been phased out as a result of the application of organic fertilizer on the soil. All these have been replaced by oil extraction by multinationals. The same is applicable to the beauty of gold that made Ghana the Gold Coast. These provided employment as well as foreign exchange to the economy. The dislocation increased underemployment and poverty in the periphery economies of the less developed countries of Africa since the available jobs in the formal sector were not able to easily absorb all displaced migrant labour from the informal sector. This also involved difficulty in accessing reasonable, stable and sustained income and livelihood. Most of the displaced migrant labour was not relevantly skilled for the jobs they were looking for. Adjustment created time lag and within this period poverty crept in.

At the domestic level, a relation was created between the industrial and modernized sector and the backward (traditional) non – formal poor sector. This dependency relation that is created therefore further pauperized Africa with the exploitation and carting off of her resources. The penetration of metropolitan capital and the extraction of surplus from the periphery (Africa) by the centre nations (industrialized nations) and the subsequent flow of scarce resources from the periphery to the centre (industrialized North, modernized sectors or regions) definitely stimulated an equal directional flow of migrant labour for paid employment. Consequently, the penetration of metropolitan capital into agrarian economy not only disrupted the land tenure system for example, it introduced mechanization of agriculture into an area where people lacked skills for performance and access to requisite development capital. Hence the poverty trap in Africa. The dependency relation that resulted from the expansionist motive of Western European mercantilist and industrial capitalism especially from Britain, started with colonization, neo-colonization, imperialism, economic integration and regionalization, etc., down to the present process of globalization that has further nailed the burial coffin. The same characterization still runs through their strands. This also informs the formulation and implementation of the policies and theories of economic development especially for the Third World, the official development assistance (ODA) and majority of the (economic) development programmes of the World Bank, Paris Club, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international donor and development agencies with multinationals and NGOs as facilitators. The underlying driving force remained the profit motive within an unregulated independent market system of capitalism.

The implication of all these is that policy formulations and development options by international bodies aim at perpetuating inequality rather than encouraging development in the South. These policies are to the advantage of the capitalist nations. The education curriculum that was the foundation of knowledge acquisition of the colonized Africans not only destroyed the indigenous knowledge system but was only meant for literacy of the three Rs of reading, writing and arithmetic. Essentially, these were to facilitate trade, commerce, administration and evangelization by the capitalist colonialists. The curriculum was not to lay foundation for technological take – off for development for the colonial enclaves. Such curriculum was not even tailored towards technological transfer as was latter requested. The establishment of Government Reserved Areas (GRAs) and White Missionary Schools in South Africa and in many other parts of Africa for example, was an indication of inequality and domination.

In the current situation, Harcourt (2007) has argued that a critical examination of the capitalist (developed) North's emphasis on almost all the items in the Eight Millennium Development Goals shows that the MDGs are solidly supportive of the tradition that the rich countries should assist the poor countries by sending money, technical assistance, medical knowledge and writing off debts. The countries of the North endorse rather than challenge international trade. By this, they uphold the uneven development and the increase in global inequality, digital divide, etc that are fostered and facilitated by global capitalism. Harcourt asserts that, through their actions, the North commend rather than question privatization of various resources and infrastructures such as water, electricity, roads, houses, etc., needed for basic survival. They not only ignore the reality of violence at individual and community levels, growing militarism, terrorism, problems of ecological disasters, the entrenchment of religious conservatism and fundamentalism but also encourage and fan the disruptions of the market on local economies. These have led critics to question the authenticity of the facilitators and institutions of MDGs that have left unearthed the root causes of poverty, especially in Africa, while relying on campaigns and expert advice on how to end it. This leaves a conclusion that the MDGs are apartheid on a world scale and have succeeded in producing and deepening global poverty and polarization (Harcourt, 2007). Applications and requests for tax concessions and exemptions as moratorium by multinational investments, while Imperial government imposed exorbitant tax on low income earners, tariffs on imported goods and company tax on indigenous manufacture indicated exclusionism, subjugation, and exploitation. Yet there appears to be good and moral intentions for development assistance to the colonized. Policies and programmes aimed at ending poverty and tackling its causes should rather examine critically where the wealth is, who are the custodians and who are controlling it? In other words, why should some multinationals and big time manufacturers such as Nestle, Unilever etc. be allowed monopoly of their products? These foster structures for inequality and poverty.

This section proffered a theoretical exposition on the contending issues and processes of poverty entrapment in Africa. It exposed the unwary nature and inability of the traditional rulers in Africa at critically evaluating the premeditated intentions of the colonial masters, their manifest and latent reasons for colonization and provided a prelude to the consequent effects. Obviously, the awareness of this incapacitation provided impetus to the nationalists during the independent struggles. But was this impetus sustained by the nationalists on whose shoulders the mantle of leadership fell after political independence? Even now, the uncritical and compromising posture of leadership in Third World countries is indicative that it does not see the implications of the activities and intentions of the facilitators of globalization in perpetuating poverty especially in Africa. African leaders, till today, appear to have caps in hand going round the globe and soliciting unsustainable financial assistance that tends to mortgage generations yet unborn. This therefore, necessitates an examination of the interrelationship between poverty, leadership and globalization.

The Nexus between the Challenges of Globalization, Leadership Question and Poverty Entrapment in Africa

As a process, it is observed that globalization has come to stay. There is no alternative. No economy, whether developed or developing, will escape it. It cannot be halted or ignored.

In an elementary sense, globalization involves integration of all economies into a global market on the bases of equal entry, buying and selling under stiff economic competition. It brings the global economies into a borderless geographical line or entity. Kwanashie (1999) sees globalization as a systematic integration of autonomous economies into global system of production and distribution. It is a process that creates a global market place in which free markets, investment flows, trade and information are integrated. There are key elements of this process and they include interconnection of sovereign nations through trade and capital flows, creation and harmonization of economic rules that regulate relations between these sovereign nations, creation of institutional structures that will support and facilitate the dependence and interconnection, and the creation of a global market place. Globalization has the advantage of linking all economies to markets that were hitherto unknown to them. It provides prospects for economic growth, expanded economic cooperation, standardization and harmonization of behaviours across borders. Information and communications technology has remained a moving structure that has made integration possible and faster. Usman (1999) identified some forces of globalization to include technology, economic liberalization and democracy. Added to this list is the development of human capital to act as catalyst.

The process of globalization is not without necessary conditions. Globalization is a world characterized by use of ideas and knowledge. The demands of globalization that all economies be competitive, market – driven, information – and knowledge – driven, liberalized and with sufficient institutional framework for its support imply the need for a restructuring of all the traditional economic infrastructure and institutions. On the contrary, African nations lack the necessary structures to participate. Yet they have to be whipped into line. For example, they lack the efficiency and sound policies. The development of adequate human and institutional capacity, physical infrastructure as well as implementation of policies necessary to seize the opportunities and meet the challenges of globalization are advocated in this regard. Specifically, the Nigerian capital market is yet to be internationalized and integrated into the world capital market. Nigeria's balance of payment is yet to be improved through exports. These inadequacies expose the failure of African states in their roles and responsibilities to their citizens. There is lack of responsive leadership to take the bull by the horns rather than compromise on foreign policies that appear to deepen the African poverty trap. Their effort should be able to disabuse the notion that poverty is endemic in Africa (Todaro and Smith, 2003; Alimi, Ayanwale, Bamile and Bello, 2004). Again, the democratic structures and processes need to be strengthened. The recent events in Madagascar, Nigeria, Guinea, Sudan, Angola etc. testify to this submission. Development of democratic structures will assist the non – democratic nations to derive net benefits from the expanding international economic integration.

Leadership connotes the context of team – building and playing. It implies the ability to lead (a group of people) into desired circumstances or places. It implies the ability to be a leader, knowledgeable, innovative, explorative, flexible, accommodating, altruistic and skillful. It knows when to be rigid or flexible and should be filled with a divine spirit that authenticates its authority and will of the people. It should be able to predict the future and the effects of its policies on the economic and political life of the nation, especially in this globalized world politics. It should harness the resources of the land for the greater good of the majority.

In the light of the above, leadership in Africa in particular should be up to the mark to confront the demands and forces of globalization and ensure that poverty is eliminated. Globalization, leadership and poverty reduction in Africa do not have asymmetric relationship but are closely linked in the course of development. To this end, leadership in Africa is expected to critically question why poverty has continued to escalate in geometric proportion in spite of all the resources and efforts at development and reducing poverty. Why do we have a wide gap existing between a few rich and (a greater) majority of the poor population within and between economies? Looking at the individual goals of the MDGs, there are critical questions regarding the measurement of women's empowerment through programmes and pursuit of education. Efforts are not made at improving reproductive health and rights. Vague efforts are made about HIV/AIDS without emphasizing adequately on health systems and corporate responsibility (Harcourt, 2007) that demand re – investment of the gains made by the multinational and foreign development investors (fdi).

The official development assistance (ODA) demands annual budgetary allocations of developed countries for developing economies. It concentrates on how to mobilize more money for the South. Yet, the nations of the North, through international financial institutions and organizations such as International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, etc., advise and insist on conditions for the mobilized funds. They advise that subsidies be removed on essential produce and infrastructure that have direct influence on improving the lives of the poor in Africa (Lambrou and Piana, 2006; Al-Rfou and Trawneh, 2009). This awareness should have been a challenge to leadership in Africa. What is expedient is more specific and ambitious development goals, additional and drastic increase in the public expenditure of the developing countries themselves. The Lagos Plan of Action becomes relevant here. The ODA from donor nations has not bridged the financial gap between the North and South. Rather, it has entrapped Africa the more and created structures for development crises.

In a related case, it is observed that about 500 million working poor who are in work but are earning less than a dollar a day are found more in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially in rural areas (Lambrou and Piana, 2006; Shephard, 2007). Africa has been described as the poorest, the most technologically backward, the most debt distressed and the most marginalized region globally. Africa has about 12.5% of the world's population that lives on less than USS 1 per day, accounts for about 1.5% of the global trade in goods and services, exports less than 20% of its GDP annually and produces only 3.2% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This is paradoxical because Africa was richly endowed and that was the attraction to the colonial masters. What leadership in Africa should concentrate on is to strategize and find pathways out of poverty. The level of poverty in Africa poses serious threat to security. Insecurity characterizes persistent poverty. The poor, in most cases, respond rationally to risk situations, developing survival strategies and behaviours to challenge their perceived blocked access and chances for progress. The poor appears vulnerable to all kinds of hazards and life-stresses that are more or less predictable. The poor observes that death, illness and disability are consequences that underlie the common downward mobility into poverty. If the poor find themselves trapped because leadership is not responsive and helpful in opening up the blocked access, they rather attempt to innovate structures and behaviours that will extricate them from the observed constrained abilities. In most cases, the constructed aberrant behaviour is nurtured by corrupt practices which not only undermine development but deepen poverty in the long run. This also challenges leadership. The events and conflicts that ravaged and are still ravaging the countries of Sudan, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Burundi, Angola, Mozambique, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Madagascar etc. are clear examples of challenged leadership.

African Leaders, Nigeria inclusive, heed the advice of opening up of borders to all financial comers (liberalization of economy). Nothing *per se* is wrong with this liberalization policy and demands of globalization. But it is worthy of note that all economies are not on the same level of development and the currencies are not as strong as the others. All foreign transactions are either made in euro, pounds sterling or dollar. This negates the principle of equal entry, buying and selling that should have characterized global market transaction. The implication is that the weak African economy and the people's welfare are left to the mercies of the free market operators. These facilitators and operators are the dominant international financial players who are interested in short term (financial) profits. This decries African leaders that are bereft of political will and knowledge. It also decries the absence of state autonomy. This demands a critical appraisal by African leaders to evaluate the necessity and benefits of such shylock's policies against the welfare and poverty status of their citizens. Such foreign policies thrive because of the dearth of home grown policies that support Afro-centric policy relations.

Martens (2007), observes that developing nations, especially in Africa, face several internal and external obstacles in mobilizing domestic resources and strengthening of fiscal policies. He is of the opinion that tax systems fail to reach large land owners, foreign corporations and wealthy individuals, Accordingly, only 16% of state revenues come from taxing income, business profits and capital gains, while 32% is collected through taxes on goods and services, particularly through value added tax (VAT). It is noted that this system does not assist in income and wealth creation and distribution. This tax places a burden primarily on the poor and on low income families who ordinarily spend much of their money on consumption. On the contrary, for the wealthy groups (who, in most cases, dodge or are shielded from the taxes), these taxes hardly carry any weight in relation to their income. In a related case, most large organizations, foreign investors, multinationals and large property owners are exempted from taxes. Developing countries with this weak tax system forego the revenues without ensuring the corresponding development benefits of the investments. This tax system deepens poverty and therefore, challenges leadership and efficient poverty reduction programmes in the countries of the South.

The continued deepening of poverty in Africa suggests that inappropriate development and poverty eradication programmes and policies are adopted. Relying on foreign funds and technical assistance rather mortgages African economies to the whims and caprices of donor nations of the North, thus according them the continued advantages of development prospects. Nigerian economy, for example, appears now to be in the strongholds of the Asian Tigers who control the energy and manufacturing sectors in the country's economy. This extends to political policies. Public power supply is substituted with imported generators for household use, manufacture etc. The pollution from this alone poses health hazards. Much of the resources of these low income earners are channeled towards health care as a result of pollution rather than for investment. If leaders are imbued with authentic knowledge leadership, this would not be. The absence of state autonomy comes to the fore. On the other hand, it exposes a failed state.

Strengthening Institutions for Overcoming the Poverty Trap in Africa

The foregoing has exposed that the articulated models for extricating Africa from the poverty trap have not done the expected magic. This paper therefore, argues that as long as these models and economic development theories are externally formulated and imposed on Africa, and as long as the dominant international financial players have the intentions for profit rather than development, their efforts are but smokescreen meant to scratch the effects of poverty in Africa. These efforts are only serving the capitalist intentions of the industrialized North. The root causes of poverty in Africa are not explored. The causes vary from region to region and therefore require different but specific solutions. In all, leadership in Africa is found to be contributing to this unacceptable compromise. There is need to strengthen the democratic structures and institutions for good governance, and without compromise, internationalize the capital market while strengthening the local currencies and ensuring autonomous states that would effectively perform their roles to the citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Against these backdrops, the following recommendations for overcoming the poverty trap in Africa are made. All that is needed is a strong will by the leadership and repositioning of the state to creditably execute its role to the citizens.

Leadership in Africa lacks the requisite knowledge and divine inspiration to lead. Authentic Knowledge leadership (AKL) is therefore recommended as a panacea. AKL involves leadership that is knowledgeable, explorative, resolute, creative, visionary, innovative, accommodating, responsive, flexible and more especially filled with divine (spiritual) capital that crystallizes all other characteristics for appropriate leadership role and responsive governance. This divine capital involves spiritual life – giving and sustaining force – the conscience - that directs the leader's actions in an acceptable, objective transformational manner. Being innovative, creative, skillful and visionary is all about ideas and this implies being knowledgeable. This will direct the leadership on how best to harness the abundant resources in Africa for greater dividend. It is not leadership that compromises as a result of the influences and dominance of the international financial players.

The AKL is nurtured through appropriate comprehensive human capital development and leadership training and enlightenment programmes. Its identification will depend on possession of AKL qualities. The electorate decisions in the electoral system should be supreme.

In order to tackle this hydra-headed poverty in Africa, the leaders should reflect and see Africa as centre of its foreign policies. By heeding the advice of international financial institutions, organizations and donor agencies on liberalization, de-regulation, right – sizing, down – sizing, structural adjustment, removal of subsidies on essential goods etc, African leaders have compromised the welfare of the electorate and ceded political and economic authority to the dominant North. This further implicates the failed states in Africa and the lack of political will among the leaders. An Afro-centric market policy is therefore, advocated. To be visionary Implies that the leader is ever ready to create opportunities for increased comparative advantage for the economy. It is the Afro-centric foreign and market policies that will nurture this comparative advantage. This is where the home grown Lagos Plan of Action becomes relevant. More of the implement- able home grown policies are advocated.

African Leaders should adopt an open and transparent administration and governance. Adherence to the rule of law should form the pillar of administration. In Nigeria, the passage of the Freedom of Information Bill (FOIB) should be passed by the National Assembly without delay. There is need for security of lives and property, justice and fair-play in all dealings. The nascent development of government of the family, by the family and for the family should be checked before the deleterious effects become universalized. This is another form of forming a cabal in government. Almost all economies in Africa are mono-cultural. There is need for diversification, especially in agriculture, manufacture and foundries. This is expedient now with the global economic melt down. This will eventually be a catalyst for entrepreneurship with which Africans were noted for before and during the colonial period. While engaging in diversification, the leadership should embark on aggressive entrepreneurship and technology development, the driving force for economic development in this information and communication technology (ICT) millennium. This process will absorb the teaming employable youth population that is entrapped in structural poverty. Most of these youths rather see the type of leadership in their area as being responsible for the blocked access to their progress. The innovation of inappropriate behaviours to access progress is traced to this.

Development funds for Africa should be endogenously generated. Reliance on external funds for development and poverty eradication gives the donor agencies, nations and international organizations an advantage and indicates political and economic dependence rather than independence. It continues to give the international donors the impetus to dictate development programmes that have least relationship to the development course and poverty situation in Africa. It will stem the advantage the international donors have in recruiting some Africans into the cabal that holds the rest in an economic hostage.

CONCLUSION

This investigation dwelt on the interactions between leadership and poverty trap in Africa taking into consideration the prospects of globalization. It examined how Africa got into this trap, why so much resource have been invested to assist the economies of the South remove the wool in their development lenses, yet poverty persists.

The paper concludes that there are structural issues to be attended to. Some of them include the development of authentic knowledge leadership in Africa, endogenously generating development funds for Africa and making Africa the centre of foreign policy. It recommends a diversified economy and development of industrial entrepreneurship to counter the effects of poverty.

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